
VIDEO LECTURE MODULE: THE LORD'S PRAYER

LECTURE 4: THY KINGDOM COME

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The John Knox Institute
of Higher Education

Entrusting our Reformed Inheritance to the Church Worldwide

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Module

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Dr. Gerald R. Procee

Presented in 14 Lectures called
THE BEAUTY OF PRAYER

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2. Our Father Which Art in Heaven
3. Hallowed Be Thy Name
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Lecture 4

THY KINGDOM COME

Welcome to this fourth lecture in the series of Beauty of Prayer. Now I wish to consider the petition the Lord Jesus teaches us, ‘Thy kingdom come.’ So far, we have seen in the Lord’s Prayer that the Lord Jesus tells us to pray, “Our Father, which art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come.” Is there a relationship between the first petition and the second petition, between ‘Hallowed be Thy name’ and ‘Thy Kingdom come’?

Is there a relationship? Yes, there is because they are both focused upon God, upon His glory and upon His honor. In the first petition we see that God is the Holy One, and He must receive glory, praise and adoration. His name must be hallowed. We see that He is worthy to be loved. He’s the Almighty Sovereign, the Lord of lords, the King of kings, and all glory must be given to Him. We cannot fathom the greatness of God’s name.

It is difficult for us to imagine Who God is because He is far above us. That’s why His name must be hallowed, must be honored. It’s a most important thing in life. Connected to this is also that His kingdom would come because His kingdom is also glorious. His kingdom is far and wide. In this petition, the Lord Jesus takes us by the hand, and He leads us through the kingdom of God. He shows us how glorious this kingdom is. Just as God Himself is glorious, so this kingdom of God is also glorious. It is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, and this kingdom is coming. This kingdom is in development. This kingdom came into our world when the Lord Jesus came. He revealed God to us. He went around preaching that the Kingdom of Heaven has come. Therefore, repent and believe the Gospel.

Ever since His coming, the Kingdom of God is coming into our world. The Lord Jesus is leading all events in world history to implement the coming of this kingdom. When this kingdom is fully come, then all His people, all the elect from all ages and from all nations will be with Him, and they will serve Him without sin. They will everlastingly glorify the Lord. They will love Him above all. How glorious is this kingdom. In that kingdom there will be no sin, no darkness, no stain or blot. They all will be perfect. There they will be an innumerable multitude. That is the longing of His church on Earth.

The coming of His kingdom is the most glorious thing here on Earth, and so His people love His church. His church is the manifestation of His kingdom. They seek the coming of His kingdom because this will be the glory of God.

It’s also important as we consider this that the Lord Jesus teaches us “Hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come.” In connection to this also, the Lord Jesus is going to teach us “Thy will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven.” All these matters show us that God must have all the emphasis. God and His honor are far above

everything else. When the Lord Jesus teaches us to pray, He teaches us first to pray towards God. That is to say for His honor, for the extension of His kingdom, that sinners learn to do His will. That is most important. God must have all emphasis and the priority in our prayers.

After that, we may lay all our needs before the Lord as the Lord Jesus is going to teach us in the fourth petition, "Give us this day our daily bread." We hope to consider that in a future lecture. We see that although our personal needs are important, far above that the most important aspects of prayer must be focused upon God, upon His kingdom and that His will would be done in lives of people. That they learn to follow Him. That must have the emphasis also in our personal prayers.

Now we will focus then upon this matter, this petition, "Thy kingdom come." First of all we can ask the question, what is meant by God's kingdom? Then we can refer to God's kingdom of nature. The Lord God created Heaven and Earth. He created all beings. He created all the animals, all the plants, and so in nature we see His kingdom that the Lord God created. The oceans, the universe, and that He created everyone. He can command all things. The wind and the seas, they are His subjects.

Connected to this kingdom of nature, we can also refer to the kingdom of His Providence. The fact that no person can live without God. That in Him we live and from Him we have our being. That we can do nothing without Him. This world is not ruled by fate, but it is ruled by God, by His Providence. The Lord God commands all things, and in His providential dealings with this world, the Lord God displays His power, His majesty, His goodness. Everything is under His control.

When we are referring to "Thy kingdom come," we are not so much referring to the kingdom of God in nature or, connected to that, His rule in providence in leading all things in this world and in our lives. When we speak about "Thy kingdom come," we are referring to God's special kingdom. That is the realm where God is obeyed and loved. We can say God's kingdom consists of all those who obey and love the Lord God, who recognize Him as Ruler, as Lord, who learn to bow before Him, who are eager to obey Him. We see that His kingdom is present in Heaven, and there it is perfect. That's where we find the angels. The angels are always ready to do the will of God, and they follow His beckoning. Without any objection, they always are ready and prepared to do God's will.

