

## **Matthew 6: 9-13, Psalm 84**

### **His Kingdom Comes**

#### **Introduction:**

Today I would like to focus on prayer as we look at Scriptures. Brothers and sisters, have you ever felt that you're praying, but God isn't listening to you at all? When I was in seminary, I read a short essay on prayer by C.S. Lewis, and was surprised by all the important points regarding prayer that I'd never really thought about before. Basically, through prayer, we can change ourselves, our self-awareness, and even the very way in which we pray.

Prayer is a conversation you have with God. It's important that you also listen to what God is saying to you. When we do so, the very things we hope for and pray for will change because we will be guided by the spirit to pray in a different way. In fact, that is how God answers our prayers.

Today we'll take a look at prayer for seeking His Kingdom. Our Lord, Jesus will teach us to pray for "His Kingdom come." Brothers and sisters, are you praying for His Kingdom to come? This prayer challenges not only our prayers but our prayer lives.

#### **Matthew 6:9-13**

<sup>6:9</sup> Pray then like this: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.  
<sup>10</sup> Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.  
<sup>11</sup> Give us this day our daily bread,  
<sup>12</sup> and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.  
<sup>13</sup> And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

#### **Psalm 84**

<sup>84:1</sup> How lovely is your dwelling place, Lord Almighty! <sup>2</sup> My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God. <sup>3</sup> Even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may have her young—a place near your altar, Lord Almighty, my King and my God. <sup>4</sup> Blessed are those who dwell in your house; they are ever praising you. <sup>5</sup> Blessed are those whose strength is in you, whose hearts are set on pilgrimage. <sup>6</sup> As they pass through the Valley of Baka, they make it a place of springs; the autumn rains also cover it with pools. <sup>7</sup> They go from strength to strength, till each appears before God in Zion. <sup>8</sup> Hear my prayer, Lord God Almighty; listen to me, God of Jacob. <sup>9</sup> Look on our shield, O God; look with favor on your anointed one. <sup>10</sup> Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere; I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked. <sup>11</sup> For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord bestows favor and honor; no good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless. <sup>12</sup> Lord Almighty, blessed is the one who trusts in you.

As we just read, today's message will focus on praying for His Kingdom to come. First let's clarify what God's Kingdom exactly is before we talk about praying about it. God's Kingdom is His Plan for salvation, and according to Christ, the coming of His Kingdom is the Gospel itself.

Second, praying for His Kingdom to come is praying that His Sovereignty be exercised. We are praying that His power and dominion be manifest in all aspects of our lives. Finally thirdly, praying for His Kingdom to come is a prayer of hope for the future.

## 1. Heavenly Kingdom/ God's Kingdom

Jesus clarified the nature of His public ministry (the work of the Gospel) by declaring the following: Matthew 4:17 From that time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."

**Mark 1:14-15** *After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!"*

As we can see here, Jesus called it "The Kingdom of Heaven" and "the Kingdom of God" and worked to bring Divine rule to us and this world. God began the focus of Jesus' work, and it began and will continue spreading among humans until eventually, God's rule of love will spread to every corner of the world.

So what can we expect when we encounter Jesus, believe in the Gospel, find rest in God's love, and have a renewed relationship with God and gain the identity of God's children? It's the very Kingdom of God. The reign of God's love is brought to this world, which belongs to God, through those who trust in Him.

It is said that an ordinary Kingdom (state) consists of three factors. First, it is the exclusive power of governance. Secondly, there are people who are protected by their rule. Finally, there is a clear area (protected by power, where the people can live).

Understanding God's Kingdom is easier in light of these three factors of a nation state. As for power, God is the King who has dominion over everything. God leads by the Word and the Spirit, and brings peace by the sacrificial love of Christ. The citizens of God's Kingdom believe in the Gospel of Christ and repent, and follow God with joy and gratitude for their given identity as God's children. Finally, the realm of God's Kingdom encompasses the entire world. This world was created by the Gospel so that God's love may be manifested, and so that it could be filled with God's glory.

