



THE PRAYER CLOSET

Encouraging & Equipping Believers in Prayer

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ISSUE 2

Your Kingdom Come

In the Model Prayer, Jesus teaches us how to pray. He shows us how to communicate with our Father. He begins by teaching us to pray, "Hallowed be thy name." In this petition, Jesus calls for us to make known how glorious God is. We are to seek to reveal to others how majestic and holy God is.

Our privilege and responsibility is to honor, esteem, and cherish who God is. We are to do everything that we can to protect the name of God. This petition demands the defense of the name of God from abuse and profane treatment in our lives and the lives of others. God cannot be greater, but we can make Him appear greater in our lives and in the eyes of others. Christ teaches that our prayers must be **God-centered**.

The second petition of the Model Prayer is, "Thy kingdom come." In this petition, Christ teaches us that our prayers are to be **kingdom-focused**. When we pray, we must remember the kingdom of God and allow that to shape and mold our praying. What kingdom is Jesus referring to? What does it mean to pray, "Thy kingdom come" (**Matthew 6:10**)? This issue of *The Prayer Closet* will seek to examine this petition and what it means for our personal praying.

What Does Jesus Mean By "The Kingdom"?

The kingdom of God refers to the sovereign reign of God. This kingdom has a present and a future reality. The present

reality is the kingdom of grace. In this aspect, the kingdom refers to the gracious reign of God in the hearts and lives of those who trust in Jesus Christ. When a person turns from sin to trust in Christ, he enters the kingdom. Christ enters his life and begins to reign in his life. The kingdom of grace is advanced as people hear the gospel, surrender to Jesus Christ by faith, and walk in obedience to Him.

The future aspect is the kingdom of glory. This refers to the time when Christ returns. It is the ushering in of God's sovereign rule over all things. All God's enemies will have been defeated. Every knee will bow and confess Jesus as Lord. Believers will enjoy the blessings of heaven and eternal life. Unbelievers will suffer the consequences of their rebellion and unbelief.

Why Pray For The Kingdom To Come?

Why does Jesus teach us to pray, "Thy kingdom come?" It is because we had to be delivered from the kingdom of sin and Satan. The very fact that Jesus teaches us to pray for this reveals that we belong to another kingdom. Remember that we said that the kingdom is the gracious reign of God when a person comes to Christ. However, before a person comes to Christ, he belongs to the kingdom of sin and Satan, "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son" (**Colossians 1:13**).

We were under the power of darkness. We were members of the kingdom of Satan and sin. It is only through faith in Jesus Christ that we are removed from the kingdom of Satan and placed in the kingdom of His dear Son, Jesus Christ. When we trusted Christ, God removed us from the evil, deadly grip of Satan and sin and put us in His kingdom that is lovingly ruled by His Son Jesus Christ.

This petition in the Model Prayer leads us to acknowledge that all people apart from Christ are under the power of darkness and belong to the kingdom of Satan and sin. It points out our desperate condition. It echoes the truth of **Ephesians 2:2-3**, “Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, *according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.*” This petition displays our miserable condition apart from Jesus Christ – in the kingdom of Satan and sin held under the power of darkness. It should cause us to look at people in a fresh light – slaves to Satan and sin in desperate need of Jesus Christ and His kingdom. These words of Jesus call us to see people as they are and to see their great need of Jesus Christ.

This petition should drive us to give thanks to God. We were slaves to Satan and sin. We were held under the power of darkness. Yet, through Jesus Christ, we have been delivered! We have been removed from the misery and eternal damnation of that slavery to the loving, merciful reign of the Lord Jesus Christ. We were under the control of the hateful, spiteful tyrant Satan. Now we are under the control of the glorious Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. What grace! What mercy! This petition should drive us to thankfulness and praise.

This petition should also shape and mold our praying. Just as we are to be God-centered in our praying, we are to be kingdom-focused. When we pray, our desire and seeking God should be for the advancement of this kingdom. Just as we want God to be glorified, we should desire that others turn from the kingdom of Satan and sin and enter the kingdom of God with Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

God uses our prayers as a part of delivering people from sin and Satan and bringing them to the Lord Jesus Christ, “Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you” (**1 Thessalonians 3:2**). When Paul wrote this to the Thessalonian church, he was in Corinth. Corinth certainly was under the power of darkness and held captive by Satan! Paul knew his only hope of the gospel spreading and transforming lives was through the faithful praying of God’s people.

