**John 18:28-19:16**

**Lent Midweek 2 – Thy Kingdom Come Lord’s Prayer in Lord’s Passion Lent Series**

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Taken specifically from the Gospel of John, as you heard read this evening, I wish to re-read for you this exchange between Jesus and Pontius Pilate to give the specifics of references to the Kingdom of God here in the Passion of Our Lord. John 18 beginning in verse 36, “Jesus answered, ‘My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world.” Now jumping to John chapter 19 verse 10, “So Pilate said to him, ‘You will not speak to me? Do you not know that I have authority to release you and authority to crucify you? Jesus answered him, ‘You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above. Therefore, he who delivered me over to you has the greater sin.”

“Thy Kingdom Come”. We pray it so often, these words of the Lord’s Prayer, but do we know what we are saying? We pray for the kingdom of God to come, and yet are we not sitting in such a building that would be included in God’s kingdom? Here in God’s house? Isn’t this part of the kingdom of God? The answer would be no if we use the very words of Jesus Christ, because His kingdom is not of this world. Maybe Martin Luther can help shed some light on what this actually means, as we’ve looked at the words and explanations of these petitions before in our journey of connecting to the Lord’s Prayer to our Lord’s Passion. Tonight we again return to the Small Catechism for guidance and to remember what we were taught back in Confirmation class. “The Kingdom of God certainly comes by itself without our prayer, but we pray in this petition that it may come to us also.” How does God’s kingdom come? “God’s kingdom comes when our heavenly Father gives us His Holy Spirit, so that by His grace we believe his holy Word and lead godly lives here in time and there in eternity.”

The Kingdom comes when God the Father, gives God the Holy Spirit so that we, as subjects and citizens of God’s Kingdom emulate the life of God the Son, Jesus Christ, and lead godly lives on earth, until we are taken home to the true kingdom for all eternity. The entirety of the Trinity is at work in God’s kingdom coming to us while here on Earth. Meaning that while we are here, and to piggy back upon a concept that will be explored more on Sunday in the practical things you can do to make sure that you don’t have your identity stolen, while we are here we have an identity, or a citizenship if that is more helpful to think of, as citizens of God’s true kingdom. We have our identity not in this world and what it uses as evidence of our residency in Michigan, in the United States, etc, but we see our true identity as a member of God’s kingdom, as a servant of the One True Almighty and Triune God, and therefore wherever we go, as we lead godly lives here, we seek to bring God’s Kingdom to the place that we live through what we say and what we do.

We have an example of this right here in our own state. Do you know what they call Frankenmuth, Michigan? You can find it on their website, you can find it throughout the town. Frankenmuth, Michigan is called Michigan’s “Little Bavaria.” Now what in the world does that even mean? You could say it’s just a catchphrase, some touristy slogan that’s designed to appeal to Germans, but that would be selling it short. If you’ve ever traveled to Frankenmuth, Michigan you may have noticed a distinct style of architecture and you may have noticed a particular emphasis of German culture, music, clothing, and food. Frankenmuth, in their claim of being Michigan’s “Little Bavaria” is saying that they have created to the best of the town’s abilities, a Bavaria, Germany in Frankenmuth, Michigan. And so what they do reflects the Bavarian, or German culture more than the Michigan or United States culture, even though that’s where Frankenmuth is. If we were to put it in theological terms, it would be to say that the town has brought the Kingdom of Bavaria to this place, they have prayed for it to come, and it has. “Thy” in this case meaning Bavaria, Kingdom come to the town of Frankenmuth.

What this means in our lives is that we too, as God’s children, and citizens of the heavenly kingdom, should seek to bring this kingdom of God into our lives and in our spheres of influence by leading godly lives and therefore influencing the lives of those around us. As it says in Romans chapter 12 verse 2: “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” Think of your own heritage, your lineage, where you came from. Your ancestors weren’t from this country, eventually they have roots back in Germany or some other country, but over time our lives become conformed to the place that we live. Language adapts, culture adapts, traditions, adapt and soon we don’t even reflect the culture of our ancestors. Another way to see it is not to be conformed to this kingdom that you live, whether it’s here in Michigan, in the United States, or anywhere else in the kingdoms or nations of the world. God’s kingdom is not this kingdom, and your true residency lies in the kingdom of heaven.

