

“Welcome to the Kingdom!”

(Luke 11:2, pt. 1)

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I. Introduction

A. Reading on the flight to California

1. *“In the Garden of Beasts”*
 - a. The true story of William Dodd and his family
 - b. U. S. Ambassador to Germany in 1930’s
 - c. During Hitler’s rise to power
 1. The “beasts” that assisted Hitler
 - d. Saw the evil firsthand
 1. Martha and “the kiss”
2. The importance of an “ambassador”
3. In a very real sense, you’re an ambassador
 - a. II Corinthians 5:20

Therefore we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us; we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God. II Corinthians 5:20

B. What does that have to do with the Lord’s Prayer?

1. Luke 11

(1) One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.” (2) He said to them, “When you pray, say:

2. Similar to Matthew 6
 - a. Same prayer...different setting and time

1. Sermon on the Mount
2. More complete
- b. Using New King James
 1. Most familiar
3. Matthew 6 (NKJV)

(9) 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 this day our daily bread. (12) And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. (13) And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

C. The importance of “the kingdom”

1. The kingdom is at the start and finish of the prayer
 - a. *“Your kingdom come”*
2. Christians have been praying it for 2000 years
 - a. And most don’t know what they’re asking for

D. When John the Baptist began to preach

1. The silence was shattered
2. What was the first thing he said?
 - a. Matthew 3:1-2

(1) In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, (2) and saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!” Matthew 3:1-2

E. Then Jesus hit the scene

1. Baptized by John
2. Endured 40 days of temptation
3. He began to preach
4. What was the first thing he said?

- a. Matthew 4:17

(17) From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Matthew 4:17

- 5. The king was at hand....in front of them

F. The kingdom is a theme that pervades all of scripture

- 1. The start and finish of the Book of Acts

- a. Opening words of Jesus

- 1. Acts 1:3

(3) After his suffering, Jesus showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.

- b. Closing words of Paul

- 1. Acts 28:30

For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. (31) Boldly and without hindrance he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ.

- 2. The theme of so many of the parables

- a. The Kingdom starts small and grows

- 1. The mustard seed

- 3. ***“The Kingdom of Heaven” vs. “The Kingdom of God”***

- a. They are the same Kingdom

- b. Matthew said “Heaven” instead of “God”

- 1. Spoke to the Jews who would never say the name of God

- 2. Substituted “heaven” for “God”

- c. Some people today say *“Oh for heaven’s sake”*

II. What we know about the Kingdom of God

1. We're told to pray for His Kingdom to come

2. We're told that His Kingdom is already here

- a. Matthew 4:17

(17) From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

- b. His kingdom has always been on earth
 c. But now, the King was at hand...Jesus was right there
 d. "Welcome to the Kingdom!"

3. There's a lot more Kingdom to Come!

- a. We are to pray, ***"Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."***

1. His will is being done in part...but not like it is in heaven
 2. How and when will that part take place?

- b. Harold Kamping's attempts...May 21 and now October 21

- c. Great confusion regarding the coming kingdom

1. Rapture, tribulation, millennium, etc.

- d. His disciples in Luke 21....Mount of Olives

1. Jesus told of what was to come
 2. Their question, "When will these things happen?"

- e. In two weeks I'll answer that question

4. There also exists a "Kingdom of Darkness"

- a. The kingdom of Satan (Revelation 16:10)

1. Of darkness
 2. Rules over the world

- b. Every person belongs to one of the two kingdoms

- c. Christ rescued you from the kingdom of darkness
- d. Satan's kingdom will one day be destroyed
- e. But, doesn't God rule over all of creation?

