

# "Your Kingdom Come"

*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: 19 January 2025

Preacher: Matt Coburn

[ 0 : 01 ] Well, good morning. I hope you're all looking forward to a day of snow tomorrow. I want to begin this morning by asking you a question. What kingdom do you want to be a part of?

Now, here's the thing. In America, and not all of us in this room are from America or are American citizens, so I want to acknowledge you and say I know you're here and we're glad you've joined us, but in America we have a touchy relationship with kingdoms, don't we? Our country was founded on the process of gaining independence from a kingdom, and the American spirit is celebrated as individual self-reliance and independence. We pride ourselves as rejecting the king.

So we have an unusual and maybe uncomfortable relationship with kingdoms. But if we stop and think about it for a minute, we need to recognize that the American experiment is relatively unusual in human history. Kingdoms have actually dominated most of human history and most of the world. In China, you could go back to the Han Dynasty or move ahead to the 15th century and the Qing Dynasty. In Central Asia, think of the Mongol Empire or the Russian Empire or the Soviet Union. In South America, go back to the Inca and the Aztec kingdoms. In Africa, the Mali or Songhai or others. I did try to do some research. There are so many that I may be missing the most important ones.

I'm not an expert in all this. In the Middle East, the Persian Empire. Further back, the Ottoman Empire that lasted for almost a thousand years. In Europe, the Roman Empire began and ruled over the beginning of this era.

And later on, the Spanish and British empires spread throughout the whole world. So, we need to recognize that empires, kingdoms, we use different words, dynasty, kingdom, empire, have almost been woven into the fabric of American political life. And listen, we may debate the relative merits of this political system as opposed to, say, dictatorship, democracy, oligarchy, or something else.

[ 2 : 30 ] But kingdoms have been an integral part of human life. Why is that? I would argue it's because God designed human beings to live in a kingdom.

We should not be surprised by this. When we go back to the creation account in Genesis 1, we see that God created Adam and Eve to live under God's rule, having dominion over the whole earth. In fact, the world, the earth was made. We were to be kings under God's kingship of us. And it was a good plan that God had.

Now, we know that not all kingdoms are good today. In fact, we would say that no kingdom has been purely good since the fall because Adam and Eve rebelled against their king. They wanted to go and set up their own kingdom on their own, with their own human sovereignty and sought to rule apart from him.

And so, we see that the best of human kingdoms politically are flawed. The worst of them are destructive, evil, and oppressive. And friends, we need to stop and realize that kingdoms are not merely political structures. But we live in worlds where we have all sorts of little K kingdoms in our world. In your workplace, there is a king. We call him a boss. But he's the guy in charge.

[ 4 : 09 ] In your home, there is a king or queen. But somebody is in charge of the household. And there's authority structure. And there's oversight and structure provided by this.

In your friend group, in your social group, on your sports teams, there are structures of little K kingdoms. And our hearts long to know where do we relate in them. Who do we need to sit under? And who do we need to be ruling over? This is a fundamental part of human society.

And friends, since the fall, we've mucked it up pretty badly, haven't we? But God tells us that there is a kingdom that is worth longing for. And there is a kingdom worth pursuing. And there is a kingdom worth praying for. God wants to restore the world to a kingdom that is good and right with him as the king over all.

And this leads us to our next part of the Lord's Prayer. If you've been here, you know we've been preaching through the Lord's Prayer as a large part of a larger series on the Sermon on the Mount. And we're going to be looking at the Lord's Prayer this morning. If you want to turn there in your Pew Bible, it's page 761. We're going to be looking at Matthew 6. And we're going to be looking at the prayer in verse 10 in particular. But let me read the whole prayer, and then I will pray for God's help as we consider this together. So, let's... starting in verse 9, Jesus says this, Let's pray together.

[ 6 : 33 ] Lord Jesus, we do ask you this morning that you would be our help. Lord, as we look at your Word, as we consider, Lord, these glorious truths this morning, Lord, I pray. I pray for minds that will understand rightly. I pray for hearts that will love the truth and the glory of your Word. I pray for wills that will submit and receive your instruction.

And Lord, we pray that you would use your Word this morning in our lives, Lord, transforming us increasingly into your likeness, Lord, so that we might show your glory in this world, Lord, that you would be exalted, that you would be lifted up in our midst.

