

Title: Your Kingdom Come
Text: Luke 11.2b
Theme: Desiring God's plan
Series: Luke
Prop Stmtnt: We are taught how to desire the glorious plan of God.

The Bible is all about the kingdom of God. And the Bible informs us that there is another kingdom that is at war with God's kingdom. That kingdom is Satan's kingdom which disguises itself as man's kingdoms. Therefore, you are presented with two ways to live: Man's way, pledging ultimate loyalty to Man's kingdoms, or God's way, pledging ultimate loyalty to God's kingdom. As followers of Christ, we are ultimate members of God's kingdom even as we live in Man's kingdom. No matter how much effort we put into man's kingdom it cannot replace nor hold a candle to God's kingdom. To those of you who wish that I would say more about politics, listen carefully. I love you too much to waste your time addressing topics that cannot save nor feed your soul. There is a time and a place for political conversations, but it is not the pulpit. Some of you know that a member of my family is in military intelligence. I also have a friend who is a reporter on Capitol Hill. He sees how the sausage is made. I also know a guy who was a writer for an in-depth political newsletter who was at the highest level of our nation's intelligence operations. I know these people and I trust them. They will each tell you that there is so much disinformation that is disseminated in the media that it is hard to know what to believe. I don't have that concern about God's Word. This pulpit is for the preaching of God's Word. It is a dangerous and damnable thing to add to and to take away from the Scriptures. I will not add to them and neither will I hold back from saying all that God's Word says. My responsibility before God and you is to stay on the line of Scripture. God's Word will help you be discerning. And we desperately need discernment. Man's kingdoms and man's kings, at their best are still flawed and at their worst are exceedingly dangerous and deceptive. They are not worth your hope and trust. We reserve that for Christ. Do not let the Evil One dupe you into thinking that the battle is won or lost on the cultural football field. The real battle is over the turf of your heart and whether or not you will submit to God as your ultimate King. So, do politics matter? Yes. But not ultimately. If you focus too much attention and affection on all things political it will mess you up. It will trick you into putting the wrong filter on your life lens and will distort how you see life. If, however your prayer, your longing, your focus is on God's kingdom, then his plan and your part in it will help you see life as you should. Jesus commanded us to seek first his kingdom. In our study of Luke, we see that Jesus is the King of the upside-down kingdom. His kingdom is not like the kingdoms of this world. And in this text where Jesus is teaching his disciples how to pray, he tells us to pray for it.

Read Text: Luke 11.1-4

Last week Chad pointed out that Jesus assumes that his followers pray "*when you pray.*" And he also referenced 1 Thessalonians 5.17 last Sunday morning, which simply says, "*pray without ceasing.*" Taken together it is clear that followers of Christ talk to God and they talk to God all the time.

A few weeks ago, I was in Louisville, KY for several days for a workshop on preaching. My son, daughter-in-law and their 5 kids live there, so I stayed with them, which I love. It also makes my

ears ring. There is not a sleeper amongst those 5. On my way home I called Cathi and she said that she felt sorry for me that I had to be by myself. She suggested that I find a podcast or two or three to keep me company. I told her that I was companied up for a bit and not having the decibel level of a jet engine next to me was fine. We hung up and like many other times, I drove by myself for several hours.

When you are in the car by yourself, or sitting alone in a season of quiet, or cutting the grass, dusting a room, making a bed, emptying the dishwasher, going for a walk, sitting in a study hall, getting some miles in on the treadmill, either not doing anything, or doing something that doesn't require a lot of concentration, and you find yourself day dreaming, what do you dream about? Where do your thoughts tend to go? What fills that space? Is it fear or anxiety? Is it fantasy, imagining a life that is far different than this one? Is it bitterness as you rehearse how much you have been wronged? Is it pity as you feel sorry for yourself? Is it guilt? If that is your internal soundtrack, then it may be why you are tempted to be constantly distracted by other things. If the space in your thoughts is tilted toward unsettling then you want to stay away from them. If you are a follower of Christ, that space in your mind is to be filled up with God. God is ever present and ever working. Prayer is engaging with our ever present and ever acting God. When Jesus told us to address God as "Father" he was helping us understand that all that God is and does, he does fatherly. Prayer is an act of faith, humility and dependence. By addressing God as "Father" we are relating to him, submitting to him, trusting in him as a child who is comforted, protected and provided for by his dad. Our desire for his name to be hallowed, means that we desire that everyone might know him, trust him, and love him as the perfect father as well.

