

YOUR KINGDOM COME

Matthew 6:9-13

Key verse: 6:10

“Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven”

Hello. There are a lot of us gathered here: the people of many nations and languages. I guess some of us live not too far from here, but others have traveled from the opposite side of the globe. For example, my route was from Kyiv to Rome by air, and then from Rome to Chicago also by air, and then from Chicago by ground. But surely, my way was not the longest one. So, why we are here? What are we all looking for? The title of this ISBC is "His Kingdom." And when we say "his kingdom" we mean "God's kingdom." So, I can suggest that we are here because of the kingdom of God. Am I right? But what do we mean when we say "God's kingdom?" Could we find it somewhere on the globe? Could we buy a ticket to get there? Is it real or is it just a kind of a dream or some philosophical conception? I think every one of us has some thoughts about God's kingdom. We are here to learn what the Bible teaches us about this kingdom. Not only to learn but to receive it, to experience this blessed kingdom and the riches of our God and Father.

The passage we are studying today is known as the “Lord’s Prayer.” It consists of 6 petitions, and one of them is "your kingdom come." It teaches us about God's kingdom and how it comes. May God bless us with his kingdom and teach us how we should pray.

Let’s read verse 9: "This, then, is how you should pray: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.'" What do these words teach us about God to whom we pray? They teach us that he is our Father in heaven. Amen! Just think for a moment: He is our Father in heaven! Is it not awesome? You know, many people come to God when they are in need. Even atheists, when facing some situations they couldn’t handle, cry: “Oh, God!”, “please, God!”, “OMG!” They call to God even they don’t know who this God is. Jesus teaches us to pray not to “some god” but to our Father in heaven. God is almighty. God lives in unapproachable light. God is the ruler of the universe. But he became our Father in heaven through Jesus Christ. The Bible says, that when we were still God’s enemies, Jesus, the Son of God, gave himself to death to pay for all our sins and to make peace between the holy God and us, sinners. To everyone who receives this Jesus, to those who believe in his name God gives the right to become children of God, and to call him “our Father” (Jn 1:12).

My father was great. I loved him very much. But not everyone has had a good father. Sometimes earthly fathers are indifferent, careless or cold. But the Bible says that God is not like that. Our heavenly Father is perfect. He is good. He loves his children and cares for us always. And now this Father calls all of us to come to him. Freely. Any time. With any request or need. With our praise or tears. He will hear us, and he will bless us. This fact changes everything about prayer. Prayer is not a burden. It's not some religious act. It's a conversation with our loving heavenly Father. Sometimes it is not easy to pray, and we have no words. Moreover, sometimes our prayer is like a battle. But when we know that our almighty and loving Father is on the other side of our every prayer, always, we can pray, and we should pray. Amen?

To know God as our Father is so important. But when we take into account the petitions listed in this passage, we should realize that God is not just a Father but also a King. Our King. The King of the universe whom we should glorify and obey. Usually, the word "king" has some negative connotations. That's because earthly kings are cruel, evil and care only for themselves. We don't like those kings. But God is different. He cares for his people. He forgives our sins and changes us. He protects us from evil. He gave himself for us and overcame death in victory. He gives us his kingdom. This kingdom is invisible now, but one day it will be fully realized when Jesus comes again in his power and glory. Until that time we should pray. Amen.

This king should be honored, so verse 9 says we should pray: "hallowed be your name." According to the original text, to "hallow" means to make something holy or to sanctify something. But what does it mean when we apply this word to God? Isn't he already the holiest one in all the universe? It is he who sanctifies everything. It is he who is the most valuable and glorious in the universe. However, the world does not hallow God's name; in fact, God's name is often used in vain. And we believers often fail to honor his name as we should. So, what could we do? Jesus answers: you should pray. God works through prayer. Through prayer, he changes the world, and he changes us. One day he will accomplish his work. The day will come when every knee will bow down before the King of kings to hallow his name. The day will come when we will be changed completely; when every one of us in the company of saints and angels will sing a new song to our Father in heaven.

Let's read verse 10: "your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." Here Jesus teaches us to pray for God's kingdom. God's Kingdom is what the Bible is about. God established his Kingdom when he created world and put the man here to be his representative (as we saw in the drama). Under God's rule, the created world was like a flourishing garden. But when Adam disobeyed God and decided to be his own king, everything became broken. This world became a terrible place to live. It is

full of broken relationships, violence, illnesses, sorrow and pain. You know, there is a war right now in Ukraine. Every day we hear the statistics of the wounded and killed. Every day we can see people who are exhausted, who lost their property or even son, or husband, or father. We can see kids who just lost their childhood. When I was a kid, I loved fireworks so much. But when kids from east Ukraine hear the sounds of fireworks during New Year celebrations, they look for a place to hide. They are afraid of bombs. Even if there is no war in your country, each of us faced so many kinds of pain and bitterness. Aren't we? There is no need to tell how terrible this world is. Each of us already experienced it. That's why we seek for God's kingdom so desperately -- because we need the salvation and the healing of the world.

