

Text: Matthew 6:9-13,33

Title: “The Kingdom’s King”

VIDEO - Turn with me to Matthew 6:9 in what we have come to know as the Lord’s Prayer. I’m starting a new series today entitled “Kingdom Come.” You might recognize that it comes from a phrase in Jesus’ model prayer here in Matthew 6. As I read the prayer again and notice how the Kingdom is on the heart of Jesus as He teaches us to pray. **Read Matthew 6:9-13.**

Like many of you I have prayed that prayer for years ... thousands of times. But I’m not sure I always knew what I was praying when I asked God for His Kingdom to come. I’m not sure I completely understood what I was saying when I prayed, “Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.” And while we’re in Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount here in Matthew 6, look ahead to the end of the chapter where Jesus gives a command to those who are anxious about the things of this world. **Read Matthew 6:33.**

ILLUSTRATION – Back in the 1930s there was a tremendously gifted illustrator and cartoonist who became intrigued with a little mouse character that he and some other artists had created. He started building comic strips around this little mouse and before long he had the idea of putting that mouse into a movie cartoon. The little mouse became such a hit that the artist formed a studio to produce more cartoons about this character that he named Mickey Mouse. Of course, you know the artist’s name ... Walt Disney. But he was more than an artist. He was a visionary. Disney had a dream to create a place where families could go to have good clean fun. In those days amusement parks were not family-friendly. They were often seedy places where you would never want to take your kids. But Walt Disney dreamed of a better place, a happy place where families could go to escape the realities of life. He poured every bit of his money, time and energy into transforming 160 acres next to a busy freeway in Los Angeles into Disney Land, otherwise known as Magic Kingdom. On the day Magic Kingdom opened in 1955 over 20,000 guests completely overwhelmed the park, but Disney survived. And last year all the Disney parks around the world had a combined attendance of over 140 million visitors. And if you’ve ever been to Disney World or Disney Land you probably thought that all 140 million visitors were there on the same day you were. From the beginning Disney adopted a slogan for their park: “The Happiest Place on Earth.” And they do a really good job of making it feel that way. Every park employee greets you with a smile. Little girls are made to feel like princesses. Boys are made to feel like Jedi warriors. And even adults, if we can get past all the

money we're shelling out, get the feeling that we've stepped back into a simpler, happier time.

But, of course, we can't live at the Magic Kingdom in Orlando or Los Angeles. We have to leave the Magic Kingdom and once again enter a Tragic Kingdom ... the world where we live out our lives every day surrounded by lots of unhappiness. But hopefully somewhere along the way we hear that Good News of Jesus that the way to real life is to pursue not a *magic* kingdom that only numbs us to the reality of the *tragic* kingdom of darkness, but to seek first God's *majestic* Kingdom, the source of real happiness that will never end.

We're going to spend eight weeks grappling with what it means to pray for and desire what Jesus taught that we should pray for and desire ... "Your Kingdom Come." What does it mean to obey Jesus and to seek first the Father's Kingdom and His righteousness? We'll see that we can either obsess ourselves with the quest for the "magic" kingdom of pleasure, food, fashions and possessions, or we can obsess ourselves with the Father's majestic Kingdom and His righteousness and trust Him to take care of all the things we need in life. We're going to see that this Kingdom has already come; it is coming even as we sit here today, and one day it will come in its final and complete fullness.

God put this series in my heart months ago, and I haven't been able to shake it. In fact, it has shaken me to my very core. When Jesus first started His ministry He said:

Mark 1:15 - "The time has come. The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!"

That tells me that for me to get in on the Kingdom of God (Heaven) I can't keep going the way I want to go as a person. I must repent and adjust my life to the ways of God's Kingdom.

You see, there is another rival kingdom that exists now in the universe. Long ago in eternity past there was a rebellion among the angels in the heavens inspired by Satan. And we learn that Satan in the form of a snake deceived Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden and enticed them to rebel against the authority of God. So Satan established his own kingdom, the kingdom of darkness. And that kingdom of darkness opposes the kingdom rule of God every second of every day and in every square inch of this universe. It's the explanation for the evil that we see all around us like the mass shootings in Las Vegas last week ... or for the suffering inflicted

by nature through hurricanes and earthquakes. So there is God's Kingdom, the kingdom of light, and Satan's kingdom, the kingdom of darkness. I'm either part of one or part of the other. There's no middle ground. With my words and actions and thoughts and choices I'm either advancing the one or advancing the other ... participating in one or participating in the other. When it comes to these kingdoms, there are no spiritually insignificant moments in my life. You're living in one or the other.