According to the Bible, which can be said to be the story of God's Kingdom, when God created this world, it was His Kingdom in its intended state. In the Garden of Eden everything was completely ruled by God's love and truth. However, God's Kingdom was damaged as a result of human sin, as we were seduced by Satan to depart from God. God's relationship with man had been broken, human beings fell into contention among themselves, and our identity had been distorted by shame and guilt.

However, nothing changed about the fact that this world belongs to God. In order to restore the corrupt world, God made promises of salvation and blessings, sent prophets, established a Kingdom called Israel, and revealed what the blessing of God's Kingdom would be like.

However, Israel was divided into North and South because of its people's lack of faith, and eventually started perishing. Israel's sin and lack of faith brought despair, but God gave them new hope. He promised that the Savior (Messiah) would come. This new covenant was told by the prophets.

Jesus, the only child of God, finally came and said God's Kingdom is approaching, so we should repent and believe in the Gospel. He thus began the work of His Kingdom. Christ accomplished the will of God through His self-sacrifice and resurrection from the cross, and God's Kingdom is still continuing to spread, and it is the very restoration of our damaged hope.

Thus, the light of His Kingdom is as bright as the sun, and it shines through the Gospel. Nevertheless, people seem to close their eyes and refuse to see the light. They choose to close their eyes, deliberately rejecting God. All spiritual problems, mental distortions and cultural obstacles arise from this unwillingness to see. People are in pain and suffering, exhausted and disappointed. Jesus therefore says in Matthew 6:33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Therefore, brothers and sisters, let's seek His Kingdom in prayer. Jesus wasn't simply preaching directly to his disciples; He is telling us who live in the 21st century to always pray, "Your Kingdom come."

## 2. God's Authority

Psalms 84 that we read today depicts the beauty of God's Kingdom where God dwells among us. The poet praises God by singing beautifully about the sight of worship, especially his encounter with God in the temple. It is evident that "Your dwelling place", "Lord's Garden", "Your Altar" and "Your House" refer to the temple in verses 1 to 4.

At the same time, God's love and dominion are spread not only through worship, but also throughout everyday life. We can see that the temple (worship) is connected to everyday life. The Kingdom of God means that the temple of worship reaches every aspect of our everyday lives, and that our everyday lives in turn become like a temple of worship.

*Psalms 84:5-6 Blessed are those whose strength is in you, whose hearts are set on pilgrimage.<sup>6</sup> As they pass through the Valley of Baka, they make it a place of springs; the autumn rains also cover it with pools*

The Kingdom encompasses all human activities, including personal life, work, friendship, marriage and family, community, art and culture. When God's sovereignty and dominion are everywhere, you get all the things you had wished for, such as a community full of life, relationships built on love and trust, and justice and compassion.

In this way, God's Kingdom means God's dominion, but in fact, there are two aspects to God's Kingdom: 'The Kingdom here with us today,' and 'the Kingdom yet to come'. These two aspects are intricately and inextricably linked. Jesus described that the Kingdom of God is approaching.

But from another light, God's Kingdom is already here with us, as Jesus, the King of God's Kingdom, came to earth, and achieved salvation through death and resurrection from the cross. Therefore the Kingdom already exists in the hearts of us who believe. When our Lord Jesus speaks, people are saved and they experience healing. Evil spirits are driven out, making way for the peace of God.

**Matthew 12: 28** *But if it is by the Spirit of God that I drive out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.*

On the other hand, God's Kingdom has yet to come. In other words, it is in the process of being completed. Jesus therefore likened the Kingdom of God to a mustard seed which grows hidden from the people or yeast that causes bread to rise. For though hidden in the eyes of men, God's dominion is surely spreading, and the day is coming when it will be established on this earth. Christ will come again to complete God's Kingdom, and hand over His rule to God the Father.

Therefore, "May Your Kingdom come," is a missionary prayer that the Gospel be spread to every corner of the earth. It's a prayer that asks that people repent and believe in Jesus. It is a missionary prayer that our lives may be transformed through repentance of sin and faith in Christ.

