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Lord's Prayer

Safety, protection, deliverance

There's a story I read in a book that goes like this:

When We Say Father: Unlocking the Power of the Lord's Prayer Worry Is Excuseless

A man saw a talking parakeet for sale. Talking parakeets are generally expensive. This one was only fifteen dollars. So he asked the store owner, "Does this parakeet truly talk?" "Certainly." "Only fifteen dollars?" "Yes." "Well, I'll take him." The store owner replied, "Now the cage, of course, is thirty dollars." The man said, "Okay, that's still not too bad. Forty-five dollars; I've got the bird and the cage."

The man was back at the pet store in several days. He said, "You know, the bird doesn't talk." The store owner said, "You did get a little swing, didn't you?" The man asked, "A swing?" "Yes," the store owner replied. "Before he talks, he has to get on the swing and swing." The man asked, "Well, how much is a swing?" "Ten dollars." "I'll take a swing, please."

The man came back again in several days. He said, "Hey, the bird has not said a word." "The store owner replied, "You mean to say that that bird got on the swing and then looked in the mirror and didn't say anything?" The man asked, "What mirror?" "Oh," the store owner exclaimed, "You didn't get a mirror? You need one of these twelve-dollar mirrors." The man said, "All right, give me a mirror."

A few days later the man was back. He said, "The bird is still not talking." The store owner said, "Oh, don't tell me. You mean the bird got on the swing and swung, and looked in the mirror, and went up and down the little ladder and didn't say a word?" The man asked, "What ladder?" The store owner replied, "You didn't get a ladder? Oh, you need one of these nine-dollar ladders."

The man bought a ladder and soon was back, same story. He said, "Mister, this bird is not saying a word." The store owner asked, "You mean to say he pecked

the bell and didn't say anything?" "What do you mean?" "Oh, he always pecks the bell before he talks." "All right. I want the bell."

Then one day the man came in the pet store. He went straight to the owner and said, "Mister, that bird died!" "He died?" the owner asked. "He sure did." "Well, what happened?" "He got on the swing and he swung back and forth. And then he went up and down the little ladder. Then he came back down and he looked in the mirror. And then he pecked the bell. And then he turned to me and said something." "Oh," said the store owner, "he did talk! What did he say?" "He said, 'Don't they sell any birdseed in that store?' And then he dropped over dead!"

We have reached, "Your Kingdom Come" as part of the Lord's Prayer, of which follow the words, your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. We will look at those words next week. But this phrase put together, can be considered to be the priority of the prayer - for God's kingdom to come, God's will to be done. In verses 31-33 of the same chapter we read, ". . . 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear?' For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."

What He's talking about here in this prayer is the power of proper priorities.

Your kingdom come.

When you hear the word kingdom you probably first think of a place. A king's kingdom we might think of the land over which one rules. As Wesley Hill put it, "Coronations

can be terrifying. The enthronement of a new king, queen, or leader can make one queasy with dread. If you've never had to fear when a new prime minister, president, or monarch comes into power, then you have lived a life of rare privilege. For many people in the world—throughout history and also presently, even in the modern West—the passing of power to a new ruler is a matter of gnawing anxiety. A scene from the end of *The Godfather* captures this fear. The protagonist, Michael Corleone, stands near the baptismal font in a Catholic church for his nephew's christening. As the camera lingers on his stoic facial expression and elegant suit, the scene cuts to a series of assassinations that Michael has orchestrated, which are happening at the very same time as the baptism. It turns out that Michael has arranged to become the kingpin of the New York mob, and he is ascending to his throne by means of a bloodbath. The cost of his rule is the death of anyone who stands in his way. The final scene of the film shows him being crowned—the new monarch of terror.

Though this story is fictional it is haunting because there are similar stories happening in real life. Dictators trample on human dignity to ascend their thrones. Terrorists seize the reins of power. Evil individuals, who care nothing for the poor or the sick, take control of governments and kingdoms, and the citizens then fear for their lives. Coronations can be occasions of uncertainty, worry, and

alarm.”

Jesus tells his disciples that “the kingdom of God is among you” in (Luke 17) but on the other hand, Jesus tells his disciples that they are to pray for the coming of the kingdom it can be hard to understand both of these statements together.

At the beginning of the Gospel of Mark, just after John is put in prison, Jesus comes to Galilee, proclaiming the good news, saying, Mark 1:15 “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.””