Paul asked these believers to pray this because he knew that fervent prayer was the key to breaking through at Corinth and seeing many people saved. Paul ties people coming to Christ with the prayers of believers. In other words, the kingdom advances as God’s people pray. God uses the prayers of His people to bring lost people to Christ, thus advancing His kingdom. By teaching us to pray “Thy kingdom come,” Jesus Christ is calling us to advance the kingdom through our praying for the lost.

How Do I Pray For The Kingdom To Come?

We have already seen what the kingdom is. We have also examined why we should pray for the kingdom to come. We now want to look at how to apply this petition to our prayer lives. You may be thinking, “How do I put this into practice in my personal praying?” I’d like to suggest some ways that we can obey Christ in praying for the kingdom to come.

Praying for the kingdom to come means starting with ourselves.

This petition should cause you to ask yourself, “Am I in the kingdom?” How does one enter the kingdom? It is by personal faith in Christ and repentance from sin. A person enters the kingdom of God by turning from his sin to trust solely in Jesus Christ. You must ask yourself, “Have I turned from my sin to Christ? Have I trusted solely in Jesus Christ? You must seek to know for certain that you have come to Christ.

Once you trust in Jesus Christ, you enter the kingdom. Jesus Christ enters your life to reign as Savior and Lord. The kingdom enters you! Jesus said, "Neither shall they say, Lo here! or lo there! for behold the kingdom is within you" (**Luke 17:21**). When you come to Christ, it is the beginning of a process – a process where Christ gains more and more control of you. You begin to grow in your understanding of kingdom priorities and lifestyle. The kingdom is to permeate your whole life.

Praying for the kingdom to come means asking God to help you grow in your surrender to Jesus Christ. When you come to Christ, you surrender to Him. However, you have to grow in this. Every area has to come under His reign. It is to pray for the grace to be more and more submissive to Christ in every area of your life. You might find it helpful to ask God to reveal any areas of your life where you are trying to control, areas you are unwilling to surrender and trust Christ. Confess your desire to bring your whole life under Christ's lordship. Jesus is now your King; He desires to reign over your whole life!

At the same time, we are filled with our own sinful desires and ideas. We are greatly influenced by the world. Praying for the kingdom to come in my life means asking God to help me turn from my own and the world's ideas and priorities to His. It is pleading with God to help us understand and practice the priorities and lifestyle of His kingdom.

This petition forces us to start with ourselves. We must first ask ourselves, "Am I in the kingdom? Have I truly repented of my sinful, self-centered lifestyle and turn solely to Christ in true faith?" Yet, we must continue to pray that the kingdom will penetrate every area of our lives. We must ask for grace to practice greater surrender to Christ. We must plead with God to teach us and ingrain in us the kingdom's priorities and lifestyle.

Praying for the kingdom to come means praying for the salvation of the lost.

In this petition, Jesus pleads with us to pray for those outside of the kingdom – those who have not come to Him in true faith. We

have already seen that the kingdom advances as people turn to Jesus Christ in faith and repentance. We must plead with God to save people through the preaching and teaching of God's Word. We must cry out for the lost to turn from their sin and to turn to Jesus Christ. Prayer is essential to the advance of the kingdom. It is crucial to the salvation of the lost.

Romans 10 gives us a view of the process of how people come to Christ. First, a believer has a passionate burden for lost people (**10:1**). That passionate burden leads to fervent prayer for the lost (**10:1**). The Word of God is proclaimed to the lost (**10:13-16**). The lost person exercises faith because of and through the Word by the power of the Spirit (**10:17**).

God uses all these things to bring people to Himself – a burden for the lost, prayer, preaching or witnessing, the Word, and the Spirit. Prayer is as much a part of this process as the others parts. I can't fully explain it, but I believe John Wesley was right when he said, "Nothing happens in this world apart from believing prayer." Somehow, someway, in the power and grace of God, He uses our prayers to bring people to Jesus Christ in true faith and repentance. Our prayers for the lost do matter! God advances His kingdom by our prayers for lost people. This petition calls us to pray for the deliverance of people from Satan's kingdom to the kingdom of God by faith in Jesus.

