

## “Thy Kingdom Come”

Revelation 1:4b-8 & John 18:33-37

- I. “Thy kingdom come, thy will be done. On earth, as it is in heaven.”
  - A. We pray this everyday as we pray the Lord's Prayer, at least I assume, I hope, you all pray everyday.
  - B. But what does it mean to pray “Thy kingdom come?” What does it mean for God's kingdom to come?
  - C. Today is Christ the King Sunday and today we will be looking at what it means for Jesus Christ, the King, and his kingdom to come. There are three things we need to know of the kingdom.
    - i. The kingdom is out of this world.
    - ii. The kingdom is among us now.
    - iii. And, the kingdom is yet to come,
- II. The Kingdom is out of this world.,
  - A. In our text from the gospel of John we see Jesus standing before Pilate for judgment just before the crucifixion.
    - i. The leaders out of fear and jealousy have brought Jesus before Pilate. They have accused Jesus of claiming to be a king. Now, you have to remember that this was the Roman Empire. One did not just go around claiming to be a king. That kind of thing could get one killed, and that is exactly what the leaders had in mind when they brought Jesus before Pilate.
    - ii. So Pilate asks Jesus, “Are you the King of the Jews?” Jesus answers in verse 36, “My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from the world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over.”
    - iii. Pilate goes on to press Jesus, “So you are a king?” Jesus answers, “You say that I am a

king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth.

Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.”

B. Pilate and the Jewish leaders were worried that Jesus being king was a threat to their own power and position and the political and religious status quo. They were both right and wrong.

i. Jesus is the King of the Jews, in fact he is the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords, the King of the Universe. Many of Jesus' early followers thought that Jesus being King meant that Jesus was going to come and bring down the Roman Empire. That is exactly what Pilate and the leaders were afraid of.

ii. After examining him Pilate determines that Jesus poses not threat to his authority and position or that of the Roman Empire. I suppose that when Jesus told Pilate that he was a king but that his kingdom was not of this world, Pilate simply dismissed Jesus as crazy. Suppose I told you that I was the king of an invisible magic land in the clouds. You would all think I am crazy, wouldn't you?

iii. What Pilate did not know was that Jesus and his followers would one day conquer Rome, not by force, but by conversion.

C. Still today the kingdom of Jesus Christ is not of this world. It is not sponsored by, nor does it endorse any political reality, ethnic identity, or national homeland.

D. Followers of Jesus Christ are forbidden from using force to protect, defend, or bring about the kingdom. Instead we are called to be people of truth and love, who are willing to stand up against injustice and oppression. However, we struggle for peace and justice and the growth of the kingdom, not by conquest, but by conversion, not by violence and force, but by truthful and loving words and charitable action.

III. The kingdom is among us now

A. Jesus said that everyone who belongs to the truth, the kingdom, of truth listens to my

voice, the voice of the King.

- B. In Revelation John says that Jesus has made us a kingdom of priests.
- C. We who belong to Jesus Christ, we who obey his Word, we who have been forgiven of our sins because of his sacrifice on the cross. We are the kingdom of Jesus Christ.
- D. Jesus makes us his kingdom by dying on the cross for us and rising again. All who believe in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are part of his kingdom now.
- E. Our membership in this kingdom overrules and supersedes all of the of our other loyalties and obligations because, as we have already heard, this kingdom is not of the world, and, as our text from Revelation tells us, Jesus, our King, is the ruler of all the kings of the earth. Jesus is King of Kings and Lord of Lords.
- F. Our membership in this kingdom also carries with a mission. We are a kingdom of priests. Priests are people who do God's work in the world and who pray to God for the world. We Protestants generally do not call our clergy priests because we are all priests. We are all called to God's mission in the world to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ and the relieve human suffering wherever we find it.

#### IV. The kingdom is yet to come.

- A. Lest we begin to think that the kingdom is all about us our text in Revelation reminds us that the kingdom in its fullness has not yet arrived.
- B. Revelation says, "Look he is coming on the clouds and every eye shall see him."
- C. There is a day coming when Jesus will return to earth to establish his perfect kingdom of peace and love in its fullness. At that time there will be no more evil, no more war, no more sickness, no more suffering, and no more death. At that time those who have died will rise again and they and we who are still alive at that time will be give new, perfect, and immortal bodies, and we will all live together with God and with each other in the kingdom for eternity.

D. And, while the coming of Jesus and his Kingdom is good news for us, it is not all sweetness. Revelation tells us that because of Jesus and his coming “all the tribes of the earth will wail.” When Jesus comes he will come to finally and fully judge and destroy evil.

V. So then exactly what do we mean when we pray, "Thy kingdom come?"

- A. We mean a kingdom which is out of this world. We mean a kingdom that stands above, outside of, and over against all political kingdoms of our world. We mean a kingdom that is at war with the kingdoms of evil and oppression, but is it a war of love and truth, not force and violence, it is a war not of conquest, but of conversion.
- B. We mean a kingdom that is already here among us, the people of God, believers in Jesus Christ. We mean a kingdom to which we all belong now, and kingdom that transcends geographic borders, language barriers, and ethnic divisions, a kingdom which demands loyalty which supersede all other loyalties. We mean a kingdom in which we all are priests, in which we all share in God's mission of proclaiming the Good News and serving the world.
- C. We mean a kingdom that is yet to come. We mean a kingdom that comes when Jesus returns. We mean the kingdom in which there is no more evil and suffering. We mean the kingdom of perfect peace. We mean the kingdom in which we and our departed loved ones will live together forever.
- D. A kingdom that is out of this world. A kingdom that is now with us in our hearts. A perfect kingdom that is yet to come. That is what we mean when we pray, "Thy kingdom come." Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Amen.