Lord, I pray for your help this morning. Be with me. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. So, verse 10, Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

I will say something. I wrestled with this sermon, whether it should be two parts, one on kingdom and one on will. And we could have preached a whole other sermon on your will be done and the two wills of God and what, but we're not going to do that. Because I think that actually in the context, Jesus is putting these things together because what is a kingdom? A kingdom is the extent of the will of the king being done. That would be one way you could define a kingdom.

It is the realm over which the king's will is exerted. And so, this is how we're going to approach this passage this morning. And Jesus says, Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven should be our prayer. So, what we're going to do is we're going to look through this just asking a couple of questions about what kind of kingdom this is and how does it work. And hopefully as we unpack it, we will have a richer view of what it is that Jesus is calling us to pray for as we pray this prayer.

[ 8 : 54 ] So, the first thing is we want to see who is the owner of this kingdom that we're to pray for. And you see that there's a pronoun there, your, right? Your, and who is that? It's talking about God the Father, right? Your kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven. Now, on earth as it is in heaven, we could spend a lot of time unpacking this. This might mean, and different people in the church have thought different ways about how exactly God's kingdom might come. Are we going to improve society increasingly so that it is finally going to be the glorious kingdom because people get better and better and better? As you will see, I don't think that's going to be the path that we're going to go. In fact, there's a really good... I'm going to reference this guy a lot today. Jonathan Pennington, he's a friend of mine. He's a teacher at Southern Baptist Seminary. He did a whole bunch of writing on the kingdom of heaven and earth and Matthew's language on it, and it's great stuff. And one of the things that he says is that the heaven and earth language in Matthew is given particularly to set up a contrast between the nature of God's kingdom and the way that the kingdoms of this world, the kingdoms that human societies in a fallen world tend to work, right? And so what Jesus is... what God is saying... or what Jesus is calling us to ask for is, God, you have a kingdom in heaven that is so different from ours, and we want it to come, and we want the earth to somehow be swallowed up in that so that what is here now is displaced by something new as God's kingdom comes.

Jesus is basically asking for a spiritual Copernican revolution in our lives, right? We who used to think that the world was the center of the universe, right? And Copernicus said, no, no, no, no, we've misplaced that completely. It's not us. It's something else. Now, you know, physically, it's the sun.

But spiritually, it should be God. And that's what God wants us to do. When Jesus is asking us to pray this, he's saying, unseat whatever is the king in your life, and it's most likely yourself, and put God on the throne of your life. Reorient your whole life. Recognize that all of creation was meant to be in orbit around God at the center and in the place of right prominence in the world.

And so, when we pray, your kingdom come, we're saying, God, we want our lives to be controlled by the question, what would God's kingdom look like? What would it look like if everything were oriented around God and His nature? So, that's the first question. Whose kingdom is it? It's God's.

Secondly, when do we think this is going to happen? This is a question that lots of people ask. Does God's kingdom...are we asking for God's kingdom to come right now? Do we think it should happen today?

[ 12 : 20 ] Do we think it should happen in the future but not right now? Do we think it already happened in the past, and so, this is a question that the church has wrestled with quite a lot, and I think the answer is yes. How's that for being helpful, right? So, when are we praying for God's kingdom to come? Well, here's the thing. Martin Lloyd-Jones, a commentator, says this, the kingdom of God means...really means the reign of God, a reign that has already come in the person and work of Jesus, a reign that now occurs in the hearts of those who believe in Jesus and whose lives are submitted to God's will present in the church, and the day is yet to come when His kingdom shall have...shall have been established here on earth in its fullness. So, we have a...in the past, in the present, and in the future nature to God's kingdom. When Jesus came, if you remember, we...Jesus came proclaiming the kingdom of heaven is at hand. So, when He came, there was an inbreaking of God's rule into the world, right? And so, we see this. And then we see that God is continuing to extend that reign through His church. So, Colossians 1.3 says, He has delivered us from the domain...this is 1.13, I'm sorry...He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. So, the church today is in God's kingdom in some sense.

