

“THY KINGDOM COME”

Pastor Mike Corwin

LORD’S PRAYER PART 3

TEXT: ACTS 12:1-19

SCRIPTURE: REVELATION 21:1-7

I – THE PRAYER WHISTLE:

There is a story about a church service that got interrupted by a young child one Sunday morning. It seems that during the pastor’s prayer there was a loud whistle from one of the back pews. The whistle came from a young boy named Gary. Gary’s mother was horrified. She pinched him into silence and, after church, asked, “Gary, whatever made you do such a thing?” Gary answered soberly, “I asked God to teach me to whistle and that’s when He decided to answer my prayer!”

It’s a funny story, but when I heard it I realized that this boy modeled the way I want to pray. The way I want everyone to pray...with confidence! You see little Gary was in church, in his young mind he knew that God hung around the church, so where better to ask God to help you with a problem like not knowing how to whistle? He asked and God delivered, he whistled. This little boy asked God fully believing that God heard him and would answer his request. Two weeks ago little Annie Lynn asked God to help her make an “S” and we heard last week God did it.

My question for you this morning is this: “WHEN YOU PRAY, DO YOU DO IT BELIEVING THAT GOD WILL ANSWER? Do you have the confidence that when you pray, God hears you and will take action? Do you believe that God is alive and well and active in our lives during this time in history, or do you believe that God used to be active, now he’s on break, and he’ll be active again in the future? When you can answer this question, you’ll know what you’re praying when you pray “THY KINGDOM COME.”

II – PAST, PRESENT OR FUTURE?:

When we pray this passage, this line from the Lord’s Prayer, we get the idea that we’re praying to God for a future event. We are reminded of passages like we heard this morning from Revelation 21. We look for the time when God will destroy the evil sinful world we live in and replace it with what the Apostle John says is a new heaven and a new earth. We want to live in that place where we’re told there will be no more death, no more pain, no more sorrow, and no more crying. We want to live in this Kingdom where there are no more wars, earthquakes, murders, child abuse,

cancer, divorce, heart attacks, poverty, or injustice of any kind. As Christians we look forward to this Kingdom. We pray that this is the Kingdom where we will spend all of eternity with our God.

But that's only part of the Kingdom. You see the Kingdom of God has a past, a present, and a future. The Kingdom of God as we know it was established in the past, over 2000 years ago when God sent his Son to be a sacrifice for our sins. That coming of Jesus established the Kingdom of God on earth. Remember what he said at the beginning of his ministry. Mark records it this way in his Gospel:

Mark 1:14 – 15 (NLT)

¹⁴Later on, after John was arrested by Herod Antipas, Jesus went to Galilee to preach God's Good News. ¹⁵**“At last the time has come!”** he announced. **“The Kingdom of God is near! Turn from your sins and believe this Good News!”**

Jesus was saying here I am, I bring you the Kingdom of God, I bring you what you've been praying for, Salvation and a way to get to God.

Jesus brought the Kingdom in the past when he came the first time, and he'll bring the Kingdom of the future when he comes back the second time, but we live in the Kingdom in the present, the time between the past and the future, and the King is alive and well.

III – TEXT:

One of the stories we have of the early church makes this point to us, that Jesus brought the Kingdom of God to earth, and that God is active in the lives of his people , even after Jesus left for heaven to await his future coming, and that we should pray with confidence because the Kingdom is here...

Acts 12:1 – 19 (NLT)

¹About that time King Herod Agrippa began to persecute some believers in the church.

²He had the apostle James (John's brother) killed with a sword. ³When Herod saw how much this pleased the Jewish people, he also arrested Peter. (This took place during the Passover celebration.) ⁴Then he imprisoned him, placing him under the guard of four squads of four soldiers each. Herod intended to bring Peter out for public trial after the Passover. ⁵But while Peter was in prison, the church prayed very earnestly for him. ⁶The night before Peter was to be placed on trial, he was asleep, fastened with two chains between two soldiers. Others stood guard at the prison gate. ⁷Suddenly, there was a bright light in the cell, and an angel of the Lord stood before Peter. The angel struck him on the side to awaken him and said, “Quick! Get up!” And the chains fell off his wrists. ⁸Then the angel told him, “Get dressed and put on your sandals.” And he did. “Now put