1. God is the King of the Ultimate Kingdom.

The kingdom of God is the ultimate theme of the Bible and is the ultimate story line of history. King-dom is compound word. It comes from smashing king and dominion together. A kingdom consists of a ruler and that which is ruled (dominion). A kingdom has a king and a dom. We are the dom. God is the king. The king-dom is the reign of Christ, the King over all that he has made. The kingdom of heaven is the same thing as the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Christ. The Kingdom of God has two aspects to it. First of all, there is the general sense in which God rules over everything that is. This is what the Psalmist is saying in Psalm 93.1-2:

*The LORD reigns; he is robed in majesty;
The LORD is robed; he has put on strength as his belt.
Yes, the world is established; it shall never be moved.
Your throne is established from of old;
You are from everlasting.*

Our scripture reading from David's song in 1 Chronicles 16 is another example of this theme. So, is God in charge? Does God reign? Yes!! But if God is so great and powerful, then how come this world is such a mess? Why is there cancer and child abuse, ALS and rape? Why is there divorce and Parkinson's and chemical weapons and nuclear warheads and gunmen who walk into schools and open fire strangers or fellow students and teachers? That leads us to the 2nd aspect of God's kingdom. The ultimate manifestation of this kingdom is the formal reign of Jesus Christ as King over his people in a place of astounding beauty and perfection. It takes place

when heaven has literally come to earth and where God literally lives among his people. This kingdom is a spiritual, political, environmental, physical and governmental reality. That has not yet happened. The 2nd aspect of God's kingdom has not come, yet. So, when we pray, "*Your kingdom come*" we are acknowledging that...

2. The Kingdom of God is real but not yet in its fullness.

From the beginning of time, it has been God's plan to live with, enjoy, reign over and through his people in a particular place. That is why he made the earth, the garden and put Adam and Eve in it. God's plan is for life on earth to be like life in heaven. Life in heaven is perfect. Life on earth? Not so much. But, in the beginning we had land, people and God. The Garden of Eden was the kingdom of God. It was perfect. But Adam blew it up. He blew it up because God gave him the freedom to rebel. God gave to humankind freedom because God made us as people in his image and not as robots or machines. But, how do you rebel against God? Can you actually dethrone God? No rebellion against God will succeed. Any revolt against God is doomed to failure because God is and will always be God. God gave us the opportunity to learn that even while God set out on a plan to restore the kingdom, which is like restoring Eden. He is still King. Everything is still under his reign, but for now, he gives the world freedom to live, as it wants, to a degree. Yet, make no mistake; even the freedom to rebel is under the sovereign control of God. So, while we have freedom, it is not unlimited freedom. We have what appears to us to be freedom, but God remains sovereign even over our freedom. We have used our freedom to make an absolute mess of this world. And then we turn around and blame God and say stuff like, if you were really God, you would not let these things happen.

Let's say that you got tickets to Monster Jam down at Ford Field for you and your kids, but on the day of the event they were being defiant, disrespectful, mouthy and out of control. Finally, you got to the point where you said, "I am not taking you to Monster Jam if you don't straighten up." Well, they didn't believe you and so you got on-line and sold your tickets. Now, they are really angry. I can't believe you sold those tickets! I can't believe you're not taking us. What a terrible parent. Hold the phone! All that you are doing is keeping your word. You said that this would happen and it did. And it's no fun because you really wanted to go to Monster Jam with them.

God is allowing the rebellion of mankind to run its course. My understanding of the Bible and the book of Revelation is that things are going to get a whole lot worse before they get better. The rebellion by mankind against God will become more and more organized, more and more violent and destructive. And yet, this world remains his. He made it. He owns it and he will return in person to reign over it. God has promised that the day is coming when everything will be re-established as it was intended to be. In order to give the world a picture of what this would be like God selected a people (the nation of Israel) and he selected a land (the promised land, Canaan) for his people. And, he was the king. But even that was met with resistance. The people wanted a "real" king, which meant that they were rejecting the real king and getting an imitation king. So, God let them try that out. He gave them Saul and it did not go very well. So, God gave them a king (David) who would look, in some ways, like the real king who would come. But the real king who would come, was not just going to reign over Israel, he was going to reign over the entire earth. He was going to have a kingdom that involved people from every tribe, language

and nation. These people would be in his kingdom because they would first and foremost acknowledge that God is Father. What makes him Father? He has a Son. The Son of God is Jesus who will be the King in the Kingdom of God. The kingdoms of this world are ruled by power over and fear. The Kingdom of God is ruled by God who is Father and his Son who is Savior. His kingdom is full of truth and love.

The citizens of his kingdom are not going to be in the kingdom just because God is the king and that's just the way that it is. They are in his kingdom because they want to be citizens in his kingdom. These are the people who truly believe that Jesus is my King and Savior. That means that I am not the King. Jesus is the King. Jesus makes the rules and I not only submit myself to that, I love that! Everybody is under the reign of God. But only those who love God and trust in Christ become actual citizens of his Kingdom.