And there in Heaven that's also where the innumerable multitude is being gathered of all the saved of all ages. They are now there already praising and honoring and loving God. That is the manifestation of God's kingdom in Heaven. Besides that, the Lord God also has His kingdom here on Earth. His kingdom here on Earth is found there where people bow before Him. It's not so much an outward kingdom with a capital city. It's not a geographical kingdom. It is a spiritual kingdom. It again consists of all those who bow before Him, whether they live in China or in Africa or in America, they together who have learned to follow Him and love Him, who desire to obey Him. They together form the kingdom of God here on Earth.

We also call this the kingdom in which His grace is manifested. The Lord rules over this kingdom, His kingdom here on Earth with His power, with His love and care because He cares for His people. He has regenerated them. He has purchased them with His blood. He watches over them. He protects His people in life and in death. They belong to Him.

We can say the Kingdom of God on Earth is actually His church, and that is not the outward church as we see her, because we know from Scripture that not everyone who outwardly belongs to His church is a true member of His church. Only the ones who are born again, who have learned to love the Lord Jesus with their heart, who have been drawn by His love, have been redeemed by His blood, whose hearts have been renewed, they belong to the church of Christ. They belong to Him. They desire to honor Him. That is where God's people love to honor His name, and they promote His kingdom.

This kingdom is most beautiful. It is a joy in the Earth. It is a blessing when the Lord establishes His kingdom in a nation, where there are various nations in this world where the Lord God has His people. It is a blessing for that nation and for that society that there would be Christians, people who learn to obey God and love Him. These people all belong to their King, the Lord Jesus Christ, because He paid for their sins. He redeemed them from the power of the devil, and they are connected to God with bonds of love. This is all wrought by God's Holy Spirit.

This Kingdom of God is growing here on Earth. It is growing because daily people are being converted. We can even say in Heaven His kingdom is also expanding because every day some of His people are ushered in

from Earth into Heaven. There they are with Him. The multitude in Heaven is daily growing. We can say that His kingdom is growing in Heaven, but especially here on Earth. That is what we are focused upon in this prayer. We are praying that His kingdom may expand here on Earth. We may believe that every day people are being converted throughout this world and that the Holy Spirit, by His powerful working, is gaining citizens for this Kingdom of God. The Lord is at work gathering sinners, and so this Kingdom is increasing. Therefore the Lord makes use of ministers, of office bearers, of elders and deacons. The Lord makes use of the testimony of His people, because all God's children are called to be witnesses. They are called to speak of the blessings of their King, but especially pastors are called to be faithful in the proclamation of His Word.

At times pastors may wonder, 'What is the use of all my labor? It seems so futile.' Yet, you may know, as Paul says at the end of 1 Corinthians 15, that your labor is not in vain in the Lord (verse 58). The Lord makes use of the labors of His servants as they proclaim His kingdom. In a mighty manner, sometimes unnoticed by us, the Lord makes use of the proclamation of His Word by means of His servants. What a high calling it is, for they are called to be fellow laborers with Christ. It is glorious. It is the most blessed work a person can do. It is work that has everlasting impact. The Lord blesses His servants and strengthens them. Through their service, the Lord causes His kingdom to grow.

Now the Lord causes His kingdom to grow because of the reality of sin. Because the fact in our lives is that mankind is under the power and dominion of sin. People need to be delivered from that dominion. They are in the slavery of sin. They need to be washed and redeemed and led into a new life with Christ. Because of the presence of sin in this society and in our world, therefore there is an increase possible of the kingdom of God. Daily people are delivered from that slavery of sin and ushered into a life with Christ.

You must understand that there once was a day in history when the whole world belonged to the Kingdom of God. There was life and abundance, happiness and peace, but then sin entered our realm because man rebelled against God and chose the side of the devil. The results were horrible. Death and misery entered this world, and the Kingdom of God was broken here upon Earth.

Then God in His unexplainable love sent His Son that He would bear the consequences of sin and that He would pay the price, the penalty of sin. He conquered death. He earned, He merited the life-giving Holy Spirit. Actually, this kingdom started in the Old Testament. It was quite small then. It started with Adam and Eve, went on through Abel. Then the Lord started over again with Noah. When again the people of God had forsaken Him and when the world was engulfed in wickedness, then the Lord started again with Abraham and through Abraham, the people of Israel.

