

Thy Kingdom Come ... Come To The Kingdom !

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- [0 : 00] Jesus said when you pray, say, Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread and forgive us our sins.
- As we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation. That is from Luke's gospel. Our Father in heaven, we thank you that through Christ we can call you Father.
- You are the God of the universe. The creator of heaven and earth. The one who gives us life. We thank you that you have caused us to be born again through our faith in Christ.
- That we might become children of God and call you Father. Father. Your name is holy and we pray that your name will be recognized as such in this world.
- Lord, we love your name. You are the great I am. We love the name of Jesus.
- [1 : 15] He is our salvation. We pray that his name would be known in the world. And we long for your kingdom to come.
- We long for your will to be done on earth. As we know it is in heaven. When we think of all the things that plague us here.
- Whether it's darkness or death. Sin or sorrow or sickness. All the evil in the world. And even in our own hearts. We pray that your kingdom would come and your will would be done.
- In our lives. In our towns. Our families. Our communities. That we would have a foretaste. And others would have a foretaste of your kingdom. Kingdom of life. And of love. Where your name is known and glorified always.
- [2 : 23] And so we pray for our brothers and sisters. Who are struggling. Who are unwell. Who are discouraged. That those of them who love you. Would be encouraged by your word and your promise.
- And by your coming kingdom. That as their eyes are fixed on you. The things of this world. Would grow strangely dim. You would give endurance.
- Perseverance. And peace. Father help us. To love one another well. Help us to forgive. One another. And forgive others. Just as you have forgiven us.
- An insurmountable debt. And we pray that you would not lead us into temptation.
- [3 : 24] You never tempt us. God. Never. God tempts no man. Nor can God be tempted. We pray that we would not lead ourselves into temptation.
- That we would look to you. And we would learn self-control. That you would help us to. To do what is right. And good. And holy. Pleasing in your sight.
- And that we would not be a stumbling block to others. And all these things God. Would you be glorified. Would you be praised.
- Acknowledged. And we give you thanks. In the name of Jesus our Lord. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Well I'm going to be reading from Luke's Gospel.

This morning. Chapter 18. If you have a Bible. Please open it there. I'm going to be reading from verse 9. Amen.

[4 : 35] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. from Luke chapter 18 from verse 9 Jesus is teaching and Luke 18 9 says this he also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and treated others with contempt he said two men went up into the temple to pray one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector the Pharisee standing by himself prayed thus God I thank you that I am not like other men extortioners unjust adulterers or even like this tax collector

I fast twice a week I give tithes of all that I get but the tax collector standing far off would not even lift up his eyes to heaven but beat his breast saying God be merciful to me a sinner Jesus said I tell you this man went down to his house justified rather than the other for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled but the one who humbles himself will be exalted now they were bringing even infants to Jesus that he might touch them and bless them and when the disciples saw it they rebuked them they tried to stop the children but Jesus called to them called them to him saying let the children come to me and do not hinder them for to such belongs the kingdom of God truly I say to you whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it and a ruler a rich young ruler came to him and asked him good teacher what must I do to inherit eternal life

Jesus said to him why do you call me good no one is good except God alone you know the commandments do not commit adultery do not murder do not steal do not bear false witness honour your father and mother and the man said all these I have kept from my youth and Jesus heard this he said to him one thing you still lack sell all that you have and distribute it to the poor you will have treasure in heaven and come follow me but when he heard these things he became very sad because he was extremely rich Jesus seeing that he had become sad said how difficult is it for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God it's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God and those who heard it said well then who can be saved but he said what is impossible with man is possible with God and Peter said well see we have left our homes and followed you