You might consider developing "Kingdom Targets." A kingdom target is someone that needs to come to Christ. It is a lost person that needs to turn from sin to true faith in Jesus Christ. I have a place in my journal designated as "Kingdom Targets." In this section, I keep a list of specific people that I long to see come to Jesus Christ. My heart's desire is that they enter the kingdom by trusting in Jesus Christ. This enables me to pray regularly for their deliverance and salvation by Jesus Christ.

Praying for the kingdom to come is to pray for the destruction of Satan's kingdom.

This petition instructs us to pray for the advance of God's kingdom through the destruction of Satan's kingdom. We are to plead with God that his grip on people is broken. We are to pray for the removal of those things that Satan used to keep people bound and away from the gospel. Satan uses a variety of schemes to hold people in darkness and sin. We must plead that all his schemes will be exposed and defeated and that the truth of the gospel will penetrate lives.

Praying for the kingdom of God to come means praying for the spread of the gospel across the world.

This petition should stir us to pray for the spread of the gospel to the whole world. As a child of God, it should be our desire to see His kingdom spread to the whole earth. We should long for people from every nation and people group hear the gospel and turn to Jesus Christ. **Psalm 67** is the Old Testament prayer that corresponds to the second petition. In this psalm, we are taught to pray:

- That God's way of salvation would be known in all nations of the earth;
- That the nations will praise God;
- That the nations will sing for joy;
- That God would judge the peoples in uprightness, punishing evil and creating good;
- That God would lead the nations in His ways.

These things can only be possible as the gospel is proclaimed in all the earth.

It's crucial to make a place in your prayer life for the world. You might consider praying for missionaries. You might adopt a country or a people group. You might pray through the nations of the world. You might pray as you see news stories concerning the nations. Whatever way you choose, make room for the spread of the gospel and the turning of people to Jesus Christ in faith and repentance.

Praying for the kingdom to come means pleading for the fullness of Gentiles to come to Christ.

The Word of God says in **Romans 11:25**, "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in." The phrase "come in" is the standard New Testament term for entering the kingdom of God through faith in Jesus Christ (**Matthew 5:20, 7:13, 18:3**). Through the Old Testament into the New Testament, we see that God's purpose was to bring people from all over the world to Christ. He desires to have His Son proclaimed in every nation, among every people group. **Psalm 67** reveals that God's saving power and mercy will be known among the Gentiles. We must pray that the fullness of the Gentiles will be brought in to faith in Jesus Christ. God has promised this and we must plead with God because of His promise.

Praying for the kingdom to come means asking for the conversion of the Jewish people.

Romans 11:1-10 prophesies the salvation of a Jewish remnant throughout history. Although God has hardened the Jewish people because of their rejection of Jesus as the Messiah, that hardening is not total. That prophecy has come true and continues to come true. Throughout history, a remnant of Jews has converted to Christ, of which Paul is an example. The rest continue to be hardened in unbelief.

Romans 11:11-32 prophesies a turning of the Jewish people to Jesus Christ in saving faith. Someday the Jewish people will be characterized by the opposite of their unbelief and failure – they will place their faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, "And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob" (**Romans 11:26**).

A kingdom-focused prayer life needs to make room for intercession for Israel. We are to plead with God for the turning of the Jewish people to the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. We are to cry out to God for their repentance and their faith in the Son of God, Jesus Christ.

We are to pray for their preservation and their conversion to the seed of Abraham, Jesus Christ.

Praying for the kingdom to come means plead for the purging and empowering of the church.

If lost people are going to come to Christ, then the church must proclaim the gospel in power and purity. This is true for the local church as well as the church worldwide. We cannot expect to reach people with the gospel unless we have the power of God. We cannot call on the world to repent if we are wallowing in sin.

We must have the power of the Spirit of God. We must pursue the holiness of life that pleases God and gets the attention of the lost. In fact, these two things go hand in hand. You can't receive power from God without the pursuit of purity. If we are not willing to confess our sins and repent of them, we cannot and will not receive the power of the living God, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me" (**Psalm 66:18**). The path to power from God is striving for purity before God.

As you pray for your local church, it is crucial to pray for the desire and pursuit of holiness. Ask that a spirit of confess and repentance will be unleashed in your midst. Call on the Holy Spirit to create an intense hatred of evil. At the same time, plead with God for the power of the Holy Spirit. Pray that the Spirit will empower your church and you to live holy lives and share the gospel. The only way that the gospel will spread and the kingdom will advance is if the church seeks purity before God and power from God.

