

40 DAYS OF *prayer*

DAY
08

WEEK 2

PRAYER AS KINGDOM PARTNERSHIP

Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

The Kingdom is where the King rules. Dallas Willard describes the Kingdom as “God in action.” A large portion of Jesus’ teaching was about His Kingdom—defining it, describing it, parables that illustrate it. The people of God’s Kingdom can participate with Him where we live, work, play, and worship—but are we? Do people see our Alliance churches and Alliance members partnering with King Jesus so that His will is done? May the focus of our prayers release God’s Kingdom and reveal!

» by David and Ty King



ARE WE KINGDOM-MINDED?

MATTHEW 13

Dallas Willard said, “You can’t think correctly about life or the church without first thinking correctly about the Kingdom.” Being kingdom-minded is paramount and priority. For Jesus, the Kingdom was the priority. The Kingdom was part of His first sermon (Mark 1:14–15), what He preached regularly (Luke 8:1), what He talked about for the last 40 days He walked this earth (Acts 1:3), and what He taught His disciples to pray (Matt. 6:9–10), proclaim (Matt. 10:7) and pursue (Matt. 6:33).

Maybe we have lost the priority of the Kingdom somewhere in the midst of our Western ideas of a kingdom, our democratic perspective on governance, our misunderstanding of the relationship between the Church and the Kingdom, or our theological constructs.

In Matthew 13, Jesus tells seven parables all related to the Kingdom. In the midst of those parables, Jesus says that the “secrets” of the Kingdom have been given to those who belong to the Kingdom. Being Kingdom-minded means we are aware of the secrets and pursue a deeper understanding of those secrets and how to live them out as Kingdom people.

The question is, “Are we Kingdom-minded?” The answer is found in how we live our lives. Characteristics of a Kingdom lifestyle are discovered throughout the “secrets” of Matthew 13. Kingdom-minded people bear fruit, live distinctively, live incarnationally, see transformation regularly, act counter-culturally, pursue continually, and live sacrificially.



REFLECTION PRAYER

To our King,

We are grateful to have experienced the great joy of being redeemed out of the kingdom of darkness and made citizens of Your Kingdom. We are grateful to be included among those to whom the knowledge of the secrets of the Kingdom has been given.

We ask, Lord, that You would enable us to steward Kingdom secrets well, to seek first, to treasure dearly, and understand fully Your Kingdom. As ambassadors of Your Kingdom in this world, we ask for eyes to see open doors and boldness to declare the gospel of the Kingdom to all nations. Amen.

» by Todd Sovine

KINGDOM THROUGH ALLIANCE MISSIONS

LUKE 10:17-21

As I read Luke and Acts, tracing their major themes, one of the threads that caught my attention was the thread of joy. We had a friend in Uruguay who was of the opinion, influenced by his favorite book, that Christ did not laugh. My husband conversed with him more about that view, but I was struck by that man's picture of a joyless Jesus.

The picture we see in the gospels is quite the opposite. We see a person full of joy, a person who rejoiced and celebrated well. In the passage for today, Luke 10:17-21, Jesus sent out the disciples for ministry, and they came back rejoicing about what happened as they ministered in His name. There is a lot we could parse out here, but what captured my attention was Jesus' response in Luke 10:21: "Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit."

As I read this passage, I felt Jesus' joy in partnering with His people, in empowering His people to do the work He created them for. Revealing the things of the Kingdom to "little children" is thrilling to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Jesus was filled with joy to see the Kingdom lived out in front of His eyes through His friends.

It brings Jesus great joy to partner with you.

Also, I am pretty sure Christ had the best laugh ever.



REFLECTION PRAYER

May we experience again the wonder of God in action. May we feel the joy of Jesus over us as we live out the Kingdom wherever we are located. May we be filled with an "inexpressible and glorious joy" (1 Pet. 1:8) because of our salvation. May we be filled with joy in Your presence (Ps. 16:11). May we have the full measure of Your joy within us (John 17:13). May we go out in joy (Isa. 55:12). Thank You that You delight over us. Amen.

» by Kora Taube

KINGDOM THROUGH CHURCH PLANTING

LUKE 17:20-21

My wife always says, “You notice everything.” Sometimes it is said with a sprinkle of admiration, and other times it is said with splash of annoyance. I am observant, and if I wasn’t called to vocational ministry, I like to think I would be a gritty detective who brings justice to the streets. I like to characterize and categorize my surroundings. This personality has benefits, but most of the time, it has to do with control. I observe and categorize so I can have control over my environment.

The Pharisees approach Jesus with predictable interference when they ask Him in Luke 17 when the Kingdom of God would come. What they were asking for was control. Jesus has a magnifying glass on the meditations of their heart, as He often does in these exchanges, and answers, “The kingdom of God is not coming in ways that can be observed, nor will they say, ‘Look, here it is!’ or ‘There!’ for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you” (Luke 17:20–21).

In other words, The Kingdom of God will not be observable through culture, creed, or power structure. It won’t be formulaic or able to be controlled. The Kingdom of God will be observable through the presence of the King.

