

Pray for the Kingdom

by Roy Pointer

Roy Pointer's sermon emphasizes the importance of praying for God's kingdom to be acknowledged, advanced, and arrived at in our lives and society.

Duration: 36:36

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Matthew 24:2, Matthew 24:14, Romans 13:11, Hebrews 10:25, Hebrews 11:40 - 12:2

Topics: "Kingdom Of God", "World Evangelization"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of world evangelization and spreading the gospel to all nations. He mentions that the gospel has already reached the ends of the earth, with almost every major tribe having heard the message and some members coming to faith. The preacher urges the audience to be ready for the coming of God's kingdom and to pray for its arrival. He also references Luke 10:8-9, where Jesus instructs his disciples to proclaim the nearness of the Kingdom of God and perform signs and miracles. The sermon concludes with a disturbing story about a young couple who made a decision that led them away from their faith.

Transcript

Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. I read a very disturbing story this week, and kind of pastor's nightmare sort of story. Situation in which you wouldn't want to find yourself.

A young couple, a very fine young couple, growing up in the church, doing very well at school, particularly at high school, successful in all their studies, accepted for medical college and training for the medical profession. At medical school, they fell in love and they decided that rather than wait for the end of their studies, they would be married. So it was quite a wedding in the church and families came together and the church celebrated this fine, fine couple.

And it was a tremendous wedding as you can imagine. Then they went back into medical school to finish off their training. And they had all sorts of plans for what they were going to do, and everything looked bright and beautiful.

And then the wife got pregnant and that wasn't what they wanted. Well, it wasn't what she wanted. All of her plans seemed to just crash with the knowledge that she was pregnant.

And she struggled with this and finally decided that she wanted to have an abortion. And so she prevailed upon her husband who was quite adamant that as Christians there's no way that they would submit to this. And he was very strongly opposed.

But she began to persuade and persuade and presented all kinds of arguments as to they really ought to be further on in their training, they ought to have graduated, they ought to be established in this and that and the other before they started a family and that this was really the best thing. And finally she persuaded her husband that the best thing for them as a couple was to have an abortion. But then as Christians and as publicly professing Christians they realized that this was something that they really couldn't go through in a public way and they didn't feel there was anyone they could go to.

So they decided it was a fairly simple medical procedure and there was no reason why as two doctors in training they couldn't conduct the abortion themselves. So they got all that was required, all that was necessary and the evening came for the abortion. And unfortunately he administered an anesthetic and she had an allergic reaction and died.

And then the phone rang at the pastor's home and there was the husband crying into the phone, pastor, pastor, I've killed her. Tragic story, it's nagged me all the week. It's the kind of thing you dread, you think well that can't possibly happen.

How is it that two Christian people can get themselves in such a predicament? Two fine Christian people. Belief versus behavior. They believe one thing, they do another with tragic consequences.

And they seem to have forgotten whose will should be done. Whose will should be done. Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

So we continue our studies in the Lord's Prayer which is a pattern or a model for prayer. We've already seen that in our praying we should pray to the Father and we should pray toward heaven and we should pray in God's name. And today we are going to see that we should pray for the kingdom.

Pray for the kingdom. We are to pray for the universal ascent to God's will. Universal submission to his reign over us.

We are to pray that the rule of heaven will be manifest here on earth. And we are to pray for the coming of the kingdom of God. No wonder our prayers should soar.

They really should. Now the kingdom of God has personal, communal, and present and future aspects or dimensions. And today as we consider this part of the Lord's Prayer, we will note the individual, the social, and the eschatological dimensions of the prayer.

That's a big word, isn't it? Did you make a note of that? Eschatological. You can think of it as the future if you like. That's not the only sort of aspect of eschatological.

It means related to the last things. The end of all things. The consummation of human history as we know it.

So we are to pray for, I believe, the acknowledgement of God's kingdom, the advancement of God's kingdom, and the arrival of God's kingdom. So let's look first of all at the acknowledgement of God's kingdom. Jesus said, this is how you should pray.

Our Father in heaven hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. The individual prayer, the one who is praying personally, should embrace the acknowledgement of God's reign and God's kingdom. We should relinquish the right to rule our own lives in our prayers.

