

# Prayer in the Shorter Catechism (7)

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 02 September 2020

Preacher: Colin Dow

[ 0 : 00 ] Perhaps you could turn over the page with me to Matthew chapter 6 and to the words we find in verse 10.

Matthew 6 verse 10. This then is how you should pray, our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Your kingdom come.

Now kingdom is not a word we use much nowadays. But kingdom was an incredibly important word to early Christians, especially the phrase the kingdom of God.

Many Bible experts today believe that the major theme of the whole Bible is the kingdom of God. And so even if kingdom isn't a word that we're particularly familiar with in general language, it is a word that we need to get familiar with, especially if we're to read the Gospels right.

What is the kingdom of God? In just a few words, the kingdom of God is the rule of God on earth.

[ 1 : 15 ] It is the spiritual authority of God on earth. There are those among whom God is proclaimed king. His authority is respected and his name is worshipped.

Why is it important that we as 21st century metro Christians want to rediscover words like kingdom? It is because brothers and sisters in Christ, we are fellow citizens of the kingdom of God by faith in Christ.

And as citizens of the kingdom of God, we have rich responsibilities and we have bona fide responsibilities. Don't you want to enjoy all the rich benefits of your citizenship?

Don't you need to discover all the bona fide responsibilities of your citizenship? Perhaps even more directly, we should be interested in the kingdom of God because Jesus was.

[ 2 : 25 ] After all, he chose to devote a whole line of the prayer he taught us to the subject of God. Your kingdom come. Now when our fathers in Westminster asked the question, what do we pray for in the second petition?

They answered, in the second petition, your kingdom come, we pray that Satan's kingdom may be destroyed, that the kingdom of grace may be advanced, ourselves and others brought in and kept in it, and that the kingdom of glory may be hastened.

So when we pray, your kingdom come as we do every Lord's Day morning together here in Glasgow City, we're praying for four things. We're pleading for God to do four things.

To tear down. To move forward. To bring in. And to come soon. That's why we as 21st century Metro Christians want to rediscover the kingdom of God.

Because at its heart, the kingdom is the glory and majesty of the gospel expressed in day-to-day living. So the first thing we pray for when we pray, your kingdom come, is that God would tear down.

[ 3 : 55 ] Tear down. When we pray, to our Father in heaven, your kingdom come, by inevitable consequence, we are praying for Satan's kingdom to go.

Because the two cannot coexist. Light and darkness do not belong together. The light dispels the darkness. When the sun rises, the dark land is bathed with light.

If we are praying for the sun to rise, then by necessary consequence, we are praying for the darkness to fall. And so we pray, Lord, may the light shine.

And may the darkness disappear. By praying for God's kingdom to come. By inevitable consequence, we are praying for Satan's kingdom to go.

Now this is how we should understand many of the so-called imprecatory Psalms and the nasty sayings of the Bible. Those parts of Scripture, which shall we say, aren't particularly nice.

[ 5 : 06 ] Sounds like Psalm 69, 109, 137. The nasty sayings of Jesus prophesying the destruction of the temple in Matthew 25.

For the kingdom of God to come, the kingdom of Satan must go. So we pray for the destruction of Satan's power.

In false religion. For the destruction of corporate greed. For the destruction of evangelical atheism and its Orwellian secularist cousin.

By and large, our prayers have a tendency to be nice. To be more tolerant of sin and justice and ungodliness than they really should be.

Surely, if we want to pray for the destruction of the kingdom of Satan, we need to be praying more and more earnestly and more directly against all that dehumanizes us.

[ 6 : 11 ] Defaces God's image in a man. Oppresses the weakest and most vulnerable among us. We pray for an end to societal injustice.

The misery to the fall. Physical and mental illness. Yes, we may even pray for God to destroy the enemies of his church. Now, some may choose to take up the fight against that societal injustice by campaigning on behalf of the weakest among us.

Others of us may involve ourselves in the political process in order that God may be honored in economy and society. Still others may choose to pursue careers in the caring professions to alleviate human suffering.

Still others in the armed services or other services preserving law and order. And yet, before it all, we pray for God through his gospel to subdue the dark forces of chaos and anarchy in our world, in our society, and in our hearts.

We pray, Lord, destroy the ignorance and the malice, the greed and the injustice, the hatred and the oppression.

[ 7 : 34 ] Satan's kingdom go. Your kingdom come. Tear down. That's the first thing we pray. The second thing we pray for when we take these words on our lips, your kingdom come.

Move forward. Move forward. The Westminster Fathers in their short of catechism suggested that the second thing for which we're asking when we pray, your kingdom come, is that the kingdom of grace may be advanced.

The kingdom of grace may be advanced. Now, I want you to notice very carefully what it is exactly the fathers are praying for. the advance of the kingdom of grace.

Isn't this, in and of itself, a fascinating description of the kingdom of God? Remember, it's the rule of God on earth. It's the spiritual authority of God in the world.

Those among whom God is proclaimed king, his authority respected, and his name worshipped. It is not a repressive Taliban-type regime where the thought police are out in force with their batons.

[ 8 : 49 ] It is the kingdom of grace where the gospel of liberating mercy reigns free in our hearts. So when we pray, your kingdom come, we are praying for the advance of the kingdom of God.

And how shall that kingdom be advanced? How shall it move forward? The kingdom of grace shall advance through the proclamation of the grace of the kingdom.

It shall not advance by military crusades, nor even by political pressure, but as the gospel is preached and the good news of Jesus Christ is proclaimed, as men and women, as peoples and tribes put their faith in Jesus Christ and come to experience for themselves his gracious love.

Of course, the secondary application of this prayer is that we want to campaign as a church for favorable social, economic, and political conditions for the most vulnerable in our society.