5. There are two aspects to the Kingdom of God

a. Universal Kingdom

1. Apart from time and space
2. All is under his authority
3. God is ruling all of creation, including Satan and all those in the kingdom of darkness and all the kingdoms of man
4. Don't have to pray for that part to come

b. Redemptive Kingdom

1. Salvation

- a. Praying for souls to be added to the kingdom
- b. Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness (Matt. 6:33)
- c. Advancing the kingdom one soul at a time
- d. Our vision

2. Sanctification

- a. Praying for personal spiritual growth
- b. Your own personal spiritual growth
- c. Doing God's will in your daily life

3. Second Coming

- a. Praying for the return of Jesus
- b. The fulfillment of the Kingdom of God
- c. "*When will these things happen?*"

6. The Kingdom demands obedience to the will of God

- a. ***“Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven”***
 - 1. God’s will is always done in heaven
 - 2. It’s sometimes done on earth
- b. A time is coming when “God’s will” will be done on earth as it is in heaven
- c. We should seek to obey his will in our daily lives right now
 - 1. We shouldn’t wait till we get to heaven to obey him
- d. Is suffering part of God’s will?
 - 1. Next....Understanding God’s will

7. Admission to the Kingdom requires repentance

- a. ***“Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand”***
- b. Repentance and salvation
 - 1. More than confessing you’re a sinner
 - 2. Turn from sin
 - 3. A changed life

8. We already possess citizenship in God’s Kingdom

- a. Jesus to Pilate in John 18:36

“My kingdom is not of this world...but from another place”
- b. Our citizenship is in heaven
 - 1. Philippians 3:20

But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ,

- 2. Ephesians 2:19

Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household.

- c. We're foreigners in this land
 - 1. That's why we stand out
 - 2. We talk and act differently
- d. Not like the citizens of Satan's kingdom

9. We're more than just citizens

We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. (II Corinthians 5:20)

a. We speak for God

- 1. The ambassador delivers the president's message
- 2. We are to deliver God's message to this world
- 3. He has written it all down for us

b. We carry the power of the One we represent

- 1. Treat USA ambassador with respect and some fear
 - a. Because of whom he represents
- 2. The privilege of being God's ambassador

c. We have direct and immediate access to God

- 1. Satellite communication
- 2. Only a prayer away

d. We must obey even if we don't understand everything completely

- 1. Not the ambassador's job to second guess—just obey!
- 2. God sees the "Big Picture"
 - a. You only see a particular battlefield
 - b. He sees the whole war
- 3. Jesus regarding the blind man

- a. John 9:1-3

(1) As Jesus went along, he saw a man blind from birth. (2) His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” (3) “Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” said Jesus, “but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life.”

- b. Josh’s comments regarding Bella

- 4. If you have taken the *wrong* road?

- a. Grow where you are
- b. Or find the right path
- c. Never too late or too old

e. We must avoid embarrassing the One we represent

- 1. “The Ugly American”

- a. Caught lying
- b. Caught cheating them out of money
- c. Drunk and disorderly
- d. An embarrassment to our whole land

- 2. You are an ambassador in a foreign land

- a. Higher expectations
- b. You represent Christ and His kingdom
- c. May judge all Christians by how you behave

- 3. Embarrass by—

- a. Not paying debts
- b. Telling off-color stories
- c. Racist comments
- d. Cheating on a test
- e. Skipping school or work

f. Gossip

4. More than your reputation at stake

a. Hurt the reputation of Christ

b. And every other citizen of His kingdom

f. We enjoy a certain degree of diplomatic immunity & protection

1. The embassy

a. A piece of America on foreign soil

b. Not governed by their laws

c. Guarded by U.S.M.C.!

2. The Christian ambassador?

a. My home

1. A piece of heaven on earth

b. Guarded by God's marines

1. His angels

g. We are ambassadors regardless of our circumstances

1. If a country dared to imprison our ambassador?

a. Still an ambassador

b. American embassy in Iran under President Carter

2. Paul's work as an ambassador

a. Ephesians 6:20

“For which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak”

3. Some of his best work while in prison

a. He wrote Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon

4. You are ambassadors regardless of what you're doing

- a. At work
- b. At school
- c. Buying groceries
- d. On vacation

1. “What happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas”

h. We’ve been given supernatural empowerment to do our job

- 1. Acts 1:7-8

(7) Jesus said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. (8) But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

- 2. The importance of spiritual gifts

i. God pleads with the lost through our words and lives

- 1. II Corinthians 5:20

“Therefore we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us; we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God.”

- 2. I implore you this morning
- 3. How to be reconciled to God?

- a. The very next verse.....II Corinthians 5:21

(21) God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might be the righteousness of God.

- b. Invitation

III. Summary

A. Welcome to the Kingdom

- 1. Are you behaving like an ambassador?
- 2. Is Christ reigning in your life?