Jesus said to them truly I say to you there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God who will not receive many times more in this time and in the age to come eternal life Amen Pray that God would bless the reading of his word So my son Levi who you all seen and know he has this game that he plays called Minecraft hands up if you've heard of Minecraft if you've ever heard of it anyway if you've not heard of it it's a game in which you create your own world we did a bit of that earlier and in this world you can choose all the settings you can choose whether you need to gather materials to build things or whether you have all the resources to hand you can choose you can build about just anything you want cities mountains rivers hills houses and when you're creating the world you decide all the settings like if you want a day and night cycle you can choose that or you can choose it just to be day you can choose what the weather will be like that's a good thing you can choose if there are animals and people in your world you can choose if your world is a peaceful world or if it's a world where people can loot and attack you and you need to fight and get swords and stuff you can choose that you can choose whether you can get hungry or not whether you need to eat or you don't need to eat you can choose whether you can get hurt and die or whether you can just never get hurt and never die and it sounds like a lot of worlds before you've even started building and stuff like that you set all these things when you're creating the world sounds like a lot of decisions but you can just create the world play along and you can change the settings as you go you can change it if you don't need to decide everything at once you can change the settings at any point after you've created the world now like earlier

I wonder and I'm sure we think about this in different ways maybe not exactly this way but if you were to create a world what would it be like?

[10 : 35] like in this game if you were to create a world what would the settings be that you would choose? how about this if Bell's Hill was a world in this game in Minecraft we know what it's like currently we know what the settings are currently but what settings would you choose?

what is the current state of Bell's Hill or wherever you're from? what does the current state of the place tell you about the settings of that world? and if you had the choice would you change any of the current settings?

is there anything about Bell's Hill or anywhere you live that you would change? I'm sure there are plenty of things I would change but I suppose maybe it depends on your experience doesn't it?

not just in Bell's Hill but anywhere on earth depending on who you are where you live what you have what experience you have if you were given the choice to change the settings of your world depending on who you are you may not want to change anything if you're a king if you have lots of wealth if you have power and everything you want maybe you don't want to change anything maybe you would prefer it if nobody changed anything but maybe your experience is such that you would want to change just about everything in your world this was true in Jesus' day by the way what kind of world was Israel in the first century?

what were the settings of first century Israel so to speak? well it was it was a world in which it was occupied by another nation Rome it was a world in which there were the rich and the poor it was a world in which people could get hurt people did get hurt there wasn't peace I'm sure there was plenty of food that people didn't like certainly the Roman occupation brought in foods that the Jews didn't like so what were the settings?

[12 : 47] and so here's the thing when Jesus went about proclaiming that the kingdom of God was at hand to some of the Jews this was really good news like I mean really good news because they would want to change so many things about the current state of Israel in the first century so Jesus comes along preaching the kingdom of God is at hand and they're like this is good news there's so many things we want to change about this current situation living under Roman occupation and religious oppression but for other people those who had money and status and power they were less affected and so some of the religious leaders and people in power just were not happy that Jesus was preaching the kingdom of God was at hand because they didn't want anything to change why would we want anything to change that would mean the loss of our wealth and our power and our position now if the kingdom of God was a world in Minecraft what would the sentence be see Jesus came along and began to change the sentence and to some it was good news and others it wasn't he began to change the sentence you see in our passage in Luke 18 there's a Pharisee and a tax collector and in the world that they were living in in the game that they were playing the Pharisee was on top and the tax collector was nothing but the world that Jesus came to proclaim the kingdom of God was a world with very different sentence it was a world in which this Pharisee was somehow not justified yet the tax collector being nothing somehow was justified a world in which a rich young ruler with all his money religiosity his righteousness and his power all his good deeds somehow could not enter this world this kingdom

Jesus was proclaiming a kingdom that this person could not enter there was something stopping him and it really confused the disciples they were like wait a minute I mean if this guy can't get in who can get in because he ticks about every box yet it was this same world that he came proclaiming was a world that little children could freely enter yet people were trying to stop them now we are living in a world that was created by God where all the settings were good yet we changed those settings and we are living with the cumulative consequences of those changes but the good news is God would not let his good creation go to ruin he sent his son into the world to redeem and restore it and when he came one of the things that he spoke about most was the kingdom of God because when God is king and the world is his kingdom all things would be well this is what the world was meant to be and this is what he is going to establish in order to restore it and so if you want to know and it's all over the Bible if you want to know what is the kingdom of God like what settings would such a world have what would you change about our current world and what do you know about the kingdom of God so let me just throw a few things out there right and we've mentioned most of them but I want you to imagine this for a moment and think if this is a world you would want to be part of can you imagine a world without pain