The Lord’s Prayer: A Guide to Praying to Our Father **Petition II: Your Kingdom Come**
The Greek word that Mark and the other Gospel writers use to summarize Jesus’ message—*basileia*—is probably better translated with a word that indicates activity. A word like “rule,” “reign,” or even “kingship” is closer to the original meaning—which means that when Jesus says “the kingdom of God has come near,” He is proclaiming that God is asserting His rule in the world in and through Jesus’ ministry.

In fact, when I looked up this Greek word it said,

Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament based on Semantic Domains 37.64 βασιλεύω;
βασιλεία, ας

It is generally a serious mistake to translate the phrase ‘the kingdom of God’ as referring to a particular area in which God rules. The meaning of this phrase in the NT involves not a particular place or special period of time but the fact of ruling. An expression such as ‘to enter the kingdom of God’ thus does not refer to ‘going to heaven’ but should be understood as ‘accepting God’s rule’ or ‘welcoming God to rule over.’

I enjoy watching The Bible Project. I’ve shown a few of their videos before during a service for the children’s message in

the past. If you haven't heard of them before it's a non-profit organization that creates free resources to help people understand the Bible and their mission is to make the Bible accessible to everyone. Their visuals can be quite helpful with understanding biblical topics and themes. There's a nice video they created called, Heaven and Earth - the biblical view of heaven and how it relates to earth, which I think goes very well with the topic today and leading into next week. It's 6 minutes, but I thought I would share with you to help visualize the words, "Your Kingdom Come."

(Watch Video)

When Jesus exclaims the kingdom of God he is announcing a sort of re-coronation. Perhaps the same worry and alarm that can happen these days with coronations, or inaugurations happened when Jesus preached these words.

Remember when the Israel elders gathered together and came to Samuel saying, "now appoint a king to lead us, such as all the other nations have." The Lord said to Samuel "Listen to all that the people are saying to you, it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king." Remember how that worked out for the Israelites?

The Lord wanted Israel to be "a kingdom of priests and a

holy nation,” but they disobeyed him and became more and more like the nations around them. We are called to be “a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession,” as it says in 1 Peter 2. Are we living up to this privilege?

Many of you probably remember as a kid the game when you would run to the top of something and say, “I’m the king or queen of the castle and you’re the dirty rascal,” saying this to the people below as they might try to push you off. Many of us, from our earliest childhood believe we are the king or queen of our own castle. We determine our own destinies, we arrange our own affairs, we govern our own lives. We can become really good at selfish, self-centered living where life revolves around the epicenter of me, I, mine.

But when we pray, “your kingdom come,” we affirm that God is King. What we are calling for is not so much a different place but a different order. We are willing to relinquish the rule of our own life, to give up governing our own affairs, to abstain from making our own decisions in order to allow God, by His indwelling Spirit, to decide what we should do. It is a new order in which, as Jesus promises, those who have been last will be first, those who have been oppressed will be free, and where instead of injustice and exploitation there will now be justice, freedom, and love. The prophets speak of this order in metaphors. For

example,

Isaiah says in Isaiah 11:6–9 “The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder’s den. They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.”

Jesus says to Pilate John 18:36 “My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here.”” Jesus taught the 12, Mark 10:42–45 “You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.””

Think back to the story from the beginning, while the man’s priority was getting the bird to talk, he forgot about something more important, more important than the bell,

the mirror, or the ladder.....but the birdseed, food, nourishment. The man didn't put first things first. We run into trouble when we put God in second place and put things first, when we don't seek God and his nourishment first. We are living in the realm of things, when, instead, we're to be, according to what Jesus taught us to pray, seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.

“Your kingdom come” implies that God is first in our lives, your first priority, and then through us, God is in the lives of others as we pray for them and minister to them. We want God's kingdom to rule in homes and families, in places of employment and ministry, in government offices and agencies, and in places of authority and ministry around the world. Until Jesus comes again and establishes the kingdom of glory, we can pray that his kingdom of grace will have great influence through his church. I really liked this analogy that I read, that we can think of the church as a kind of embassy of the kingdom. The embassy, while it wants to dwell peacefully in the foreign land, exists to advance the interests of another country. The church, like an embassy — dwells on earth in various nations around the world — it exists to advance the interests of another kingdom, a heavenly kingdom. The church is the place where you expect to see the values and rules of the kingdom honored and upheld. So, when you pray, your kingdom come, are you living up to the privilege? Are we,

both as individuals and a church, set apart, of a different order?