And yet, we look around and we think, has God's kingdom actually come to earth as it is in heaven? I hope not, because man, what a mess we have. If this is God's kingdom, that's a pretty terrible thing. But in fact, we see, no, there is still yet a future kingdom. Remember when we preached through this in Revelation, that one day Jesus will come back, and He will put all things right. He will make all things new, right? He will punish the evildoers. Sin and sorrow and sickness and death will all be defeated and cast out, and His kingdom will come with life and glory and joy and peace, with God in the center of it on His throne. And so, we live in this timing of all of these things. The yes, it's already come. Yes, it's coming now, and it will come in the future. Remember the promise that we see in Revelation 15, the seventh angel, which is looking into the future, when He said, the kingdoms of the world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever. Friends, this is hope for us, because when we live in a dark world and we wonder, how can we keep going? There's a promise here. God has accomplished what is necessary for His kingdom to come through Jesus. He is at work even now, and when we have eyes to see, we can look for it, and we have a certainty that no matter what King is on the throne of our world, of our own lives, one day Jesus will come, and He will make it all right. And the King that we may feel oppressed by or done wrong by, we no longer have to, we don't have to fear that He, that that unjust King will last forever, but we know that King Jesus will come one day, and that's a great hope for us.

So, that's the second question. First one, whose kingdom? Second question, when will it come? Third question, how does God bring His kingdom? I've already alluded to this, but it's fascinating to look through the gospels and think, when Jesus the King came to earth, how did He work, right? He came proclaiming a message. He came proclaiming the message that the, of the gospel of the kingdom, that the kingdom of heaven was at hand, and He constantly pointed back to Himself. The reason why I'm proclaiming this is because I am here. Look at me to see the kingdom of heaven and what it's going to look like. And then how did He do that? Well, He displayed His kingship over, for instance, creation. As Jesus came in the world, He healed, He stilled storms, He fed 5,000 people with scraps. He showed Himself to be the Lord over the physical creation, the one who has control even over those things. He showed Himself to be the one who could reverse the curse of sin in the world. He showed His healings, thinking about His casting out of demons.

[ 17 : 26 ] He showed this is what the kingdom of heaven is like. He embodied this kind of kingdom, not only by showing His power over it, but also by showing, as the God-man, His humility.

Think about Him in the garden of Gethsemane. You probably have heard this, right? But when Jesus went, the night before He was crucified on the cross, Jesus went and prayed in the garden. And He said, I have come to do Your will, God. Not my will, but Your will be done. And then we see, and so this is how Jesus said, the kingdom of heaven is at hand, and it's in me.

Look at me and what I'm doing, right? And then He says, He'll continue to do this then through His church, right? So what happens after Him? He raised up His apostles. He sent them out, He said, you will be my witnesses to the ends of the earth. He says, the gospel of the kingdom will be

proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. So this was God's plan on how He would establish His kingdom, by the proclamation of His Word. God's plan on how He would establish His kingdom. This is remarkable, because some people today seek to establish God's kingdom by using the normal tools and powers of earthly kingdoms, right? They want to use political power. They want to use social power. They want to use military power to establish kingdoms on this earth. We do it in our own little ways in our own lives. We use manipulation. We use authority. We set up our own kingdoms. But Jesus says, there's a different way that I'm going to do it.

[ 19 : 40 ] There's a different way through the spread of the gospel and through the work of the Holy Spirit. This is how the kingdom is established. This is how it's established broadly in the world as people come to know Jesus through that proclamation. This is how it happens even in our interpersonal relationships as we share and point one another to Christ. God's kingdom comes in our midst.

So we need to recognize that though, yes, there is good work for us to do, being leaven in our society, seeking to influence the world so that it might be less evil and more good, there is still good work to be done. But that's not going to establish His kingdom through the proclamation of His word and the transformation of hearts. This is central to it. And we recognize that therefore, it is a work that only God can do. And so we pray.

We don't force it. Because the nature of God's kingdom, and this is the fourth thing I want to say, and it's wrapped up in what I've already said, you guys are probably waiting like, why didn't He say these parts? Well, it's coming. Here we go. Because the nature of, what is the nature of this kingdom that Jesus brings and that He's coming? Well, again, the gospel of Matthew is so instructive in this, the Beatitudes, right? Who gets the kingdom of heaven in the Beatitudes? The poor in spirit and those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake.

Those aren't the winners. Those aren't the people asserting authority. Those are the needy. Those are the weak. Those are the ones who know that they're not here to establish the kingdom. Think about all the parables in the book of Matthew and what the nature of the kingdom is according to Jesus' teaching in these parables. The kingdom of heaven is like a tiny mustard seed that will have a completely outsized effect on the world around, not because it is great, but because God will use it to do great things.