on your coat and follow me,” the angel ordered. ⁹So Peter left the cell, following the angel. But all the time he thought it was a vision. He didn’t realize it was actually happening. ¹⁰They passed the first and second guard posts and came to the iron gate leading to the city, and this opened for them all by itself. So they passed through and started walking down the street, and then the angel suddenly left him. ¹¹Peter finally came to his senses. “It’s really true!” he said. “The Lord has sent his angel and saved me from Herod and from what the Jewish leaders had planned to do to me!” ¹²When he realized this, he went to the home of Mary, the mother of John Mark, where many were gathered for prayer. ¹³He knocked at the door in the gate, and a servant girl named Rhoda came to open it. ¹⁴When she recognized Peter’s voice, she was so overjoyed that, instead of opening the door, she ran back inside and told everyone, “Peter is standing at the door!” ¹⁵“You’re out of your mind!” they said. When she insisted, they decided, “It must be his angel.” ¹⁶Meanwhile, Peter continued knocking. When they finally opened the door and saw him, they were amazed. ¹⁷He motioned for them to quiet down and told them how the Lord had led him out of prison. “Tell James and the other brothers what happened,” he said. And then he went to another place. ¹⁸At dawn there was a great commotion among the soldiers about what had happened to Peter. ¹⁹Herod Agrippa ordered a thorough search for him. When he couldn’t be found, Herod interrogated the guards and sentenced them to death. Afterward Herod left Judea to stay in Caesarea for a while.

Herod the great’s grandson is now on the throne and he’s trying to keep his Jewish subjects happy and loyal so he arrests the disciple James and has him beheaded. This brought so much pleasure to the Jewish leaders that Herod figures he’s found a way to keep them happy and loyal, so he has Peter arrested and throws him in jail with the intention of killing him too. The congregation does the only thing they can think of to do...THEY PRAY! And it says they did it earnestly.

The night before he dies God sends an angel who frees him from jail, but Peter doesn’t believe it’s really happening, he believes he’s dreaming it all. The head of the church hasn’t completely caught on yet. Finally he comes to his senses and realizes he’s really been freed, God’s power is working to ensure the success of the early church, despite all the violent opposition. The prayers of the believers have been answered. Not in the future...TODAY! The Kingdom is active TODAY!

Peter runs to one of the homes where the early church met, where they were meeting to pray for Peter and they don’t believe it either when they’re told Peter is alive and well, standing at the door. They finally go and look and realize it’s true. God has answered their prayers, not in a future Kingdom, but in the present Kingdom.

In the end Peter doesn’t die, the guards do. Good wins, evil loses. Isn’t that the Kingdom we pray for when we think of revelation? The triumph of good over evil? It happens in the present too, because the Kingdom is here in the present.

IV – WE ARE THE KINGDOM:

You see...WE are the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God isn't contained in geographical borders like England; it's wherever his people are. God's Kingdom occurs when we allow him to reign over our lives. To be in the Kingdom means that we have made God the center of our lives. Not ourselves, our spouse, our children, our job, our money, or anything else, just God. A King has no Kingdom unless he has subjects to rule. We build the Kingdom when God rules our lives.

To enter the Kingdom is easy...we believe...we have Faith. We accept Jesus Christ into our hearts as the Son of God, because where Jesus is, is where the Kingdom of God is. The Kingdom of God was the central message and proclamation of Jesus. It's mentioned 103 times in the 1st three Gospels. When Jesus started his ministry he proclaimed that the Kingdom of God was here, standing right in front of them. In Matthew 6:33 Jesus gave us the command to "make the Kingdom of God your primary concern," the King James Version said it this way, "SEEK YE FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD." Seek Jesus and enter the Kingdom.

When we pray, "THY KINGDOM COME" we're proclaiming that we want Jesus to be our Lord, that we want God to rule over our lives, not just parts of them, but each and every aspect of them. When we pray, "THY KINGDOM COME" we're praying that we are submitting to the direction of our King and asking for help learning about love and forgiveness and the other lessons of Jesus. When we pray, "THY KINGDOM COME" we're praying that others will find Jesus and let God rule over their lives, because when we're praying this we're witnessing to our faith and belief in the King of kings and Lord of lords. Long live the King!

V – PRAY WITH CONFIDENCE:

If this is your King, and your Kingdom then pray with confidence. Pray like the little boy who wanted to whistle...knowing God would teach him to whistle. Pray knowing that your King lives and is active in the lives of all his subjects.

Let me give you a personal example of how prayer works when you believe and operate in the Kingdom of God. To tell you the story I have to confess that I was a smoker at one time. Not just a smoker but a 2 and ½ pack a day smoker. I tried everything to quit and could make it short periods of time, but it never lasted. I was ready to go to a hypnotist to try that and the young adult Sunday school class I taught said I shouldn't give someone else control of my mind. Instead they divided up the week among them and pledged to pray each day for me to quit, and I prayed for the same thing. At the end of the week I laid my cigarettes down and quit. I never gained weight, didn't get moody, and didn't crave them. I had no withdrawal at all like the horror stories you hear. That's been over 20 years ago and I've never smoked again. Thank you King Jesus!

Prayer works! You'll never convince me otherwise. So stop praying like wimps, make sure you're living in the Kingdom and start praying like you know the King is listening. AMEN