

WARRIORS IN PRAYER

YOURS IS THE KINGDOM

⁹ “This, then, is how you should pray:

“Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,

¹⁰ your kingdom come,
your will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven.

¹¹ Give us today our daily bread.

¹² And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

¹³ And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one. Mathew 6 v 9-13 NIV

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‘Our Father who is in heaven,
Hallowed be Your name.

¹⁰ ‘Your kingdom come.

Your will be done,

On earth as it is in heaven.

¹¹ ‘Give us this day our daily bread.

¹² ‘And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

¹³ ‘And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. [For
Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.‘]

Mathew 6 v 9-13 NASB

The older translations of the bible include the words: For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen. Older translations used older texts from which to translate, and in older texts these words appear.

Some of the more modern texts from which more modern translations come, don't have these words, so more modern translations of the Bible don't have these words. So the NASB and the King James translations include the words “For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.” Where

the NIV does not! It is however, quite likely that the words were included as part of the prayer.

Today, because of their power we are going to spend our time reflecting on this part of what we call the Lord's Prayer: "For yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever. Amen!"

I have a question for you this morning: How is your kingdom?

That might seem a surprising question, but we all have our kingdom. My kingdom is the place where I am at the centre: I am the one building my life; I am the one calling the shots; I am the one making the decisions; I am the one around which everything else revolves. And my kingdom is where my name is glorified. My kingdom exists to promote me; my thoughts; my wishes; my vision; my desires. In my kingdom, I am on the throne! And in my kingdom, I tend to think that my kingdom is as secure as a kingdom can be.

How's your kingdom?

He ruled over what is arguably the biggest and greatest kingdom in human history. He was, in his time, effectively the ruler of the known world. He was, in his time, the most powerful man in the world and the most powerful man who had ever lived. He devoted himself to making his kingdom bigger and better and even more powerful.

He expanded the road system; he founded a postal service, a police force and a fire brigade. He introduced a programme of social reform. He created a standing army for the first time, so that he could protect and expand his kingdom, and he created an army so big and so powerful that it could not be challenged or defeated.

He made sure his image was promoted throughout his empire, so he had statues of himself made and placed everywhere. He had his image printed on the coin of the day.

He took the name Augustus, because Augustus means 'lofty' or 'serene'. Caesar Augustus was devoted to extending his glory and his kingdom. And people literally worshipped him. They proclaimed him a Roman god! A kingdom like that of Caesar Augustus has never been repeated.

Caesar Augustus: my kingdom, my glory, my power.

One day, when Caesar was around 60 year old, he decided it would be good to count the people in his kingdom and Caesar thought it would be good to tax all the people in his kingdom. Caesar Augustus, the most powerful man in the known world, with the biggest kingdom the world had ever seen, was building his kingdom. But Caesar Augustus had no idea what was about to happen.

In one kingdom a census is called to the glory and power of a Roman Emperor, but in another kingdom, something far bigger and far more important is coming to pass. Luke records it this way:

2 In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. ² (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) ³ And everyone went to their own town to register. (Luke 2 v 1-3)

Caesar Augustus thinks he is building the kingdom where he is in control, where he calls the shots, where he has the power. But in a little known backwater town called Bethlehem, far away from the glamour and power of Rome, something entirely different is about to take place.

In Bethlehem, during the census Caesar Augustus set in place, biblical prophecy is fulfilled. Truth promised centuries ago and long awaited comes to pass in Bethlehem, truth about another kingdom where another king is on the throne. A kingdom long promised and long awaited. And it begs a powerful significant question: What king is really at work here, and what kingdom is really at work here?

In the Roman world Caesar made sure everyone knew who he was, and people literally fell at his feet to pay him homage. In Bethlehem literally nobody knew what was taking place – only a few shepherds on a hillside. But there were no angels singing in Rome! The real king who brought a far bigger and a far better kingdom was lying in a manger in Bethlehem!

So...I ask again: How's your kingdom?

We tend to have a kingdom problem. Our kingdom problem is that, in truth, like Caesar, we want to be in charge, and mostly we act as if we are. I work really hard at building the kingdom of Ian Phillips...sadly, I do!

Our kingdom problem, is that our kingdoms are all about "me". We want to be in charge, but there is another kingdom where 'the first shall be the last, and the last shall be first!'

So, I am wondering, how are you building your kingdom, and how is it going?

When Jesus was born he ushered in a kingdom that is different to the kingdom of Rome, the kingdom of Ian Phillips and the kingdom of you! He said that this kingdom, his kingdom, a far bigger and a far better kingdom, is at work in this world.

This is a kingdom where everyone is welcomed and a kingdom where everyone is invited in.

This is a kingdom where the lost become the found, the outcasts become members of the family.

This is a kingdom where the lonely are comforted, the sick are healed and the prisoner is set free.

This is a kingdom where sins are forgiven – completely forgiven and removed as far as the east is from the west. This is the kingdom where love wins.

This is the kingdom where the king loves you because he loves you because he loves you...and leads to the birth of a baby in a town called Bethlehem.

This is the kingdom that you can't always see and you don't always know of its presence, but this is the kingdom into which you have been invited. When you take up Jesus invitation to pray 'Your kingdom come!' you commit to his kingdom. When you take up his invitation and pray 'Your kingdom come' you lay down your kingdom... you give up building your kingdom and you pursue his kingdom.