I had a great day yesterday with the boys we were down the park they were at the granny's we went a great big walk everything was fantastic they were having the time of their life fun until Levi fell and cut himself and everything was ruined like everything it was like this spoiled everything all the good things can you imagine a world without pain can you imagine a world without sorrow I mean who's been to a funeral this year or recently can you imagine a world without sickness and without death can you imagine a world without toil or turmoil can you imagine a world without worry or stress that would be great without any worry or stress a world without any violence or evil but only peace and joy can you imagine even just a day just a day without evil or darkness just a day without injustice or crime or a world where people are not dying of hunger and thirst how ridiculous is this people are not dying of hunger or thirst or even dying of disease because the only food and water they have are contaminated can you imagine a world without any trace of sin anywhere not even in our own hearts can you imagine that even just one day one day or one week where you have in your mind no anxious or sinful thought whatsoever

I mean that's something I long for I'd love to go through a day or a week without a single anxious or sinful thought or a day where your body does have no aches or pains whatsoever wouldn't that be good or where there is no threat of sickness or death anywhere you go because let me tell you you can't go to any corner of this earth and escape these things if ever there was a place like this I don't know about you but I would want to be there wouldn't you seek it would you not pray for it Jesus says seek first the kingdom of God now he's not just saying oh you need to be all about what I like and not what you like and get your priorities straight he's telling you something significant about the kingdom of God I mean why would you not want to seek that first pray when the disciples ask what teach us how to pray what should we pray for you know one of the first things he says is pray thy kingdom come because that is what's going to solve we are not going to solve all the problems of the world on our own as David said last week the way

Jesus teaches his disciples to pray isn't for a formula to recite but to teach us what really matters and why and maybe you already know we're not going to fix this world doesn't matter what the latest thing is you know buy an electric car reduce your carbon footprint climate change wokeness whatever it is the next thing we're not going to fix the world humans kingdoms governments countries are never going to fix the world we just can't do it we've been trying for thousands of years we're not going to restore this earth to Eden by anything we can do but we know that Jesus is going to return and he's going to establish his kingdom on earth changing all the settings to his kingdom and his rule and imagining what his kingdom will be like isn't merely wishful thinking and this is how we know it's not wishful thinking because when

[20 : 35] Jesus was on earth the things that he did were to give you a foretaste of his kingdom and so when Jesus is going about doing all these miracles it's not just to bring some sort of show to the world it's not just to try and you know wouldn't it be good if everyone was healed in this world no we still have the problem of sin you know this world is dying in a million different ways and when Jesus did the miracles he did it wasn't to say guys this is what you need to do you just need to heal as many people as you can that wasn't what it was all about it was to show people what it will be like in his kingdom because in his kingdom there is no sickness in his kingdom there is no death so he's pulling people out of graves in his kingdom he can walk on water because he is the king he rules everything even the fish even the weather in his kingdom there are no wars there is peace and so he's bringing peace between enemies he's shown us by the things that he did what his kingdom is going to be like giving us a foretaste it's amazing and so when we talk to

God when we pray we should pray for his kingdom to come it's the only thing that's going to change anything in the world when we talk to God we should pray for his kingdom to come and when we talk to people we should bid them to come to his kingdom talking to God thy kingdom come talking to people come to the kingdom I mean where else are you going to go don't you want to come to a kingdom like this I mean who doesn't even the criminals want justice when it's something done against them they take it into their own hands peace righteousness no evil no enemies no death ask anyone in the world the things that belong to the kingdom we want trouble is a lot of people want it without God without the king but we want the things of the kingdom and this is what

Jesus is teaching us in Luke 18 how do you come to the kingdom how can people enter this kingdom how can any person enter a kingdom like that because in what Jesus said there's a Pharisee who is unjustified and a tax collector who's justified there's a rich young ruler who just somehow cannot enter the kingdom and then there's these little kids who he's saying come on come on people are trying to stop them so do you need to be a Pharisee to enter the kingdom how could a tax collector enter the kingdom in fact look at what the Pharisee says okay the Pharisee says God I thank you that I am not like other men extortioners unjust adulterers even like this traffic warden tax collector or whoever you know because these people were a menace to society