They received the light of God's Word. They were told that Messiah, the promised Savior, would come through them. When the Lord Jesus came, He said to the people in Mark 1:15, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the Gospel." But we know what happened. Israel rejected the Lord Jesus, and Israel, together with the heathens, crucified the Lord Jesus. The whole of mankind did not want to bow for Christ.

After His resurrection and His ascension, God poured out His Holy Spirit. It was then that His apostles started to preach the kingdom of God throughout this world. Then the kingdom of God was extended throughout all nations. And so, although no one was asking for God and no one was seeking God, God would see to it that people would be converted, that there would again be a people here on Earth who would live in agreement to God's will, who would love God and honor His name. This glorious work of God, of saving sinners, will be carried on and continued until the end of the days.

Then at the final day, God will overthrow all His enemies. He will condemn Satan, and then the Lord God will establish His kingdom here on Earth. This Earth will be renewed. Heaven and Earth will be united together, and the Lord Jesus will reign forever with His people in glory and peace.

When we pray "Thy Kingdom come," we are praying that this glorious kingdom would come and that therefore now, in the time that lies between us and the final day of judgement, that God would extend His kingdom, that many people would be converted, that everywhere the Gospel would find entrance into people's lives. As we pray "Thy Kingdom come," we are actually praying that people would be delivered from false religions like Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism. We are praying for the conversion of the Jews. We are praying that people in all places may learn to bow for the Lord Jesus as the only Savior, and so we are called to pray, "Thy Kingdom come."

Connected to this, we are also to pray for all those who suffer for the sake of the Lord Jesus. We are praying for other people that they may be brought to conversion. We are praying that His church may be continued on in spite of man's ignorance, in spite of persecution and tribulations. As we remember people around us in prayer, we may believe that God will hear these prayers, that the Lord God will strengthen those who are imprisoned, those who suffer pain and shame for the name of Christ. We believe that God will convert people who are now ignorant of the Gospel. We confess and believe that God will cause sinners to be converted and that His people in their struggles will be strengthened.

As we ask the Lord for His kingdom to come, we pray that errors and heresies will be unmasked and that the power of godliness may be received by many. We pray that God's people would be revived and that all enemies of the church be overthrown, that all the wicked schemes of the devil be brought to nothing. This all belongs to the prayer "Thy Kingdom come."

How is your prayer life? Do we pray for people around us? Do we pray that others would also see this great salvation? Then it is also our duty to be a witness of this great salvation. Then we must also speak to others around us of this great salvation. We need to be a living example of godliness to them. That is the hardest part. It's hard to speak about the Lord Jesus, but it's much more difficult to be a living witness by our actions, by our demeanor. And so, connected to this prayer, "Thy Kingdom come," is the necessity that we would also be living witnesses of the Lord Jesus Christ because really, it is so glorious to be delivered from the slavery of the devil and to be set free from all the winds of this world and to be delivered from a life of vanity and that emptiness would be changed into fullness and that we see the glory of God, that we learn to love Him. Then we have an aim in life.

As we consider this prayer, "Thy Kingdom come," we must also consider ourselves, whether we belong to His kingdom. That means does God's Spirit fill our lives? Has the Holy Spirit filled your life? When the Holy Spirit works in life, He shows that we have rebelled against God. He shows us that we have a heart that is against God, that we want to focus upon our own desires in life. The Holy Spirit uncovers us to our own guilt. He brings us low, and we see how inclined we are to go our own ways, even after having experienced grace, that we still so often seek our own will.

The Holy Spirit gives us then a desire to be humbled before God. The Holy Spirit teaches us to love God above all. When we are praying "Thy Kingdom come," we are praying that we ourselves would also belong to this kingdom. Actually, we could verbalize this petition by saying, "Rule us so by Thy Word and Spirit, that we may submit ourselves more and more to Thee." And so, this petition, "Thy Kingdom come," shows us the need for personal obedience because God's kingdom takes place in our lives through obedience, humble obedience.

The Holy Spirit teaches us to be fully dependent upon the Lord God. Man, by nature, dreams about ruling his own life, but the Lord Jesus teaches people to pray, "Rule us so by Thy Word and Spirit that we may submit ourselves more and more to Thee." Is this also your prayer? Is this what motivates you? This must be our desire in life that we learn to have the Lord as our King, that He rules our lives, that He governs our lives. Have we learned to pray, "Lord, lead us to the glory of Thy name." Have we learned to pray, "Lord, glorify Thyself in our lives."