Now it's very interesting. A lot of people sort of caricature the Christian faith and what they say is this. They say, if we are standing as it were on the roadside, we see Jesus thumbing a lift.

And so Jesus is thumbing a lift and we pull over as it were with our lives and we say, okay Jesus, you can hop in. And the Christian life is really driving around with Jesus in your life. Is that right? I mean, that's the way it is, isn't it? That's evangelism.

I've presented the gospel to you. That's the Christian message. Jesus is standing there thumbing a lift and we come along and we say, okay Jesus, hop in.

I'll open my heart. And he hops in. Well, that's not what it's all about, folks.

Jesus, in a sense, if you like, is standing by the roadside and he may be thumbing a lift, but if you let him into your life, he gets into the driving seat. You move over into the passenger seat. We have to relinquish our right to rule.

We relinquish our right to rule. We dethrone self. We acknowledge that it's God's right to reign.

And we need to pray that as individuals we will acknowledge the kingdom and the reign and the rule of God. Jesus has come and we submit to his reign over us. That's why in Mark 1 15, when Jesus began his ministry, he says the kingdom of God is near.

Repent and believe the good news. Believe the good news of the kingdom. Believe the gospel.

You have to repent. You have to believe. You have to dethrone self from the rebel's throne and you hand over the throne of your life to Jesus.

Jesus is Lord. You turn from sin and self. You renounce it.

You're determined to leave it. You turn your back on it. I'm going God's way, not my way.

And then you have to exercise faith. What is faith? Well, a child in Sunday school said faith is believing something you know isn't true. Is that what faith is? No, that's not what faith is.

Turn to Hebrews 11 and you'll get some clues about faith. Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. And hope, remember, in the Bible is not this uncertain thing.

Because hope is based upon God, it is absolutely certain. It's guaranteed. Now faith is being sure of what we hope for or what is guaranteed by God and certain of what we do not see.

This is what the ancients were commended for. By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible and so on. And by faith and by faith and by faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going.

And then by faith, by faith, by faith and all through the saints. By faith Moses, parents hid him for three months after he was born. By faith Moses, when he'd grown up, refused to be known as the son of

Pharaoh's daughter.

And by faith and by faith and by faith. And you go through all the Old Testament saints. These were all commended, says the author of Hebrews, for their faith.

Yet none of them received what had been promised. God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect. So the Old Testament saints and the New Testament saints were all gathered together in submission to the reign of God.

Therefore since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses. There they all are. Can you see them? The eye of faith sees them.

Cheering us on. Hallelujah. Can you see them? There they are.

Think of the old saints. Brothers and sisters. There they are.

Cheering us on. Isn't it wonderful? I think it's wonderful. So let us throw off everything that hinders us and the sin that so easily entangles and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith. Who for the joy set before him endured the cross scorning its shame and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. There he is enthroned.

And so you commit yourself in trust to God. You trust in Jesus God's only beloved Son and our only beloved Saviour. And you believe.

You repent, turn from your sin and you trust Christ as your Saviour. Then you are in the kingdom. Hallelujah.

Are you in? Or are you out? Actually we exercise faith a great deal. I mean this week driving on the roads you've exercised faith every time you put your foot on the brake. Whoops.

You go into the restaurant and the meal comes. Takes faith sometimes to eat it. But you know you have trust in the chef and the bill is so high that you know it must be all right mustn't it? So you know you exercise your faith and you eat the food.

We're exercising faith all the time. Trust. Faith.

Same thing. It's the object of our faith that is important. Here the object of our faith is Jesus.

Isn't it amazing how people will not believe? All sorts of things they won't believe. I read of a Texan down in Texas. I thought most Texans were oil millionaires but apparently not all of them.

This fellow was destitute, had nothing. And he got a letter from a lawyer in England saying they had traced him. He was the sole survivor of a family back in England who a great estate had been left.

If someone could be found and this fellow was found he was destitute in Texas and he had a fortune back there in England. He wouldn't believe it. And he died destitute.

Isn't that crazy? But there are thousands, millions dying destitute outside of the kingdom who will not submit to the reign of the king over them. We need to pray for people to believe, for people to enter the kingdom, to come to Christ. We need to pray for those who preach Christ.