I believe cities can be changed through church planting. However, church planting that seeks to garner their own kingdom or control a city will fail. Church planting that seeks for and chases the presence of the King will prevail.



REFLECTION PRAYER

Dear King,

We long for You to be the center and in our midst.
We repent for where we are off-center.
We ask for Your presence to be the tip of the spear.
We repent for where we have led with our own name.
We ask for You to control and have Your way.
We repent for our need to control and have our own way.
We call on Your presence.
We call for Your leadership.
We call for You, our Shepherd.
Be in our midst; be in our midst. Amen.

» by Justin Thornton

KINGDOM THROUGH DIVERSITY

JOHN 13:31-38

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”—John 13:34-35

In the beginning of this dark setting, Jesus washed His disciples’ feet then predicted His betrayal by Judas in the Upper Room. Jesus then tells of His leaving for the cross and predicts the denial of Peter. In the middle of this conversation, Jesus tells them “to love one another as I have loved you, so you must love one another.”

At first glance, I suppose Jesus knew that His disciples would need each other when He left them—no fighting or blaming, but love one another. However, tucked in between loving one another is “as I have loved you.” This isn’t just Jesus’ example of sacrificial love for the world; we also need to receive His love and be filled with His love. Only then can we love one another.

What’s the purpose of this command? The purpose is so that the world will know that we are followers of Jesus. As we call upon God’s coming Kingdom, we also submit to His rule and reign here today by loving one another. Jesus came to us as a bridge between His Father and sinful humankind, not just for one group of people, but for all.



REFLECTION PRAYER

“Teach me to treat all that comes to me with peace of soul and with a firm conviction that Your will governs all.” —Elisabeth Elliot

Lord Jesus,

Thank You for loving me. Continue to fill me with Your love so that I can love others. Show me how I can build bridges in our community as an example of Your Kingdom. Help me reflect on how people will see that I am a follower of You, especially if I don’t break down my own walls of hostility and separation. Encourage me to have a meal with someone outside of my own beliefs and ethnicity. Thank You, Lord. Amen.

» by Hang Wong

KINGDOM THROUGH HEALTHY CHURCHES

MATTHEW 5:13-16

God's Kingdom is being built upon the Living Cornerstone, Jesus (1 Pet. 2:4), and on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets (Eph. 2:20). God is using the believers, the living stone to build His Kingdom from the past, to the present, and into eternity (1 Pet. 2:5), and this living Kingdom is ever-growing and expanding (Acts 13:49).

The Kingdom is dependent on the new hearts, natures, and spiritual value system that God gives (John 1:12). Our identity has become His (Gal. 4:19). The Kingdom is being built by God Himself, using His holy living materials to build it, which are His chosen living stones. The distinctive lifestyle of the lives of Christians comes from a transformational disposition of the heart by the powerful work of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 5:3-10). This is a transformation as the result of the living present of the Lord Jesus Christ in us (Gal. 2:20). It is His attitudes, thinking, and actions, for the living God who lives inside a person is in itself a miracle (Luke 1:35).

In Matthew 5:13-16 we are "salt" and "light" of this world! How could it be? Without the life and influence of Jesus Christ in me, my life would bear no result nor influence! God is establishing His Kingdom from eternal past, to present, into eternity; and He is doing it with the Body of Christ where Christ is the head of this Body (Eph. 5:23).



REFLECTION PRAYER

Pray according to Romans 11:33-36: "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has become His counselor? Or who has first given to Him And it shall be repaid to him? For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen."

» by Chinh Nguyen

KINGDOM THROUGH CARE OF THE EARTH

ROMANS 8:19-23

“Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”

This is what I think of when I read Romans 8:19–23. Anticipation and longing form a palpable tension between what is and what we hope will come to be: the coming of the God’s Kingdom.

Strikingly, Paul intertwines creation’s anticipation with the fate of humanity. Creation awaits liberation “from its bondage to decay” while humanity awaits adoption and redemption. In fact, creation’s liberation is dependent on humanity’s redemption; it waits in expectation “for the children of God to be revealed” in order that it might be “brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.” Kingdom–living brings life to the whole word.

Paul reminds us that when people sin, creation suffers. In Genesis 1, creation was subjected to humanity, who was tasked to rule over and care for it. When humanity promptly rebelled against God and this task, creation began its suffering, waiting for the redemption of those who would reflect God and His rule.

In our redemption, we become what we were created to be: participants in the Kingdom of God who rule over and care for creation. To participate through care of the earth, we must commit to orienting our lives toward God’s creation in the ways that He designed us to do—to rule as He rules and to care as He cares so that we help bring about the flourishing of all life.



REFLECTION PRAYER

Lord of Creation,

We thank You first and foremost for the gift of life that comes through Jesus Christ. As we reflect on this passage, we repent of the ways that we fail to be Your image bearers, not least in how we choose to live in the world. Forgive us for failing to love our neighbor and Your creation. May Your Holy Spirit convict and guide us into new habits of living. Give us the strength to be obedient to Your Kingdom rule. In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit we pray, amen.

» by Chris Vena