That is what this whole prayer is really about: I surrender my kingdom, and I will pursue the kingdom of the heavens, the far bigger, far better kingdom.

I am going to invite you now, here, in these moments, to pray this prayer – but we'll do it in song. In these moments, as we worship together you can take the opportunity to commit yourself to the kingdom begun in Bethlehem. As we worship you can give to the king all the places where you are building your kingdom: your agenda; your sin; your grudges; your fears; your hopes and dreams. You can take these moments to build your life on the only throne that will last! You can do what Caesar never did – find your way to Bethlehem.

Worship

"Yours is the kingdom and the power!" Do you have anywhere in your life that you need the power of God? Do you have a need, a challenge, a relationship, a burden that you know you cannot manage on your own? The truth is we are not made to live in our own power. Jesus invites us to pray for, and live in the power of Almighty God.

⁴ After arresting him, he put him in prison, handing him over to be guarded by four squads of four soldiers each. Herod intended to bring him out for public trial after the Passover.

⁵ So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him.

⁶ The night before Herod was to bring him to trial, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries stood guard at the entrance. ⁷ Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light

shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him up. “Quick, get up!” he said, and the chains fell off Peter’s wrists.

⁸ Then the angel said to him, “Put on your clothes and sandals.” And Peter did so. “Wrap your cloak around you and follow me,” the angel told him. ⁹ Peter followed him out of the prison, but he had no idea that what the angel was doing was really happening; he thought he was seeing a vision. ¹⁰ They passed the first and second guards and came to the iron gate leading to the city. It opened for them by itself, and they went through it. When they had walked the length of one street, suddenly the angel left him.

¹¹ Then Peter came to himself and said, “Now I know without a doubt that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from Herod’s clutches and from everything the Jewish people were hoping would happen.”

¹² When this had dawned on him, he went to the house of Mary the mother of John, also called Mark, where many people had gathered and were praying. ¹³ Peter knocked at the outer entrance, and a servant named Rhoda came to answer the door. ¹⁴ When she recognized Peter’s voice, she was so overjoyed she ran back without opening it and exclaimed, “Peter is at the door!”

¹⁵ “You’re out of your mind,” they told her. When she kept insisting that it was so, they said, “It must be his angel.”

¹⁶ But Peter kept on knocking, and when they opened the door and saw him, they were astonished. ¹⁷ Peter motioned with his hand for them to be quiet and described how the Lord had brought him out of prison. “Tell James and the other brothers and sisters about this,” he said, and then he left for another place

Peter is in prison and the church come together to pray for him. This was earnest prayer – they really wanted something to happen. I’m wondering what the earnest prayer was: keeping him safe? It suggests much more than keeping Peter safe! While the church is praying, God is at work.

The power of God through an angel sent to help free Peter. Peter himself isn’t even sure it’s really happening until he’s out of the prison! But he comes to realise exactly what has happened: God’s power has freed him! And then Peter goes to where he knows people will be praying – he knows that people will be praying!

Now, I want you to think about and reflect on what happens next. People are earnestly praying for Peter that God might step in and Peter might be released from prison. In the middle of their praying, Peter arrives at the front door and

waits to be welcomed in. A servant girl, Rhoda, is so excited that Peter is at the door she forgets to let him in. And when, in her excitement, she tells those praying for Peter's release that he is at the door – they don't believe her!

Let's get this straight; the people praying earnestly for Peter's release don't believe that Peter is at the door! It begs the question: What were they expecting as they prayed?

Maybe the truth is, they were praying without really believing in the power of the God to whom they were praying. I'm wondering how much you might recognise that in your own life. Thing is, we can do the same: We can pray but we don't really believe in God's power.

How about you?

Thing is, when we don't really believe in God's power, we don't really ask for God's help and we try to do it on our own. So, how about taking up the challenge of asking God to show his power in the area of your life where you need it most. If you do, you do it in the light of having just committed yourself to his kingdom, not yours.... to building his kingdom, not yours.... to making him king, not you.

So where do you need God's power most in your life: a regret, a temptation, a relationship, in your finances, in mission, for the future, for the past, in the present? And as you do that, you begin to live for his glory, as you commit to his kingdom, to living in his power; you begin to proclaim his glory.

When we live this prayer we find our lives are transformed and we seek the things God seeks, we desire the things he desires and we love the things he loves.

Luke records that Jesus' life ended as it began. Caesar Augustus decreed and Jesus was born in Bethlehem. Caesar Tiberius decreed and Jesus died on a cross just outside Jerusalem. But which kingdom was really at work? Caesar serves his own glory. Jesus' kingdom is completely different.

2 Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion,² then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind.³ Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves,⁴ not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

⁵ In your relationships with one another, have the same mind-set as Christ Jesus:

⁶ Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own
advantage;
⁷ rather, he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.
⁸ And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross!
⁹ Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,
¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
¹¹ and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father

Philippians 2 v 1-11

Caesar thought he got Jesus to bow to him, when in fact, one day, every knee will bow to the name of Jesus. And one day God's glorious, far bigger and far better kingdom will fully come and every knee will bow.

But friends, we don't have to wait until then; we can bow our knee now.

So how about you? What will you do?

Preached in Crawley Baptist Church, on Sunday 7th July 2019, by Rev. Ian Phillips.