The kingdom of heaven is like a leaven in flour that infiltrates and transforms it so that it's useful for making bread. The kingdom of heaven is a pearl of such exceeding value that we would count all things as loss of the sake of having that one pearl. The kingdom of heaven is like a bride waiting expectantly with their focus and their hope fixed completely on being ready for this bride, for this groom to come and to meet them. The kingdom of heaven welcomes the children, the outcasts, the needy. It is those who lifts up servants and the humble and brings low the proud and the self-important, a kingdom that loves and serves the marginalized.

[ 22 : 57 ] It's an incredible kingdom. Jonathan Pennington, as I quoted earlier, says this, the Beatitudes give us an image of the blessed ones that is just the opposite of what we would naturally value. Jesus' model of life shows open-armed compassion for the downtrodden, the touching of a leper, the exalting of a lowly child, the welcoming of the Gentile, and a listening ear for blind outcast beggars. As a king of the universe, he enters Jerusalem, not on a warhorse or golden chariot, but riding humbly on the foal of a donkey.

As king of all, he willingly rides into the city where iron nails will soon be used to hang him naked on a cross in the scorching sun. At the very heart of Jesus' kingdom, of this kingdom that God will establish in the world, is Jesus humbling himself and becoming a servant even to the point of death, death on the cross. Bearing shame and scoffing, he, by his wounds we are healed. By his death, we are saved. By his resurrection, the powers of sin and death are ultimately triumphed over.

This is the kingship that Jesus brings. How different is this from the kingships of the world? Think about what the Roman Empire did. The Pax Romana was built on the backs of military conquest, slavery, and oppression. Now, again, we could argue on the realpolitik of whether that's a better thing than the chaos of the chaos of not having Roman rule. But we know at the end of the day, it was established by force and it was maintained by force.

Right? The Roman Empire, power was found in wealth, in military resources, and in natural resources. When you had these things, you had power in the Roman Empire. And in the face of this, in the first century, the Jewish people were longing for a restoration of a different kind of

kingdom. They were looking for David to come back, leading an army on a white horse to overthrow the oppressors and reestablish a national kingdom again, where Israel would be a great kingdom. [ 25 : 51 ] And Jesus comes and confounds all of these expectations. Jesus comes and he says, no, I have come to do your will. I have come not to be served, but to serve and to give my life a ransom for many.

Pennington says this again, as this king instructs us, we learn that the one who wants to be first should not exercise an overbearing leadership style, but should be the slave of all. The one who is blessed by God with material wealth should set it aside to follow Christ. The one who desires to save his life must, in fact, die. Such is the radical nature of the vision of the kingdom that Jesus brings.

This is the nature of the kingdom that Jesus instructs us to pray for. Thy kingdom come is this kind of kingdom.

Which leads us then to our final point. What does this do for us? If we pray, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven, we must begin with our hearts. How does this prayer shape us as we pray it for the world? Three things that I have for us this morning. First is surrender. When we pray this prayer, God calls us to reaffirm, not my will, but thy will be done.

Remember the gospel that we've proclaimed and that we've believed in here as a church. It's that apart from God, I am a sinner. I am a rebel. And my sinful desires to exalt myself as king have led only to ruin and destruction in my life and in others. Alienation from God.

[ 27 : 55 ] And when I came to Christ in the first place, I said, I surrender my life. I can't save myself. All I can do is by faith give up that and take hold of you. You have done, Jesus, what I could not do to save me.

And so we surrender to God. We let go of our own plans, our own strategies, our own desires, our own agendas, and let God reform and reshape how we live our lives. And friends, you know why this is so hard?

Because we don't trust God to do well. We all think, God, I know you're up there, but really, I'm in the weeds here. I know what it should look like. I've got a better plan than you.

I'll simply refer you back to two weeks ago when we started this prayer with our Father who art in heaven. We pray to a loving heavenly Father who is also a sovereign king, and he knows far better than us what is good. And so when he calls us to surrender, it's like we, you know, we do this every day when we get on an airplane, right? We take our lives and we put them in someone else's hands. We say, we trust you to be able to get this plane up off the ground to where we're going and back down again and safely, right? Now, we know in a fallen world it doesn't always happen, but that's what we do. We have this trust in a very physical way with airline pilots. We give our lives over to them and say, please take care of me. This is what God calls us to do as we pray, your kingdom come. God says, give me your life. I will take care of you. Let me order it. Let me direct it. Let me lead it. This then, of course, leads to the second thing. The first one, heart attitude, is that of surrender. The second one is that of obedience. It is said, the quip is, if Jesus is not Lord of all, then He is not Lord at all.