If it is that we do not know this prayer, then we still resist God, and we don't want Him to rule our lives. Then we are on our own. If we are without this King, if we do not belong to His realm, then we live on our own. Nobody will care for us. The devil certainly will not care for us. The world cannot care for us, and we are unable to care for ourselves. Who will then protect you from danger? Who will lead you through this life? Who will be with you when you have to die? Without bowing for the Lord Jesus in truth, you are cutting yourself off from the source of all life. This is a most miserable condition to be in.

See how good the Lord Jesus is, that nothing can separate God's people from His love, that He cares for them. When He is your King, you are never alone. He strengthens you. He leads you. How then does the Lord lead in life? He leads through His Word and through His Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit teaches us to obey God according to His Word.

We also see this petition will be fulfilled. The fulfillment of this petition, "Thy Kingdom come," is seen in the lives of people who learn to obey Him. These people learn to love Christ. They love His church, and that is a manifestation of His kingdom. Then we desire to support God's church. We will see that sinners will follow Him. When we have been gained for the Lord Jesus, then we belong to His church, and we will love His church. We will care for her. We will support her. We will pray for her. We will also pray that His church will be delivered

from attacks of the evil one because the devil is always at work trying to hinder and stop the progress of God's kingdom. The devil is a great adversary and enemy of the Lord. He is always at work trying to ruin the church. He hates the church because he hates the King of the church. The devil does this because he is evil. When we pray "May Thy Kingdom come," then we are praying that God would overthrow the wicked plans of the devil.

In every possible way the devil will try to harm the church by persecution, by worldliness, by false religion. We are to pray that the Lord would sustain His people under persecution. As we pray "Thy Kingdom come," we are praying that the church that is getting lukewarm would be revived, that heresies may be overthrown. We are praying that everywhere His church may grow and be made healthy and strong. This is a prayer also against our own inclinations, against our lukewarmness, against our natural laziness. This petition accuses us ourselves personally that we are self-centered and that we are not focused upon His church as we should be.

As we pray "Thy Kingdom come," then we are actually praying, "Let my kingdom go down and let my honor be of little or no importance, but let Thy kingdom be established. Then Thy truth shall be acknowledged, and people will find eternal life and real salvation in Christ." We pray, "Glorify Thyself, oh Lord, in expanding and preserving Thy church and protecting her from all her enemies."

This petition will ultimately lead to the glory of God for God's kingdom must come. It will come. And then the Lord shall be all in all. He shall be everything to all God's people. This is the hope and the anticipation and the expectation of all God's people. Therefore, they have courage. Therefore, they continue on. They know His kingdom shall come. That's why our focus must not be upon our own ease or upon our own delights or upon our own prosperity, but let our desires be for the glory of God, for the extension of His kingdom. That sinners may be saved, that they may learn to love God above all.

Then our desire will be that God's glorious kingdom of light will come, and the devil and every enemy be vanquished. This will be reality in your life when the Lord has gained you for His kingdom. Then it cannot be otherwise but you long for the extension of His kingdom, that worldwide but also for the extension of His kingdom in your own life, that you will be more and more gained for Him. 'Teach me to do Thy will, oh Lord. Teach me to crucify my own flesh. Let the old man within me die, and teach me to bear the fruit of Thy Spirit that Thy kingdom would come within me. That Thy love, oh Lord, would constrain me. Teach me to be a blessing to others, although I am really nothing.'

Then you pray "Fill me with Thy Spirit, oh Lord, and open my lips that I may speak Thy Word." And so, you have peace in your heart. You have an aim in life; an Almighty power is on your side. He will fulfill that petition in your own life. God will receive glory in your life, and we long and believe that God will also be glorified in the lives of many other people. What a perspective this is when all sins shall be banished, when God's law will be fully implemented in the lives of His people, when God's people will be forever with Him in His glorious light in New Jerusalem with a new body, with a new name, with perfect new desires, when He will be their All-in-All. What a perspective that He has spoken, "Behold, I make all things new." That will be the final manifestation of His kingdom. That will last forever and ever. Nevermore any attacks. Never any more temptations. The devil will be overthrown. Then my sinful flesh is purified. There will be a new Earth in which righteousness shall dwell. This is what this Kingdom of God will amount to.

In Revelation 21, then John "saw a new Heaven and a new Earth: for the first Heaven and the first Earth were passed away" (verse 1). "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (verse 4). This shall come to pass because it is founded on the death and resurrection of Christ unto Whom is given all power in Heaven and upon Earth, and so we may pray with expectation. We may pray with fervor. We may continue to pray constantly, "Thy Kingdom come." Thank you.