My aim in this series is to help you see your life as an individual and our life together as the church in the most compelling way imaginable ... by fully and completely living in the Kingdom of God under the absolute reign of King Jesus. Today I want to zoom way out and introduce you to the big picture of the Kingdom of God. So keep your Bibles or your Bible apps open and grab the note sheet in your worship guide.

At the very heart the Kingdom is **THE KINGDOM'S KING**. We're talking about the Kingdom of *God*. Every kingdom starts with a king. And the King of this kingdom is an eternal King so His Kingdom has no beginning and no end. So we see...

1. HIS ETERNAL KINGDOM

Psalm 145:13a - Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom....

Our Father in heaven didn't become a king one day; He is the King eternal. Because God is unrivaled in His power and glory His Kingdom can never be destroyed or overtaken. It's eternal. But then God decided to put His eternal kingdom and His eternal power and glory on display by creating this vast universe we inhabit. And this becomes ...

2. HIS UNIVERSAL KINGDOM

ILLUSTRATION – A couple of weekends ago we were with some friends in the mountains. One night we sat out on the deck with all the lights off and marveled at the sky filled with stars and planets. Without the light pollution we have in here in the city we could see the Milky Way. We sat there in silence at the splendor and vastness of this universe that displays the creative power of the King of heaven.

And part of that universe is this tiny speck called Planet Earth that has hundreds of nations or human kingdoms. But God sovereignly rules them as well.

2 Kings 19:15 - “O LORD, God of Israel ... you alone are God over all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth.

ILLUSTRATION – Just think of a snow globe like you might have in your home. Here is this little sphere of glass with a scene inside. Think of that as the universe of time and space, including Earth. God created that system and controls what’s going on in that system, but He is much bigger than that system. But remember there is also a kingdom of darkness led by Satan. And this universe (including our planet) is the battleground between the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan.

Now out of all the nations the eternal King chose one nation in history through which to display His eternal, universal Kingdom. In the OT we see how God chose Israel to become ...

3. HIS SPIRITUAL KINGDOM

The eternal King who created the universe would be their God and they would be His people who worship Him by living holy lives. And God gave them human kings like King David and his successors who were to rule over this spiritual kingdom of Israel. But the eternal King desired that this spiritual kingdom would encompass more people than just the nation of Israel. He wanted people in His Kingdom from every nation on the earth. And the eternal God had in mind a king much greater than King David. So we read in the OT prophecies about a coming Messiah King who would be the Savior not just of Israel, but of the whole world. So the God who is the eternal, invisible and unseen King of the Universe two-thousand years ago God became visible and human in the person of His Son Jesus Christ. This is what we call the incarnation. Jesus is the incarnation of God and of the Kingdom of God. The baby born in Bethlehem’s manger was King Jesus. Jesus puts on display for us what the Kingdom of God looks like in a human body. The Kingdom of God looks like Jesus. Jesus began His ministry by proclaiming...

Matthew 4:17 - “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.”

So with the coming of Jesus the Kingdom of God is near, is here, present. And get this: King Jesus has come to reclaim the territory that has been stolen by the kingdom of Satan. Through the ages Satan continues to capture slaves for his dark kingdom. The whole world is in his evil grip. Turn to Luke 4:18. One day Jesus walked into a synagogue in His hometown and He picked up the copy of the OT

and turned to Isaiah 61 and read this prophecy written hundreds of years before.
Read Luke 4:18-21.

So Jesus is saying, “The time has come; the Kingdom you’ve been waiting for has arrived. I’m the One spoken of in this prophecy. And the Kingdom of God is now being pressed into this world through the healing and salvation and freedom that I bring.”

So in Christ the eternal, universal, invisible King became visible and personal in the human body of Jesus Christ. To release the captives of the kingdom of darkness Jesus had to go to the Cross where He suffered and died. But after three days He rose again so that people who put their trust in Him would be transferred from the Kingdom of Darkness to the Kingdom of Light. That’s why Jesus said to His disciples in Luke 17:21, “The Kingdom of God is within you.”