However, we still have a deep-rooted tendency of not wanting to obey God's sovereignty, of not wanting to take heed to the will of God. This tendency is so deep rooted that we're not even aware of it.

I personally experienced the power of prayer deeply four years ago when I was being tested and treated for angina pectoris. I was temporarily unable to speak due to a cerebral infarction. At that time, not only Grace City but also people around the world prayed for me. Thanks to that, I've recovered to be able to give sermons like this again.

At that time, Grace City was just about to increase our Sunday worship to two services. However, as I was in the hospital, I felt frustrated and it hurt my pride not being able to contribute at such an important time. I thought I would just give up on the project. This was all because I felt as if it were my own church that I built with my own work, even though Grace City had been initiated by grace under the sovereignty of God.

According to Calvin,  
"Thus this kingdom consists of two parts; the first is, when God by the agency of his Spirit corrects all the depraved lusts of the flesh, which in bands war against Him; and the second, when he brings all our thoughts into obedience to his authority. ... Then as the word of God is like his royal sceptre, we are here enjoined to pray that he would subdue all minds and hearts to voluntary obedience."

Therefore, the prayer for God's Kingdom to come is a prayer that our thoughts may be righted by God's word, so that we may obey God's sovereignty, that the desires and wishes of our hearts may be transformed by the Spirit of God. In other words, we're praying that the Kingship of God be revealed through Christ, extended and deepened in all areas of our lives (emotions, desires, thoughts, ways of life).

### **3. Prayer of hope**

But this kind of prayer can be said to be very painful to us today, who are encouraged to pursue self-assertion. Of course, it was not easy for the disciples who walked with Jesus in the 1st century AD and were taught this prayer directly. They, like modern people today, wanted to be as great, had selfish desires, and wanted to outperform their peers and succeed.

James and John went to Jesus in secret from the other ten disciples and asked Him to make them His close aides in the Kingdom. When the other ten heard this, they were angry at James and John because they also wanted that right.

Brothers and sisters, our deepest desire (heart's desire) is the motivation for all our actions, often without our own consciousness, and is the driving force behind our mistakes and sins. What we need is fulfillment from the joys and aspirations of God's Kingdom. If not, we cannot properly pray for God's Kingdom.

In Psalm 84, we can see that the poet deeply experienced that kind of joy and aspiration.

<sup>8</sup> Hear my prayer, Lord God Almighty; listen to me, God of Jacob. <sup>9</sup> Look on our shield, O God; look with favor on your anointed one. <sup>10</sup> Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere; I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked. <sup>11</sup> For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord bestows favor and honor; no good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless. <sup>12</sup> Lord Almighty, blessed is the one who trusts in you.

Do you know how Jesus describes the completed Kingdom of God? Jesus always portrays God's Kingdom in the image of feasts and banquets. And in many cases, Jesus gave the people a taste of God's Kingdom, speaking of the gospel at meals and feasts. And when Jesus likened the Kingdom of God to a feast, he must have recalled this text from the Old Testament.

**Isaiah 25:6-8** <sup>6</sup> On this mountain the Lord Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine—the best of meats and the finest of wines. <sup>7</sup> On this mountain he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations; <sup>8</sup> he will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign Lord will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove his people's disgrace from all the earth. The Lord has spoken.

Brothers and sisters, why did Jesus speak of the Kingdom of God using the image of a feast? That's because Jesus came to bring us joy of celebration. It is to enjoy the delights of God's Kingdom.

There is a difference between believing that God is holy and gracious, and having a new sense on the heart of the loveliness and beauty of that holiness and grace. The difference between believing that God is gracious and tasting that God is gracious is as different as having a rational belief that honey is sweet and having the actual sense of its sweetness.

Therefore, if you turn to God today, and are struck by God's power, dignity and holiness, or believe in the love of Christ displayed on the cross, you must pray that God's Kingdom will come with a joyful heart filled with the Holy Spirit. And for the coming of His Kingdom, you will repent of the thoughts of your heart with joy, not with bitterness, and entrust your life to God's dominion.