I mean that's there's the statement is half true you know he's thanking God that he's not like people who are just against God's law but he's like you know I fast twice a week by the way I give tithes of all that I get now the Bible does say that the liar the murderer the sexually immoral will have no place in his kingdom they will not be permitted to enter what does that mean what does that mean does that mean it's impossible for other men to enter like extortioners unjust people adulterers tax collectors you and me see the Bible also says that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God no one does what is right no one seeks God no one comes to the gates of the kingdom with the right credentials to enter no one not even the Pharisee his fasting his tithes will not get him there so what does it mean you know when we pray for

God's kingdom to come and then when we bid others to come to the kingdom how did we come what are we showing people those who know Jesus what are we showing people by our words and actions and by our attitudes about how to come to the kingdom do we give people the impression that you need to be a Pharisee is that the impression we give to the world you're only going to get there if you're a Pharisee if you're like us a Bible expert or a tither you're only going to get in the kingdom if you're a tither or if you're a prayer warrior or if you fast twice a week or even more do we give the impression that unless you do x y and z you cannot enter the kingdom unless you pray and fast twice a week unless you do your daily devotions unless you tithe and read the Bible you're not welcome in the kingdom now I'm not saying that any of these things are bad I'm not saying that but sometimes in churches sometimes we can treat even each other forgetting about the tax collector out there sometimes we can treat one another as though we're not welcome if we fail to do these things never mind the person out there it's no wonder the disciples forbid the children to come

[26 : 28] I mean what have they got to offer what have the children done to deserve any of this okay let's forget the let's forget the Pharisee and the tax collector okay because Jesus it was a parable wasn't a real person it was a parable he was making a real point but let's move on to the rich young ruler says that Jesus loved him he wasn't a bad guy he was successful he was religious he was law abiding he was an upstanding citizen in fact he ticked all the boxes that's what made the disciples so confused he ticked all the boxes he was a Jew ethnicity check he's a Jew he kept the law he said that I've kept the law righteousness check he went to synagogue he was a ruler religious service check and he was wealthy which to them meant

God's favour the favour of God God's blessing on his life check what does he not have I mean he's checking all the boxes now most of you maybe have not been aware of this right but there is a test called life in the UK test if you want citizenship in this country you need to take this test and there's some requirements you need to be the right age you need to meet certain language requirements and you need to do this test the life in the UK test and you need to pass it to be a citizen of the United Kingdom now I took this test I took this test recently and I failed I failed the test I got 66% which was below bar and it's basically like a pub quiz about things in the United Kingdom you know who starred in East Enders or who was the Prime

Minister X Y and Z you know most information I'm just not interested in and if it was a test about Scotland maybe I would pass that one because I know more about it and I'm interested more but I'm just not that interested in the United Kingdom to be honest I'm here but I'm just not that interested in the affairs of this kingdom and so I failed but don't tell the government what would it be like you know life in the kingdom of God if there was a test how could you pass that test because this rich young ruler I mean the disciples are like they see the children they're like no no no you can't come and they see this is not in the text but it's implied the rich young ruler got through the disciples allowed him to come through I mean they were the gatekeepers to Jesus if you want to see Jesus you need to get through us and the children now you're not getting by and yet this rich young ruler on you go on you go oh you check about every box there is you're passing the test if anyone's going to be in the kingdom of

God Jesus is going to want this guy this guy is going to be a major contributor he's a perfect picture of a person you want in the kingdom if ever there was someone in the kingdom of God what would he look like this guy the rich young ruler he lacked nothing except Jesus said something didn't he he said one thing you lack I mean the guy thought he lacked nothing it's a lie of the material world isn't it to think that if you have money you lack nothing isn't that a lie to think that if you've got money you lack nothing this man had something that he lacked and it was hindering him coming to the kingdom Jesus makes it clear that none of these things guarantee him entry all these checkboxes everything that this young man had did not guarantee his entry even his ethnicity the fact that he was a Jew doesn't guarantee you the fact that he was religious and kept the law doesn't guarantee all his religious service all his righteousness all his wealth doesn't guarantee you a place you can't buy a ticket into the kingdom he doesn't have a birthright to eternal life religious status won't give him a pass his wealth you can't buy your way into the kingdom and his law keeping doesn't matter if you're a

