

Text: Psalm 72 (International Children's Bible)

Sunday 31st May 2020

Brightons Parish Church

Let us pray. May the words of my mouth, and the meditation of all our hearts, be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, our strength and our redeemer. Amen.

Boys and girls – what am I saying?

(SIGN START OF LORD’S PRAYER)

Do you know? Could you remember? It was the start of the prayer Jesus taught us, we **prayed it today:**

‘Our Father, who is in heaven,

hallowed be Your name,

Your kingdom come...’

(Matthew 6:9-10)

We say this prayer every Sunday and hopefully you’re starting to learn both the prayer and the sign language so that you can join in and say it with us.

Now, Jesus wasn't the first person to encourage us to pray for God's Kingdom to come into the world because **about one thousand years** before Jesus this psalm was written. Our psalm today is one example of a prayer where God's people prayed for God's Kingdom to come, and they probably prayed it when a new king of Israel started to reign as king. **It might have first been used** when Solomon was starting out as king and the people would have prayed this psalm, asking, hoping that Solomon would be a good king and receive from God, God's justice and righteousness, God's goodness, so that God's Kingdom would be seen on the earth. I wonder, can you remember any other names of kings in Israel? I'll give you 30 seconds to see what you can come up with.

(PAUSE)

So, I wonder what names you remembered – if you want, you can share them in the live chat just now. **You might have said** good kings like David or Josiah. Or, you might have said some bad kings, like Jeroboam or Ahab. But even the good kings were not perfect, not as perfect as what the people prayed for in this psalm. **Also, none of the kings stayed as ‘king’ for ever, and none of them reigned over as big an area as the people prayed for – they prayed for all the nations** to be blessed because of the king (v17), for they wanted everyone to know God’s justice, protection, and peace, or we might say wholeness. And so, the people had to keep praying this prayer, until one day someone very special came – who do you think this was boys and girls? Who was this special person? Shout it out loud of me! (PAUSE)

That's right – it was Jesus. When Jesus had grown up to become a man and started going around teaching people about God, **He said this:**

'The time has come...The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!' (Mark 1:15)

Jesus was saying, that because He had come to earth, then the Kingdom of God was breaking into the world and starting to change the world. **Another time Jesus said:**

**'The Spirit of the Lord is on me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.**

He has sent me **to proclaim freedom for the prisoners
recovery of sight for the blind,
to set the oppressed free,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.'**

(Luke 4:18-21)

As Jesus started going around helping people, healing people, teaching people, the kingdom of God started to come into people's lives and change their lives. That prayer, which God's people had been praying for hundreds of years, was coming true through Jesus, because Jesus is the perfect King, the King of God's Kingdom, and so people started to experience God's justice and righteousness; they started to experience God's peace, His shalom, the gift of wholeness; the people knew that what **Jesus said of Himself was true:** 'Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest...' (Matthew 11:28) or **another time He** said, '...whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.' (John 4:14) The hopes of that psalm were coming true in Jesus...

because Jesus was God's promised King, the King the people had been praying and waiting for, the King through whom God's Kingdom would come upon the earth and change people's lives.

So, why did Jesus include a line in His prayer, which says, 'Your Kingdom come'? I'll give you 30 seconds to think or talk about that. (PAUSE)

Again, if you want to, you can share your ideas in the live chat just now because there's probably lots of things we could say. But I wonder if part of the reason is that Jesus wanted to shape our agenda, **because what you care** about, you pray about. I wonder, what do we pray about? How high up the agenda is God's Kingdom in our prayer life? Or, do we simply jump into 'give me my daily bread'...

and rarely get past that? Not that God doesn't care for our daily bread, He told us to pray about it after all. **But, do you want to see this world get better?** Do you? Do you want to see justice reign and love for neighbour to grow? Then pray for God's Kingdom to come. Do you want to see the poor treated right and to know life in your own soul and mind and body? Then pray for God's Kingdom to come. Do you want to see crime and addictions and isolation and hopelessness decrease? Then pray for the Kingdom of God to come. **Maybe Jesus includes that line,** and puts it so near the top, so as to challenge us, to recalibrate our priorities, and to call us to seek His Kingdom and pray for His Kingdom, because it is the coming of His Kingdom into this world and into our individual lives that will bring the wholeness, the blessing, which our psalm spoke of.

So, in these difficult days, are we praying for God's Kingdom to come? Are we praying for light to come into darkness, and for love to come where people are lonely? Are we praying for creativity and understanding in the issue of a vaccination? This too is to pray for God's Kingdom to come.

And what about the situation here in the Braes area, as we face a future with 2 ministers instead of 5 – how high up our agenda is the Kingdom of God? Or is our focus more on our little area, our stuff, our buildings, our reputation, our minister, our comfort, our needs? Or can we pray, 'Your Kingdom come'? Because if we pray this, then our focus may move from ourselves and to the wider concerns of God's Kingdom, through which blessing and wholeness will come to our area and beyond.

There is much more to say, and I'll share some of that in our Tuesday Evening Sermon, so join me then, if you're able or get the recording later in the week.

But let us be a people who pray, 'Thy Kingdom come', not simply by rote, not simply because of tradition, but because our hearts yearn for the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus to come in our midst, that the people in our parishes, in our workplaces, in our families and circle of friends, might experience in increasing measure the kingdom of God, and so know with certainty that one day they will experience the fullness of God's kingdom when Jesus returns and we see Him face to face.

**Until that day, we pray, Thy Kingdom come. May it be so.
Amen.**

We close with our final hymn, “You’re the Word of God the Father” – which is a hymn that reminds us of how powerful, eternal and loving is Jesus Christ, our King.