Praying for the kingdom to come means anticipating and praying for the return of Jesus.

At the beginning of the newsletter, we saw that the kingdom has two aspects - the present kingdom of grace and the future kingdom of glory. There is coming a day when Christ will defeat all the enemies of God and usher in eternity. That is our hope and prayer. We must pray as John did in **Revelation**

22:20, "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus." This is praying for the kingdom to come – the kingdom of glory. This prayer needs to be on our lips regularly.

Why should we regularly pray, "Even so, come Lord Jesus?" There are two reasons for this prayer – **anticipation** and **preparation**. First, this prayer creates anticipation in us for Christ's coming. It reminds us that things will not always be the way they are. It causes us to realize that Christ will come and make all things right. It calls us not to cling to this world but to expect His return one day. This prayer creates a thirst, a longing in us for that blessed moment when Christ returns for His people.

At the same time, this prayer enables us to make preparation for His return. It keeps foremost in our hearts and minds that Christ will come back and that preparation has to be made. If you believe Christ is coming back, it will have a practical effect on the way that you live your life, "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure" (**1 John 3:3**). The "hope" of this text is that of Christ's return (**1 John 3:2**). Because we anticipate His return, it shapes and molds our lives now.

We need the **Revelation 22:20** prayer to combat worldliness and the corresponding apathy that accompanies it. Too many of us cling to this world. We live for the present. We focus only on the here and now. Yet, praying **Revelation 22:20** helps us to face and deal with this.

As you pray **Revelation 22:20**, meditate on the changes that will take place:

- ✓ Freed from the unending toil of this life
- ✓ Freed from corruption
- ✓ Freed from all sorrow
- ✓ Beyond the reach of all temptation and sin
- ✓ Freed from all worries
- ✓ Freed from all doubt
- ✓ Freed from the ungodliness and persecution of wicked people
- ✓ Freed from all displeasure and chastisement from our heavenly Father
- ✓ Freed from all disputes and disagreements with others

- ✓ Freed from all frustrations and vanity

At the same time, meditate on the blessings that God will give us in heavenly glory:

- ✓ Immediate fellowship with God
- ✓ Uninterrupted, eternal fellowship with God
- ✓ Seeing the glorified body of Jesus
- ✓ Fellowship with glorified saints
- ✓ Unending joy
- ✓ Honor for an obedient life
- ✓ Blessed rest
- ✓ Incorruptible, immortal bodies
- ✓ Eternity – No end to all of God's blessings

Meditating on these things will stir your heart to pray, Even so, come Lord Jesus!

Kingdom Prayers For Yourself

The following are some prayers you might consider praying for yourself in order to help you put **Matthew 6:10** into practice.

Father, I praise You that by faith in Your Son Jesus I have entered Your kingdom. Empower me to be more submissive to Christ my Lord. Deliver me from selfishly clinging to any area of my life.

Father, I adore You that by faith in Your Son Jesus I have entered Your kingdom. Teach me the priorities of the kingdom. I pray that these priorities will govern my whole life. Deliver me from being influenced by the values and priorities of the world.

Father, create within me the character of the kingdom. I ask that I will be:

- Poor in spirit
- Mourn over my sin and corruption
- Meek
- Hungering and thirsting for righteousness
- Merciful
- Pure in heart
- A peacemaker
- Faithful and patient in opposition and persecution

Work these things into my life. Help me grow in them and to manifest these to the lost around me.

Father, I pray that I will seek first Your kingdom and its righteousness. Use me to bring others to You through my prayers, my witness, and my lifestyle. I plead with You to provide for me as a member of Your kingdom.

Father, I pray that I will love Your kingdom. I plead that I will repent and forsake worldliness and that I would treasure Christ and the kingdom above all things.

Father, prepare me for the kingdom of glory. Creating in me a longing and an anticipation for the return of Your Son. Deliver me from a self-centered, worldly spirit that dulls my desire and looking for Christ's return.

Kingdom Prayers For Your Area

The following are some prayers you might consider praying for your area and church in order to practice **Matthew 6:10**.

Father, I pray that the lost of this area will be delivered from the power of darkness and brought into the kingdom of Your dear Son Jesus Christ.