Pharisee or an adulterer no amount of goods works is going to give any of us enough righteousness that is required and so the disciples are like well who can be saved how can a person enter the kingdom and one of the helpful things in Matthew Mark and Luke is that in all three of these they record this account of the rich young man and immediately before this young man comes they all record the children trying to come and Jesus says this if the rich young ruler wanted to know what was the thing that he needed Jesus said it in the line before unless you receive the kingdom of God like a child you cannot enter cannot enter so what do these children have that this man does not imagine Jesus would say the same to all of us today all of us who call ourselves Christians who rely on many other things if we do okay and sometimes we do but sometimes we don't we know we remember why we're

[32 : 11] Christians but it's not just in how we can articulate the gospel I mean we can all quote Luther on justification by faith alone we can all say that with our mouths but how do we treat one another how do we act how does that signal to other people how you can be welcomed in the kingdom how do we treat other people and how do we treat one another how do we live and how do we approach the things that we do together do we present ourselves in a way as you need to do this and you need to do that and if you don't do this and that you're not welcome or do we present ourselves with that humility and faith that started our Christian journey in the first place you see if you go back to the start of Luke chapter 18 there was another story that I missed out where Jesus talks of this woman he tells this parable of a woman going to the judge where is it so the persistent widow you know of the widow and she keeps going asking for justice give me justice against my adversary now maybe she's saying that because she's a widow because somebody murdered her husband

I don't know but she keeps going now Jesus makes it clear that this judge doesn't care this judge doesn't care he's not a righteous judge he just doesn't care about the good or the bad or anything he just doesn't care but by her persistence she just beats him down by her continual coming he's like I'll give her justice just to shut her up I'll give her justice otherwise she'll just keep coming and Jesus says well hear what the unrighteous judge says will not God give justice to his elect who cry to him day and night will he delay long over them no and then he says this he says this at the end when the son of man comes will he find faith on the earth it's a big thing will he find faith anywhere where did he find faith in these stories between the

Pharisee and the tax collector where did he find faith the tax collector rich young ruler that checks all the boxes children with nothing to offer where did he find faith the children and not this rich young ruler and so in hope we ought to pray thy kingdom come in our hope of what the world ought to be like we pray thy kingdom come and while we wait for his kingdom to come fully we ought to invite others to come to his kingdom we ought to show them the way that by coming to Jesus in humility and faith you can enter the kingdom by coming like a child in humility and faith with nothing to offer but trust and dependence because he is the king come to the king now think about this right the rich young ruler how did he compare to the children think about how he compared if you were to stack them up against one another yet he lacked one thing

Jesus said there was one thing he lacked and the thing that he lacked was the only thing that could help him enter the kingdom and inherit the eternal life that he wanted what are the chances he's got everything he comes to Jesus asking what do I need to do for eternal life I've done everything I've got everything he's like well the one thing that you need that you don't have is the very thing that can help you enter and you don't have it what are the chances the things that he did have were hindering him because the thing that he lacked was the humility and faith like that of a child with nothing to offer nothing to depend on of yourself except throwing yourself on the mercy of the king you see between the children and the rich young ruler who did the disciples let through is that who we are letting through and letting in people in our world is that who we invite no wonder they let the rich young ruler in and not the children because look at him look at how he compares this guy's a picture of what people in the kingdom of God should look like yet when

Jesus asks him to come when Jesus asks him to come because that's how it ends Jesus says do this get rid of the hindrance and come follow me come Jesus asked him to come he didn't Jesus Jesus isn't looking for rich young rulers in his kingdom that's not what he's after think about these children what do they have they've got nothing they've got no money no status no claims of being righteousness they have nothing to give no credentials but Jesus isn't looking for credentials he's looking for humility and faith so he said isn't it when the son of man comes will he find faith on earth the children have that the rich young ruler does not you see the difference between the two is that these children come and yet when Jesus tells the rich young ruler to come he cannot he doesn't come the children want to come and people are stopping him and