Are you willing to say to God, you are my king, I will obey you no matter what?

[ 30 : 38 ] Do we allow Him to be our commanding officer and our sovereign king? How often does our American, maybe not American, our human, independent, rebellious spirit rise up in our hearts to say, God, I've got a better idea. I think I know how to do this. I don't want to do it that way. For those of us who are parents, you all know this is what your two-year-old is doing.

They're trying to say, I want my kingdom, not yours. And part of what we're doing is helping them realize, no, that's not good for you. Your kingdom is not a good thing.

But you know, all of us can be like those two-year-olds. God, I want my kingdom. But the call to pray your kingdom come is a call to obey.

God, will you tell me how to live? Will you shape my life? Again, we do this in some areas of our lives. If you're on a sports team, you show up at practice, and the coach says, okay, we're going to run today. And you may groan, and you may moan, but you're going to do it. Why? Because you believe that that coach has a better idea than you do about what you need to do to get ready to play the game. He knows what fitness you need. He knows what training you need. He knows what skills you need to develop and to practice.

how much more then does God, the infinite ruler of the world, and God, the Savior of the world, call us to obey Him and say, okay, Jesus, here I am. Life is following you. Tell me what that looks like. I

want to let you shape. I will obey you. And that may be spiritual disciplines. It may be putting aside sin. It may be changing the way we are stewards of our lives, of our time.

[ 32 : 58 ] all this in obedience to our King. So if the first attitude is surrender, the second one is obedience, the third one is worship. Because God's kingdom doesn't merely come, and Jesus doesn't merely come as a King to be bowed down to in obeisance and in abject humiliation. He is one who comes, calls us to surrender, calls us to obey, and calls us to worship. Because He is the one who says, who calls us to a faith that has characteristics of loving loyalty, of fealty and allegiance, of devotion, of devotion, not just to bow to Him, but to adore Him. Because He is not only in authority, but He is also a loving Heavenly Father. He is also a creator God. He is also beyond our imagination in beauty and majesty and splendor. And so He calls us to worship Him. When we pray God's kingdom come, we are meant to look at God and say, this is the treasure. This is the thing that my heart most desires. This is what I was made for. And it is to make, order my life around Him so that He might be glorified. This is the greatest desire of my heart, because this is what we were made to do.

You know I couldn't get through this without a Lord of the Rings quote, right? Do you remember? Do you remember what it's like at the end? And if you've watched the movies, I apologize, because the seven endings were just really painful and even not sufficient to capture the glory of what... But Middle Earth had been subjected for hundreds, yea, thousands of years. There was no king, and because there was no king, evil fomented and flourished in the land, and civilizations became besieged, and the places of goodness shrank. And then through the great story of the Lord of the Rings, Jesus, right? The evil Lord was defeated by a king, ultimately. Well, not really. He was defeated by a hobbit who was one picture of Jesus, the humble one who laid down his life, right? But in the meantime,

Tolkien says there is also a king that is going to be restored, one who lived in obscurity, but now is coming into his glory. And there's this picture of him in the fields of Cormelion, standing on the pinnacle of the kingdom of Gondor, of Minas Tirith. And Aragorn steps out as the king, and everybody bows before him, because they love him, because they're so glad that there is a king who is right, and who is just, and who is humble, and who will bring goodness, and who will overcome evil.

And friends, there will be no human king like that in this world, but there is a king who has come, who is exactly like that. And his name is Jesus, and this is what we bow to. And this is who we adore and worship and give our lives for. And this is the one that we worship. We say the king has returned. You know, this is what the Hallelujah Chorus, in the great work by Hondo, Hondo's Messiah, the Hallelujah Chorus, this is what it's about.

Hallelujah, hallelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth, and the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ. And he shall reign forever and ever. King of kings and Lord of lords, and he shall reign forever and ever, and ever, and ever, and ever, and ever, hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah. Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Let's pray.

[ 37 : 57 ] Oh, Lord, we pray this morning. Lord, we simply want to pray in obedience to you. May your kingdom come. May your kingdom come. May your kingdom come in our hearts. May your kingdom come in our church.

Lord, may your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Come, Lord Jesus, we pray. Amen.