God has complete authority over his heavenly and true kingdom, the kingdom that won’t pass away and that won’t deteriorate and perish like earthly kingdoms. Pontius Pilate speaks to Jesus as if he has an ultimate authority based upon his position in the Roman Empire, an Empire that eventually crumbled. The chief priests were scheming and working through the earthly established kingdom in order to kill Jesus so that their authority wouldn’t be questioned in their own religious kingdom, that their place would remain in the great Temple of Jerusalem. A temple that was destroyed. Pontius Pilate orders an innocent man to die, in order to keep his own position of authority in a kingdom that isn’t worth saving, in a kingdom that would fall. But that’s the allure of authority and power, and its why Jesus doesn’t come to establish an earthly kingdom. It’s why he’s not fighting against his captors, this isn’t some great coup against the rightful heir of political and earthly authority, he never set out to be the ruler of the Roman Empire, or even the king of this world, no matter what the crowds thought, or even his own disciples.

But ask yourself this question, when you look into the mirror of this text of God’s Word, and see the desperation of authorities to keep their power, when you look at the misuse of power of those in authority and how they use their power only for their own benefit. What are you in authority over in your own life? What kingdom do you reign in your day to day experiences? What vocations has God called you to, and what authority has he given you? Are you high up in your occupation? Do people answer to you and you have authority over them? What about this church? Has this become a kingdom where you wield power over others and see yourself as higher than your brothers and sisters in Christ? If you have authority in these or other places in your life then you have to look again into the mirror and be honest if you’ve wielded that power for the benefit of God’s kingdom, with the spiritual care of others in mind and caring for their souls and not just earthly and finite benefits. Chances are your authority was used for your own benefit, or focused only on earthly things.

We get wrapped up in this kingdom, and neglect our true residency and citizenship. Remember what we are praying for! “Thy Kingdom Come” The Kingdom of our heavenly Father. For God’s kingdom to come and be established means that Christ returns and this kingdom is no more. One is going to pass away, and be destroyed. There is no room for an earthly kingdom with earthly authority in the coming of God’s Kingdom, and when we pray for the Kingdom of God to come, it is in our own lives through our own actions, but also in eternity as Luther puts it. Meaning the second coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. What we’re praying for is the end of this kingdom and the establishment of an eternal kingdom of glory pointed not to us, but to God. Where we will have no authority and power, but instead we will be God’s children and servants forever.

Which is the most wonderful thing we could ever hope to be. God’s child. God’s servant. Under God’s authority, under the care and rule of the Almighty God, the one worthy of praise and the one reliable ruler. We’ve lived our entire lives under the rule of sinful and corrupt leaders in a sinful and crumbling kingdom. We are conformed to this world, we are drawn to this world, yet we are not citizens of this kingdom. We have a greater kingdom to look forward to, a true and lasting kingdom of peace and rest. Which means, in our thanksgiving to God, we are used as instruments of God our Heavenly Father, sending God the Holy Spirit into our lives, and into others hearts in order to extend the work of his true kingdom in this fallen kingdom here on Earth. And one day, our prayers will be answered, not the selfish and egotistical prayers of having it all here in this kingdom, and having more authority and power over others here on earth, but rather what we’ve been praying over and over in the prayer our Lord taught us. “Thy Kingdom Come.” The greatest gift, God gives in His Passion, in His suffering, in His death, as he’s arrayed as a king in mockery, with a crown of thorns, and a scepter that they used to beat him with, is that by his death, you were made a citizen of God’s kingdom. You were brought into His presence, you were washed and made clean, you were saved from the sinking ship of this world. When you look at the cross, and when you pray these words, “Thy Kingdom Come” remember the king, who died to make you his subject, who died to save you.

Amen.

The peace of God which surpasses all human understanding keep our hearts and minds through faith in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Amen.