Let's say that you were raised in a home with two "dads." Or with a dad and mom who fought and screamed all the time. This is what life was like as far as you knew. But as you got older you began to see and experience what a family was supposed to be like. One day, you were at a friend's house and you watched a dad and a mom relate to one another in a way that made something click in you. Something inside of you wanted that. It just felt right. As time went on you realized that your home was not the way God had intended. In fact you began to realize that all of your life you longed for something that was right, peaceful, comfortable and safe.

We are born into this world as members of the rebellion. This world that God made for the kingdom of his Son is in a state of revolution and rebellion and we are born into it on the wrong side. As sinners we join the rebellion and attempt to live as if we are king. We are told by our world and by our hearts that life would be awesome if we could just overthrow the king, because the king hates fun and makes all of these rules and places ridiculous limits on us. But the rebellion is a mess. People do not get along. They kill each other. There is disease, famine, death, lies, addiction, bondage, slavery and abuse. It is ugly. So, even though we are in this rebellion, we wonder if life really has to be this way. Then we hear that life was not always this way. In the beginning this earth was made to be the kingdom for a wise, loving, joyful and delightful king who really was and is infinitely great and infinitely good. And yet, the subjects of this king listened to the treasonous words of an imposter who convinced them that they should be king instead. And on that fateful day, the citizens rebelled. Since that day, the kingdom has been in rebellion against the real king. But, the days of the rebellion are numbered. The King has planned to re-establish his reign. But, before he does that, he wants to give every member of the rebellion a chance to repent of their allegiance to the rebel cause, renounce their citizenship in the imposter kingdom and trust in him. The real King is so merciful that he has provided a pardon for the rebels who will renounce their allegiance to the rebellion and will trust in Him. This pardon is made available because the King, personally paid the debt for their transgressions, so that when they renounce their citizenship in the rebellion and are transferred into the Kingdom of Christ, that there is no punishment for them to endure, no penalty for them to pay, no probation for them to serve. The King has made it possible through repentance (renouncing my kingdom) and faith (allegiance to Christ as King) to become full citizens of his kingdom. Now, as citizens of the King and the coming Kingdom, we are ambassadors who live to tell others about the demise of this kingdom and the establishment of the eternal Kingdom. As citizens of the real kingdom, we are viewed as rebels and threats to the rebellion. So, no, the kingdom is not

here in its fullness. But every time another person trusts in Christ, the real kingdom is then established in another life.

3. The Plea.

When we pray, “your kingdom come” we are pleading with God to come and take back what belongs to him. We are acknowledging that this world is not how it is supposed to be and we want him to return to fix it by taking over everything. Therefore, in order to pray this sincerely, we have to start with ourselves. Think about that for a minute. If Christ returned today what would that mean for you? According to Matthew 25.31 (and following), “When the Son of Man comes in his glory...he will sit on his glorious throne ... and he will separate people from one another as a shepherd separates sheep from the goats....” The sheep (his genuine followers) will inherit the kingdom while those on his left (who are not genuine followers) he will tell them to “Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.” This is the day of judgment when the Lord, the righteous judge returns and establishes his kingdom on the basis of who is his is in and who isn’t is not. So, if the Lord answered this prayer today, where would you be?

Secondly, if the Lord answered this prayer today, is there any area of your life where you resist the authority of God? Is there anything going on in your life right now, where you know what is the right thing to do, but you refuse to do it? You know what God has revealed in his word about this choice you have made, this relationship that you are in, this attitude you have, this habit you indulge in, this part of your life where you just want to be in charge. If Christ came back today, there would be no resisting his Word.

Are you one of those who wants God to fix the world, but you want him to leave you alone so you can do what you want? He is King and you need to reckon with that, happily. Do you realize that you are part of the world that needs to be fixed? Are you willing to pray, “your kingdom come and begin, right here and right now in every area of my life.”? Are you willing to pray that? If not, why not? Do you believe that you actually know better than God? Do you believe that you are wiser than God? Do you believe that your resistance to his will is ok? In other words, can you sincerely pray, “your kingdom come.”?

4. Now what?

Jesus taught this in order to change how the disciples prayed. This text is information designed to change us. If your life is not marked by prayer, please listen to Jesus and start. Here are two related ways you can pray for the Kingdom of God to come. 1) Ask God to help you see what he is doing in this world. 2) Ask God to show you what your part is to be.

Father, help me see what you are doing in this world. Father, show me what my part is to be.