

We continue our series “**Lord, Teach Us to Pray!**” We turn today to the second petition of the Lord’s Prayer, which is very fitting for our Ascension celebration. As Jesus ascended into heaven to rule in His Kingdom, so He teaches us to pray, “**Your Kingdom Come.**”

“Lord, teach us to pray...” 2 So He said to them, “When you pray, say: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come.”

Dear Fellow Redeemed,

What a horrendous week this has been for the people of Uvalde, TX 18 of their nine year old children and 2 teachers gunned down. Parents sent their children to school in the morning thinking they were safe and they didn’t come home again.

Even more disturbing, this is the 27th school shooting this year in the United States. 27 schools in just five months that were turned into a war zone. And that’s just schools, there have been more than 200 mass shootings this year alone, including the 10 people that were killed in a supermarket in Buffalo, N.Y., just 10 days before.

What is going on in the world? Why is there so much senseless violence? People so angry and disturbed that they just start killing people that they don’t even know? It makes no sense.

There is a simple explanation that most people don’t want to hear. People have forgotten God, or more accurately they have rejected God. Can it really be that simple? There have always been unbelievers in the world. But this kind of senseless killing of children is a relatively new phenomena in the past few decades. So how can I say it is the result of rejecting God? Not every unbeliever becomes a mass murderer. That of course is true, but remember the first use of the law acts as a curb. When there is a general consciousness of God and our accountability to Him in a society, even the unbelievers generally abide by basic morals of good and evil. But for over half a century Evolution has been taught in our public schools telling children that there is no God who created us, we are just the product of random chance. Humanism is promoted along side of Evolution turning everyone into their own god. People can decide for themselves what is right and wrong and, as in the days of the Judges, people do what is right in their own eyes. As that consciousness of God fades, it’s not surprising that crime and violence is on the rise? God says you reap what you sow. Our society is reaping the result of what they have been sowing for the past many decades.

All the violence in the world is a powerful reminder of how much we need to pray, “Your Kingdom to Come.” Many think we need stricter gun control laws. But that’s not the real problem. That’s like treating cancer with a bandaid. The real problem is people don’t have Jesus in their hearts. Lord, Teach us to Pray,

“Your Kingdom come!”

Last week we said that the first petition, “Hallowed be Your Name,” was the most important petition. If we do not see the glory and holiness of God, we are not even going to bother praying at all. But that doesn’t mean that the rest of the petitions are less important. The first is the most important because it has to come first in our hearts, but the second is praying for an equally great need.

Jesus summarized His entire ministry by saying, “**The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe the gospel.**” Mark 1:15. That was His whole goal, His whole reason for coming to earth as a man was to establish God’s kingdom among mankind. All His teaching was about the Kingdom of God. Remember how many of Jesus’ parables began, “**The Kingdom of God is like...**”? Jesus died on the cross and rose again in order to establish His kingdom among sinful mankind. Jesus also teaches us how to live in this world with all its cares and worries. He says to, “**Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added to you.**” Matthew 6:33 Being citizens of God’s Kingdom and enjoying the benefits of God’s Kingdom is what the Christian faith is all about. So Jesus teaches us to pray, “**Your Kingdom Come.**”

Remember, the Kingdom of God is not a place. It is not heaven or any place here on earth. Many Christians today think the Kingdom of God hasn’t come yet. They believe that Jesus will come again to establish His Kingdom on earth and that He will reign visibly over a world made

perfect. But they are paying attention to Jesus' words. Jesus says His Kingdom "is at hand," it is here. On another occasion He told the Jews, "The kingdom of God is in the midst of you." Luke 17:21 ESV He has established His Kingdom.

The Kingdom of God is the ruling activity of the King. Jesus Christ rules in the hearts of His people. Martin Luther explains this Petition in his catechism this way: "God's kingdom comes when our heavenly Father gives us His Holy Spirit, so that by His grace we believe His holy Word and live a godly life here in time and hereafter in eternity." We became a part of God's Kingdom when the Holy Spirit opened our hearts to believe in Jesus as our Savior from sin. That is when Jesus became our King.