Father, I plead that You will break the grip of Satan on this area and that many will come to Christ in faith and will enter the kingdom.

Father, I ask that the people of this area will experience the saving, healing power of Jesus Christ and His kingdom. Draw them to Jesus; save them, heal them, and deliver them.

Father, expose the schemes of Satan in this area. Smash the strongholds that he has erected in this area in order to keep people from Christ and His kingdom.

Father, destroy Satan's kingdom and build Your kingdom in this area. Break through the

darkness and shine the light of the gospel into the lives of the people here.

Father, enable the lost in this area to see how empty and useless the ways and the possessions of this world are. Reveal to them how precious and enduring Jesus and His kingdom is. Open their eyes to these things that they might come to Christ in faith and enter the kingdom.

Father, I ask that the people of this area will enter the kingdom by faith in Jesus Christ, praising You and singing with joy over the salvation that You give through Christ.

Father, I plead that the people of this area will enter Your kingdom, knowing You and walking in Your ways.

Father, open the eyes of the believers in my church – reveal afresh to us the terrible condition of the lost. Give us a fresh burden to reach the lost for Christ and to advance the kingdom.

Father, create within my church a longing for the kingdom. Stir us to pray and witness. Empower us to be faithful witnesses for Jesus Christ.

Father, grant my church kingdom power. Forgive us for depending on our own strength, resting in our own resources. Give us Your power. I pray that we will live and minister in Your power.

Father, produce in my church the character of the kingdom. O God, transform us and make us:

- Poor in spirit
- Mourn over my sin and corruption
- Meek
- Hungering and thirsting for righteousness
- Merciful
- Pure in heart
- A peacemaker
- Faithful and patient in opposition and persecution

Work these things into us. Empower us to display this character to the world.

Father, create within us a hatred of sin. Deliver us from being complacent concerning our sin. Unleash a spirit of confession and repentance throughout my church.

Father, I ask that the believers of this church will anticipate and prepare for Christ's return. Enable us to live and minister in the light of Christ's certain coming. Set us free from discouragement and complacency.

Praying Through Ecclesiastes To Everything A Season Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

This text presents the world's most famous poem on the subject of time. It is so famous that even people who don't know the Bible have heard it. These verses show that Solomon had come to a proper appreciation of the sovereignty of God over time and eternity. He teaches us that positive and negative experiences are all under God's sovereign control according to God's wise timing.

Solomon begins with a summary statement, "To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven" (**Ecclesiastes 3:1**). He makes it clear that God is in control of time. The timing of events happens according to His own purpose and wisdom. Our lives are not governed by chance or fate. A wise, good Father governs them. In **3:2-8**, Solomon shows how precise and definite God's timing of events is in our lives.

How do we respond to this text and pray its truth?

- *Worship God for His wise and good timing.* There is an orderliness and precision to when events take place in our lives. Adore God for His wise timing. Praise Him for His good purpose in controlling and using them in your life.
- *Let these verses strengthen your faith.* Others do not govern your life. Fate and chance don't order the events of your life. Your Father controls your life. His timing for the events of your life is perfect and

wise. You don't have to give in to worry, fear, or frustration.

- *Learn to wait on the Lord.* We should trust God to know the right time for everything. Most of us would prefer to manage our own agendas. This often makes us quick to criticize God's timing. Instead of getting impatient and complaining, we must wait for God's timing. We need to pray **Psalm 31:14-15**, "But I trusted in thee, O LORD: I said, Thou art my God. My times are in thine hands."
- *Make good use of whatever time you have.* I see in this poem the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus always lived by God's timing. Jesus always knew what time it was. Jesus did everything exactly at the right time. He was born in the fullness of time. He did not die until His hour had come. He knew the time for every right activity. We must pray to become like Christ – to live our lives according to God's schedule. Plead for the Christlike use of your time.
- *Live your whole life knowing that there is a time for you to die.* The Word of God says that you have a time to die (**3:2**). You will breathe your last breath; you will die. Your life will not keep going on and on. There is no time to lose! Trust in Jesus Christ as your personal Savior and Lord now. Seek

to do His will now. Bless and minister to others now. Pray for others now. Whatever you will do for Him, do it now. There is no time to lose.

*Only one life and soon it will be past,
Only what was done for Christ will last.*

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