[38 : 02] Jesus says come let them come they want to come and yet he needs to say to the rich young ruler come and he's like I'm not coming that's the difference the children want to come and people try to stop them yet when they let this young man through and Jesus tells him to come he won't he won't come you see you need to come like a child with nothing of yourself to offer but faith and humility trust and dependence and we want the people of his kingdom ought to be those who do right who do justice and mercy you know but we ought to always be coming humbly and in faith depending think about this man's question what must I do to inherit eternal life let me ask you a question what can a person do to inherit anything if you're looking for your inheritance what do you do to inherit it I mean is it a task that you need to do do you need to reach the answers in this question how can anyone inherit anything by their own efforts you need to be a part of the family you need to be in the will you need to be a child to inherit do you not

God has a son and Sam 2 it says that his son will inherit the nations the nations are his heritage the ends of the earth his possession and so to his son you must receive the kingdom like a child and if you receive Jesus God's son who is the king of the kingdom then as John 1 12 says if you believe in his name you will become a child of God and Romans 8 says if we are children of God then we are heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ we can only enter the kingdom of God like a child in his inheritance as the children of God having become children by faith you see John 1 12 says it's not by your own will it's not by human flesh that you are born as a child of

God it's not by anything we do it's by the will of God that we become children of God and so to inherit one must be a child by the will of God and to inherit one must be in the will of God it's not by anything that we do not by anything we do it's by what he has done so Hebrews in the book of Hebrews chapter 9 it says this Jesus is the mediator of a new covenant so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed for where a will is involved where there's a will the death of the one who made the will must be established otherwise the will doesn't take place the will takes effect at death since it is not in force as long as the one who made it is alive yet

Jesus is the one who made it and died so that the will comes into effect our inheritance will be in the coming kingdom Peter says this an inheritance that is imperishable undefiled unfading kept in heaven for you who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed when his kingdom comes Paul says to those who do come to Jesus in humility and faith the father has qualified you to share an inheritance of the saints in light he has delivered you from the domain of darkness and transferred you into the kingdom of his beloved son in whom we have redemption and forgiveness of our sins by coming in faith and humility to Christ so pray for his kingdom to come if you love God if you long for his kingdom pray for his kingdom to come and as we wait for his kingdom to come would teach us how to show them the way by humility and faith and so let me end with a picture of what it's going to be like okay this rich young ruler this rich young ruler is going to be standing at the gate the gate that he could not enter he's going to be standing there with all his righteous deeds with his great possessions with his good deeds his ethnicity his religiosity all his service all his goodness all his wealth he's going to be standing at the gate and he's going to see these little children running in the gate and he's going to say wait a minute children what have you got why are you allowed in why are you allowed in and not me what have you done have you kept all the law since birth since youth have you gathered the blessings of

God through your success and wealth have you done religious service to the point of becoming a ruler have you done any of that why is it you're allowed in have you done the hard work he's going to say to them why are you allowed in and not me and they're going to say to him because he said we could come Jesus said let the children come he said we could come and we came and by the way he said that you could come too but you didn't come that's it doesn't matter about all the stuff you have he said we could come do you come come come come to Jesus come into the kingdom any of you are welcome all you need to do is come when this man asked Jesus the question I don't think that

[44 : 27] Jesus really gave him an answer as much as he gave him an invite it was just an invite come follow me come and follow me and see where it leads and John 1 5 says this this is the testimony that God gave us eternal life and this life is in his son whoever has the son has life whoever does not have the son of God does not have life let me pray God that any of us could come to you that any of us could be forgiven of our sins that any of us could enter into your kingdom that any of us could be welcomed by you is not by anything that we have done but by everything that Jesus your son has done and we thank you for that we thank you for Jesus we pray that we would always remember that and we pray that we would always come on that basis that by his work he said we could come we come in faith and dependence on all of what he did and who he is and we know that everyone else is in the same position

God we thank you for Jesus we thank you for this welcome and invite into your kingdom we pray your kingdom come and we want to see as many people come to that kingdom as possible we love you we praise you in Jesus name amen amen