Even though God's Kingdom has already come to us and we are citizens of God's Kingdom by faith, we still need to **Pray "Your Kingdom Come" for Yourself.**

It is troubling and disturbing how many people are dropping out of God's Kingdom. Mostly young people who are being deceived by evolutionary teaching to believe it is a proven fact that the earth is billions of years old and so the Bible cannot be true. Others drop out because of tragedies like the Uvalde massacre. Robin Roberts was reporting on it and commented that people's faith is being shaken. That is true. The devil suggests that a loving God would not let such terrible things happen. If that is what His rule is like, I don't want any part of it. But remember, The evil and hatred of man does not diminish the love and faithfulness of God. It is precisely in these times of tragedy that we need Christ dwelling in our hearts ruling with His love to comfort and strength us. We need to know His love and that He has saved us from all evil. Then our faith will not be shaken in times of tragedy but will rather grow stronger and more confident.

So praying for His Kingdom to come involves praying that God will preserve your faith in these wicked times and keep you and your loved ones as a part of His Kingdom. Christ's rule of love in our hearts will keep us from being overcome by the evil world. We will always have the love of God in our hearts. Even if we or a loved one would become a victim of the hatred in the world, we know that His Kingdom is an eternal one and we will have eternal Joy with Christ.

We also pray for God's Kingdom to come to us so we will be a positive influence in the world for good. Luther says that Christ has redeemed us so that we may "*Live under Him in His Kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence and blessedness.*" When we pray that Christ will come and rule in our hearts, we pray that we will submit to Christ's rule more and more, that we will always look up to our King in honor and praise and gladly submit to His rule and live according to His will. As Christ reigns in our hearts our life will reflect His love and show kindness in the face of evil. Christ reigns with forgiving Love. He is the King who forgave your debt of 10,000 talents, an impossible debt of sin that you could never have paid off. Now are you going to be like the unforgiving servant who refused to forgive his fellow servant the few dollars that he owed? No, not with Christ ruling in your heart. You will forgive as He has forgiven you and spread that forgiving love in the world.

That love of Christ in our hearts also moves us to **Pray "Your Kingdom Come" for the world.**

The second petition is sometimes referred to as the Mission Petition. We pray that God's Kingdom may spread and grow in the world. We do this because, like our King, we want all people to be saved. We want others to enjoy the peace and salvation that God has given us. So we pray Your Kingdom Come to others. When you know other people who do not have faith in Christ, there is nothing better that you can do for them than to pray for God's Kingdom to come to them. Pray that the Holy Spirit will awaken their hearts to know and believe Christ. We also pray that God's Kingdom will spread and grow around the world that people everywhere may come to know Christ as their Savior. Pray for and support our missions.

An added benefit of God's Kingdom spreading in the world is that the world will become a better place to live. This world will never become paradise. There will always be sin and corruption. Even we who believe in Christ are still sinners. But when a nation is predominantly Christian, there is a far higher degree of peace and security. God's Kingdom is the only thing that can truly change

the world. The Roman empire once persecuted and killed Christians, but God's Kingdom spread and grew among them and Rome became a center of Christianity. When more people have the love of God in their hearts, the more love and good will will be spread in the world.

In almost every case these mass shootings are carried out by people who have been hurt multiple times and are angry at the world. They have not received loving care from anyone. If the knowledge of Jesus' love and forgiveness would come to them that could overcome their anger and hatred with His love and forgiveness and stop the senseless violence.

So pray, "Your Kingdom Come" and then get out there and spread His Word. Remember it doesn't do any good to pray "Hallowed be Your Name" and then avoid the Means of Grace through which God does hallow His name in our hearts. That would be like asking your child to sweep and mop the floor but then take away the broom and mop. How can they do what you ask if they don't have the tools to do it? The means of grace which is the Gospel in word and sacrament, that is the tool God uses to Hallow His name in our hearts and show us His glory. If we don't use those Means of Grace, then we are making it impossible for God to answer that prayer for us.

The same thing is true of the second petition, "Your Kingdom Come." It is the same Means of Grace that God uses to spread His Kingdom. The Gospel is the only means God uses to bring people to faith. God only uses Christians to spread the Gospel in the world.

As the opposition to the Word of God grows, we tend to become more timid in proclaiming it. But why should we? We have the Almighty God with us and He promises to work through that word to spread His kingdom. So let's pray "Your Kingdom Come" and then go out boldly with His word to tell the world, and boldly support our Missions around the world that people everywhere will know the peace of God which surpasses all understanding.

Amen.