People often think that they could be happy without God reigning over them. But that's not true. Without God reigning in our lives, we are like the lost sheep from Jesus' parable: lonely, unprotected from all evil of the world and starving. Without God's reign, we are like the prodigal son: distant from the Father's love, provision and protection, living under Satan's rule and doing his evil will. The good news is that God doesn't leave us to die in our sins. His heart hurts when he sees all this pain and darkness. He gave us Jesus to restore his kingdom and bring us back to him. Just as in Adam's disobedience everything was broken, so in Jesus' obedience everything is restored. When we humble ourselves under God's rule, his kingdom comes into our lives. Before knowing God, I wanted to be the king of my own life. I had many dreams: to become a great scientist or a wealthy programmer. But I could not control myself and did nothing to achieve my dreams. I wandered here and there without any purpose. I wasted my time, doing nothing but playing the guitar and drinking. In drunkenness, I slept on toilet floors. I was almost kicked out of the university. But my heavenly Father did not leave me. By his mercy, I was invited to study the Bible, and it was a turning point in my life. 2 Corinthians 3:17 touched my heart. It says, "Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom." I longed for that freedom. For the first time, the Spirit of God began to reign in my life. He forgave my sins, and set me free from sinful desires and Satan's torment. He began to change me into the glorious image of Christ. I felt God's kingdom come into my heart. God gave me a clear life purpose and mission. I could finish my study well. I became a shepherd for others. God established my blessed house church and used me to preach the gospel in Kyiv. Since God's kingdom came to my heart, I feel like the most blessed person on earth.

When God reigns in our lives, we have his kingdom. We will not wonder or be lost. And even when we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, we know that it is he who leads us. His will is good, may it be done. His staff is strong, and we'll be

protected. We need this God to be our King, a King for our kids, families and church. Will you pray for this?

Let's look at verses 11-13: "Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one." The Lord's prayer is not just a personal prayer. It's a prayer for the Christian community. That's why he says "our Father," "give us," "protect us" and "forgive us." This community may be just two or three people gathered in Jesus' name (Mt 18:20). But regardless of size, it is the visible expression of God's kingdom on earth. Our Father is at the center of this community and we are all brothers and sisters. Jesus makes us a part of God's big family, his household, and this family is so unique and precious. That's why when my younger brother came to our church for the first time, Missionary Ruth greeted him with these words: "Hello, brother Dima." This little word "brother" moved his heart so much that he decided to do everything possible to move to Kyiv and join our church family.

The Lord's Prayer teaches us that we shouldn't be self-centered in our prayers. When we pray "give us our daily bread" and then get something from God, we should not forget that it was asked "for us," so it is given "to us." Not just to me. We should share God's blessings with each other joyfully.

There are some things which can destroy this community. One of them is unforgiveness. Though we have received Jesus' grace of salvation, we still sin every day. Sin makes us miserable and breaks our relationships. So Jesus teaches us to forgive each other. Those who don't forgive others spread a judgmental spirit, grudges, and complaints. They are experiencing hell in their lives. But when we practice forgiveness freely, we can ask forgiveness freely. Forgiving others is not an option, but mandatory. I know, that's not easy - to forgive somebody who hurt you. How can we do so? We should pray. And we should always remember God who forgave all our sins. Our debt was so huge that we couldn't pay it back. Jesus paid it for us. He paid a high price, indeed--his own blood. Maybe there are some of us who have unforgiveness in our hearts. Please, let's look at Jesus. He forgave us unconditionally. Shouldn't we do the same? Forgive now and may we experience God's kingdom of love and his grace of reconciliation.

There is one more thing I wish to mention. The Lord teaches us to pray "lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one." A king's duty is to protect his people. Here Jesus says that we should come to our Father and King for protection. The evil one is Satan. He is a strong and powerful enemy. We are facing his temptations all the time while on earth. So what should we do? We should be warned, and we should

seek God's grace and protection. So, let us pray for ourselves and our neighbors during this conference and may God help us to experience the victory of God's kingdom in our lives. Amen!

So, what do you think of the Lord's prayer now? Our Father in heaven made us his children, his royal family. So, we should pray and act as the children of the King, as the people of his Kingdom. To honor God's name, to obey his will, to respect his kingship and rely on him in our daily needs: bread, forgiveness, and protection. Do your prayer, your life and ministry match to God's will revealed in the Lord's prayer? As we listen to messages and study the Bible at this conference, let's pray that God's kingdom may come into our hearts. Let's pray that God's kingdom may come in our families, ministries, and to all nations until God's kingdom is established on earth as it is in heaven.