We believe that every voice is important, even those who speak most quietly. We believe in life before death and not death before life. We want to campaign and work for societal transformation in the name of Jesus.

[ 10 : 18 ] We cannot pray your kingdom come and be satisfied with the discrepancies between life expectancy in Carlton in the east end of Glasgow here and Lensie in eastern Bartonshire some 27 years.

We cannot pray your kingdom come while ignoring and belittling the alien among us. Such a prayer as this warrants Christians and churches to be involved in every area of societal transformation in the name of Jesus.

But that is, I maintain, a secondary application of this prayer. The primary application concerns the advance of the kingdom of grace, recognizing that while we may improve the living conditions of our fellow citizens, their greatest need as ours is to know and experience the grace of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

We may spend our lives lifting sinners from the gutter only for them to spend eternity in Gehenna. It's a hard teaching, I know, but the primary application of this prayer concerns the advance of the kingdom of grace, a spiritual kingdom of which Jesus said, it is not of this world.

God. It's a gospel kingdom. Third, the third thing we pray for, bring in, bring in. The fathers in the catechism answer continue that ourselves and others are brought into it and kept in it.

[ 12 : 04 ] That ourselves and others are brought into it and kept in it. We're going back to the previous point here. It's possible for us to engage in all kinds of societal transformation and yet for those we have raised from the gutter not to enter the kingdom of grace for themselves.

We've done what is right. We have campaigned for the rights of the vulnerable, for social justice, for legal freedoms, but the vulnerable we have fought for and the disadvantaged we have campaigned on behalf of may not themselves enter the kingdom of God by faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

And so the ultimate and primary focus of this prayer is that we ourselves and other people may be brought into the kingdom of grace by faith in Jesus Christ.

We are praying for our own spiritual life and the spiritual life of others. We're praying for conversion, for discipleship, for genuine faith and trust in the gospel of grace.

Let's put this in solid terms. Praying for ourselves, for our family, and for our friends, for our neighbors, for our workmates, for all those we know and hear of to come to know Jesus Christ for themselves.

[ 13 : 41 ] I'm sure we all regularly pray for those we love to come to know Jesus for themselves. Well, that prayer is a logical outworking of this second petition of the Lord's Prayer, your kingdom come.

Because we're praying for ourselves and for others to be brought into this kingdom of grace. You see, this is a prayer for evangelism, a prayer for mission, for the expansion of the church and the glory of the gospel.

It is a huge subject. But it's also a prayer that we may be kept in the kingdom, not just for conversion, but for what the late great J.I. Packer called a life of convertedness, a life of convertedness.

In other words, not only would we and our whole family and friends decide to follow Jesus for ourselves, but that our decision would result in intentional discipleship and growth in faith.

Remember how we said earlier that at its heart the kingdom of God is the glory and the majesty of the gospel in real life?

[ 14 : 56 ] we're praying here for our maturity of faith and of holiness so that the life of Christ can be seen both in our words and in our deeds, both in our living and in our dying.

so on a very practical level since this is the prayer meeting, this means we will not only pray for those who are not yet Christians, we shall pray for those who are, not just for conversions, but for discipleship.

Can I challenge all of us here this evening, are we praying for one another? not so much am I praying for Auntie Bessie's sore knee, but am I praying for her discipleship and growth in grace? Are we praying not just for young Jack's conversion, but are we praying that when he has professed faith, he will grow in faith and holiness?

Bring in. And then lastly, when we pray your kingdom come, we are praying come soon, come soon.

[ 16 : 21 ] The Christian lives now in the kingdom of grace, but according to our fathers, they await the kingdom of glory. Listen to what they call upon us to pray. That the kingdom of grace may be advanced and that the kingdom of glory may be hastened.

If that phrase, the kingdom of grace is marvelous, then so too is that phrase, the kingdom of glory. In fact, the kingdom of God in its totality may be comprehended by these two phrases.

It's all grace leading to all glory. Grace now, glory hereafter. Grace here, glory there. Grace on earth, glory in heaven.

Grace in time, glory in eternity. glory in eternity. It isn't something we focus on nearly as much as we should, but the world in which we now live, this world of pain and injustice, sin and misery, it will pass away.

Jesus shall come in the glory of his father, surrounded by 10,000 mighty angels and all sorrow and sighing will flee away.

[ 17 : 44 ] Reminds us, does it not, of that rather sentimental Gaither hymn from the States. what a day it shall be when my Jesus I shall see, when I look upon his face, the one who saved me by his grace, when he takes me by the hand and leads me to the promised land, what a day, glorious day that shall be.

Paul's prayer in 1 Corinthians 16, 22 is framed in one Aramaic word, Maranatha, come, our Lord. So when we pray for God's kingdom to come, we are praying for the hastening of the kingdom of glory, for Jesus to come again, for then and only then shall all that is of the kingdom of Satan hear, and all that is of the kingdom of Satan within us come, be finally destroyed.

Are you looking for that day? Are you praying for that day? Are you living for that day? Let me close with a quote from the Puritan commentator Matthew Henry.

He writes, while we are busy in the duties of our different stations of life, whatever labors may try us, whatever difficulties may surround us, whatever sorrows may press us down, let us with pleasure hear our Lord proclaiming, behold, I come quickly.

[ 19 : 34 ] I come to put an end to the labor and suffering of my servants. I come and the reward of grace is with me to recompense with royal bounty every work of faith and labor of love.

I come to receive my faithful persevering people to myself to dwell forever in that blissful land. our Father who is in heaven, your kingdom come. obeying our glory best of financial in almost may be your preferences on the side of us as there to beweile who is in our transformed the way you havemeddul whoever over priori into whateveraste