



Over this week-end we have had the privilege of being able to join in with Archbishop Justin Welby's "Thy Kingdom Come" initiative by visiting the beautiful 24-3 prayer tent in our church room. Next Sunday we will be celebrating the Day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came upon the Apostles. It must be safe to assume the disciples prayed the prayer Jesus taught them during the waiting period before that event and later through many hardships. What does 'Your Kingdom Come' mean? At its simplest it must be 'O God help!' but there are more implications: **Matthew 6: 5-13**

1. What is God's Kingdom?

- God's Kingdom is His realm, His territory where His way of doing things prevails. God's values permeate His Kingdom, so there is no sickness no disease: only justice, mercy, joy, kindness, generosity and outrageous love.
- Heaven and earth are much nearer each other than we imagine: they are interlocked, in a parallel universe, separate yet interwoven like the pieces on a chessboard. So earth and heaven can be described as "Two provinces of one creation: one in harmony with the creator's purposes, the other in chaos and rebellion."*
- Praying 'Your Kingdom come' is asking for God's culture to take over human culture, but not as an imposition. Imagine heaven's culture coming like a warming presence, melting hardness and bitterness, transforming lives
- **The 'now' and the 'not yet'.**
 - Jesus says, 'The kingdom of heaven is near'. Christ's presence brought the power of God to earth, as when a sick woman touched His robe and was healed. She put herself under the authority of the King.
 - The Holy Spirit's presence in Paul brought a sleepy young man called Eutychus back to life: **Acts 20:7-12**
 - But Jesus also tells us to pray, 'Your Kingdom come ...' because although Jesus' birth, life, death and resurrection began the 'Year of our Lord', the full realisation of Kingdom values worldwide is yet to come. Not every sick person is healed, not every hungry person is fed. So Jesus tells us to keep praying for His Kingdom to establish its warm, loving, transforming influence on ours.

2. Entering into Kingdom Prayer.

- There is a difference between reciting this prayer and entering into it. *John Wesley* said, '... Without God man cannot and without man God will not'. God is intent upon partnership with man, so to pray, 'Your Kingdom come' is to declare 'I'm in on this process of surrendering to Kingdom principles'.
- Longing to see God's kingdom power working in us means surrendering territory in our lives we call our own. Greek for worship is *proskuneo* = to kiss the hand, so when we worship God we are pledging allegiance to Him
- For Paul this meant deliberately appealing to Caesar when on trial for his life so that he could present the case for Jesus to the Romans. **Acts 25:10-12; 26:32; Philippians 1:12-14.**
- Centuries ago some missionaries sold themselves into slavery in order to reach real slaves with the gospel....

3. Entering into Kingdom Prayer has consequences.

- On the Day of Pentecost the small group of about 100 believers was expanded to over 3,000 **Acts 2: 40-41**
- Similarly, in the '80's during the Argentinian revival well-ordered little churches of about 50 people were overwhelmed by the jump in numbers coming to worship. They ran out of loo rolls, paper cups, folding chairs and Sunday School teachers – the elders went into shock and complained of the newcomers' lack of discipline!
- It may mean changes to our Church Services or to the way we inter-act with unbelievers.
- We may find ourselves called to a job or a place we hadn't thought of ... we may well experience persecution.
- We'll find ourselves expecting the miraculous when we pray because of what Christ has done for us all.
- But the biggest consequence of praying 'Your Kingdom come' will be to see the world being changed.

Possible Questions:

1. **How do we understand the concept of the 'now' and the 'not yet'?**
2. **Would our lives be different if we really believed we were partnering with God in bringing in His Kingdom?**
3. **Are there any areas of our lives which we mentally ring fence for ourselves and don't let God in?**
4. **Are we prepared for changes to our church services or our way of worshipping in order to see God's Kingdom come, His will be done?**
5. **Begin in a small way: Be patient, results from your prayers might not show up for a while!**
Saying a prayer after watching the news is a good way to start.
Pray against apathy and disappointment – be positive, God is on your side and wants to partner with you..... Other ideas??