

Feb 25 – Your Kingdom Come, Your Will Be Done

Luke 10:25-28

We, in this country, have a fascination with British Royalty. We are eagerly awaiting the marriage of Prince Harry to Meghan Markle and the birth of the third child to William and Kate. We put seeing the Crown Jewels high on our list of things to do if we go to London and read with fascination stories about the royals churned out by the British tabloids. But when it came right down to it, we didn't like having a king. We didn't want someone over there telling us here what to do and so we revolted.

The people of Israel no sooner enter the Promised Land than they start asking for a King. The Judges, who guided Israel for 400 years tried to convince them that God was their King. The people wanted to be like every other kingdom. Having a king meant they were important. A King commanded armies. A king conquered your enemies and brought home spoils. The judges warned that a king also taxed you and took your sons off to war and your daughters into his harem. They wouldn't listen. Finally the last of the Judges, Samuel, anoints Saul as the first King. When he refuses to follow God, Samuel anoints David as their new King. Ultimately, his son Solomon succeeds him. The history of the Kings of Israel and Judah is mostly a story of power, greed and faithlessness to God. Just what the prophets had predicted. Ultimately, their kings are defeated and the people in the north dispersed, those in the south taken into captivity for a time. Soon after being conquered and even after they return to Jerusalem the prophets talk about a Messiah, a king from the lineage of David, who would rule with faith and power forever.

By the time Jesus offers this prayer, they have Caesar on the throne in Rome with puppet kings like Herod beneath him. The Zealots and Essenes were seeking their promised Messianic King. They believed this Messiah would overthrow Rome and its puppets and allow them to be free and to faithfully follow God.

With this context what was Jesus suggesting when he asks that we pray to God, "Thy kingdom come?" What does it mean today when we pray those words? To acknowledge God as king means we are no longer in charge. We are asking that God's vision for our lives should prevail. The Bible gives us some insight as to what God, as

King, would want if his kingdom was here on earth. We should welcome everyone into our church, visit the sick, be honest in business dealings, don't go to bed angry, forgive 70 times 7, do good for those who hate you. The list could go on and on.

Someone has said that God's kingdom cannot come until our kingdom goes. We don't like being told what to do. We revolted when England tried to do that. Yet, this is what this prayer is saying. In praying it, we are saying God, you are in control. Your vision for the world is now our vision. This means that we embrace change. We are willing to do it God's way instead of our own.

Do we really want God's kingdom to come? Or do we instead want to treat God's kingdom as we do the British Monarchy. It is something fun to read about, to tune in to and enjoy the spectacle once in a while but when it comes to actually living under their authority, no thanks.

Before you answer that question think about the story of the Good Samaritan. Jesus told it to answer a question about who is our neighbor. It could have just as easily been shared to answer the question, "What does it mean to have God as king in my life." A man fell among robbers and was beaten, stripped and left half dead. Along comes first a priest and then a Levite. These were learned men of the Torah. They knew the rules about helping those in need. The commands to take care of the stranger in your midst were not new with Jesus. They knew what God wanted them to do. Walking by and ignoring this man in need is a way of saying, "Let God be someone else's king but not mine—at least not right now." They were afraid. Perhaps the robbers were still around. Maybe they were late to an important event. They wanted a king, a Messiah, but not one that would inconvenience them. Along comes the Samaritan. He represents those who good Jews believed were worshipping God incorrectly, if at all. Yet he risks, he cares. He knew what God wanted and in responding was acknowledging God as king of his life.

I will ask the question again. Who wants a king? To have God as king means we are no longer in charge. God's vision prevails. God's kingdom cannot come until our kingdom goes. This is why Jesus wants us to pray each day for the coming of God's kingdom, not in theory but in our lives.

This part of the Disciple's Prayer is the revolutionary part of the prayer. It is asking us to become change agents in a world that does not reflect God's kingdom. We know that God wants all to feel loved, to be at peace, to not hunger. For God's kingdom to come it takes Christians working together with all people of faith to help those in need and demand changes.

This part of the prayer is saying that it is our desire for others to see, hear and feel the loving presence of God in their lives. For this to happen we must engage in kingdom building in all the ways necessary to make meaningful changes in the lives of the people we are to reach.

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven means we are turning over our own interest and desires. We are willing to get out of God's way and allow God's Kingdom dream to become a reality, now in the present moment. When we choose to live a Kingdom life, we live into the image of which God created us. We become God's ambassadors.

Jenny and I have not traveled a lot internationally, but when we do we are often embarrassed to be known as an American. We Americans act as if all the world should do it our way. On our last trip we had people complaining because things were not like at home. Sometimes you could understand their complaints when people with mobility issues were reminded that ADA standards are not in place in Europe. It was hard for them to hear they could not see and do some things. But in other ways, it was just embarrassing to see them demanding things as if it was their right, complaining if food was not just what they were used to and so on. Occasionally we would hear comments from the locals about here must be another bunch of Americans along with an eye roll.

Ambassadors represent their king. What do people think when you tell them you are a Christian? Do you represent your king well? Are you living as if God's kingdom is here on earth? Or, do others put up with you, roll their eyes, and make comments about you behind your back?

We need to ask, "What do we have to give up, where do we have to be subservient for God's kingdom to come?" If it is not about us, but about God, it does

mean trying to be kind, to be loving, to be forgiving and all the rest. It means trying to live as Kingdom people.

If you go to an embassy in this country it is as if you walk into a little bit of their home country. They strive to live as if they were home. We even say their embassy is sovereign territory. What if we thought about all of Sequim as God's sovereign territory? We live according to God's rules not the worlds. It would mean change. Are we willing to join the revolution?

This week I hope you continue to pray the word "our" in remembrance that we are all citizens of the King of Heaven. But even more each day pray, "Lord I am choosing to turn_____ in my life over to you so Jesus can come first. All of us have places where we have to let our kingdom go so God's kingdom can come.