Turn to Acts 1:3. A few weeks after His resurrection Jesus would ascend back to the right hand of the throne of God in heaven. But before He did, let me show you what He did. **Read Acts 1:3.**

Whatever it is He had for them to be and do as His followers, it was all summed up in this single thought ... the Kingdom of God. And people who follow Jesus take His teachings seriously and the Book of Acts describes how the church did that. Those first followers, filled with the Spirit of King Jesus and the vision of the Kingdom of God shook their part of the world like nothing before has happened in history. In spite of persecution and every obstacle you can imagine they fearlessly proclaimed the Gospel and the Kingdom of God expanded as the hearts of countless souls came under the reign and rule of King Jesus. Now turn to last verses of the Book of Acts in Acts 28. The Apostle Paul, who has proclaimed the Gospel and planted churches all over that part of the world, is under arrest in Rome. But look what he is doing. **Read Acts 28:30-31.**

So King Jesus came to establish a spiritual kingdom that encompasses people from every earthly kingdom. The rule (reign) of God exists in the hearts of people who submit to King Jesus. The Kingdom of God comes (expands) with every instance where the will of God is done ... when a person is saved and comes under the rule of King Jesus. The Kingdom of God comes (expands) when by our words and actions and choices as His followers, the heart and the will of King Jesus is pressed into this broken, sinful, captive world.

What is surprising for us as modern church-going people is to discover that the Kingdom of God is bigger than us. It's bigger than me. Someday I will die. Guess what. The Kingdom of God continues on without me. My purpose in life is not to try to save my life, but to lose it for the sake of the Kingdom of God and the Gospel. That's what it means to deny myself, take up my cross daily and follow King Jesus. And only what I have done for the glory of God and the advancement of His Kingdom will endure beyond my time on this earth. And the same thing is true about local churches. We are not the *goal* of the Kingdom of God; we're a *vehicle* for the expansion of the Kingdom of God. Our purpose as a church is not to figure out how to keep our life or save our church. Our purpose is to figure out how God wants us lose our life for the sake of the expansion of the Gospel and the Kingdom of God in our city and the world beyond. But get this:

Luke 18:29-30 - Jesus said to them, “no one who has left home or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God will fail to receive many times as much in this age and, in the age to come, eternal life.”

So followers of King Jesus are people who make sacrifices so that the Kingdom of God expands. And our purpose as a church is not to expand the kingdom or the institution of TABC. Our purpose is to empty ourselves to expand the Gospel and God's Kingdom. And we do that knowing that we're only losing things temporarily. Remember the Kingdom has already come through the eternal reign of Almighty God. It is continually coming through the expansion of a spiritual kingdom under King Jesus. But the Bible also shows us that the Kingdom of God one day will come in all of its fullness as it becomes...

4. HIS VISIBLE KINGDOM

So the Kingdom is “here and now”; but it is also “there and then.” In in one sense it is *now*; and yet it is also *not yet*. It's an invisible Kingdom, but it is as real as you are real. One day what is real will become visible.

Turn to II Peter 1:10. After the resurrection of Jesus He ascended back to the right hand of the throne of God. Meanwhile by His Spirit the Kingdom of God expands as one person after another comes under the rule and reign of King Jesus. Right now we're part of a secret kingdom. But one day it won't be secret. Every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that King Jesus is Lord. One day Christ will come again and take us to a new home. We will visibly see the King and His Kingdom. And to your amazement Peter says this: **Read II Peter 1:10-11.**

Peter is talking about our forever home ... the New Heaven and the New Earth that will be the final, full-on, visible expression of the eternal, universal, spiritual Kingdom of God. That is our hope.

As we go through life we have trials and hardships. We witness the terrible display of evil like the Las Vegas shooting and we have this feeling things shouldn't be like this. And that's because they shouldn't. And inside we long for that final Kingdom that King Jesus will bring with Him one day when He makes all things new.

ILLUSTRATION - Jeff Bauman was standing at the finish line of the Boston Marathon on April 15, 2013. You remember two brothers placed bombs that exploded killing and injuring many. Jeff Bauman lost both of his legs. After the Las Vegas shooting last week, he posted a message on Facebook to the victims. "I know your pain. You will walk again. You will laugh again. You will dance again. You will live again."

We live in a world that is a tragic kingdom of darkness. Let's not try to escape to some magic kingdom of our making, but step into God's majestic kingdom that will never end that is filled with true happiness.