You need to pray for me, Pastor Robert, Pastor Hudson, all who preach Christ and preach the good news of the kingdom. Brethren, sisters, I'm hungry for a harvest. Are you hungry for a harvest? A harvest of souls.

We need to see hundreds coming to faith in Christ. We need to pray for people to acknowledge God's reign and his sovereignty over them. We need to do that ourselves.

I was reading about Bishop Taylor Smith, the godly bishop in Africa. He wrote a little memo. He was explaining how he began his day.

This is what he said. As soon as I awake each morning I rise from bed once. Is that what you do? Well now you know why you're not a godly bishop.

Anyway, he kind of wakes up and gets up. Now that's the way I was trained. I don't know if it's because I think there's some gunnery instructor still behind me somewhere, but when I wake up I get up.

I don't all have to be like me or this Bishop Taylor, but anyway, he says I dress promptly. I wash myself, shave and comb my hair. I try to do that too.

Then fully attired, wide awake and properly groomed, as he says, I go quietly to my study. Bishop Taylor Smith, quietly to his study. There before God Almighty and Christ my King, I humbly present myself to my sovereign, ready and eager to be of service to him for the day.

Brethren and sisters, is that how you and I begin the day? Christ my King, I'm ready to serve. It's a good way to begin the day, the acknowledgement of God's reign over you. But we should also pray for the advancement of God's kingdom.

The individual Christian is a member of the fellowship of other Christians, of other believers. He's a member of the church, the true church of Jesus Christ, made up of all those millions and millions of true believers. Now the church is not the kingdom.

The church witnesses to the kingdom. And where that witness bears an effect in healing and beauty and righteousness and justice, in truth and goodness, the kingdom advances. There's a kind of a ripple effect that goes on.

And we should pray for such advances. We are the prayers and doers in the work of the kingdom of God, because we are the church. But there are others active as well.

The ripple effect goes on and on and on. Luke 10, 8 to 9, When you enter a town, said Jesus, and are welcomed, eat what is set before you, heal the sick who are there, and tell them the kingdom of God is near you. And there are all these signs of the kingdom, wonderful signs, miraculous signs, but other signs too.

And they are fulfilled in the great commission, go into all the world and make disciples of all nations, everywhere, calling them to repent and to believe. And so the kingdom advances. Now we are the conscious agents of the kingdom, but there are unconscious agents too.

Let me read to you from Archbishop Coggan on this prayer and his exposition of it. He says, The kingdom in Jewish thought means the reign, the sovereignty of God. To pray this prayer, Thy kingdom come, is to pray for the suppression of whatever forces oppose the fulfillment of His will, God's will and purpose.

When we pray these three words, we ask that, in the conflict between good and evil in the world, God's supremacy may be seen and His sovereignty manifested. To pray this prayer is to ask for something wider than the extension of the church. It is a mistake to think of church and kingdom as synonymous, they are not.

It is truer to think of the church as the agent of the kingdom. The sovereignty of God may be advanced and the kingdom may come through those who are unconscious of being its agents. The scientist who, while acknowledging no allegiance to God, makes inroads against the forces of disease, is unwittingly advancing the kingdom.

The politician who lays the foundations of a peaceful society is advancing the kingdom. Inasmuch as God is a God of order and of peace, rather than of confusion and war. We may regret it, we do regret it, if that politician is not a committed Christian.

We may hold and we do hold that if he were to lay his foundation on securely Christian principles, his building would be the surer. But insofar as the forces of peace and truth are strengthened by his endeavors, so far is the kingdom advanced. The writer who, though not a Christian, writes beautiful and clean prose or poetry advances the kingdom.

Wherever the bounds of beauty, truth and goodness are advanced, there the kingdom comes. Wherever the forces of darkness, disease and hate are driven back, there the kingdom comes. And God enters in more fully to the sovereignty of his world.

The prayer, thy kingdom come therefore, can be answered through those who are not consciously the agents of the kingdom, but of course this prayer is the prayer of the church. So we are to pray, brethren and sisters, for those in government. We are to pray for those who work in the fields of medicine and justice and righteousness.

We are to pray for the healing of our culture and the healing of our society and for all those, Christian or not, who by their work and endeavor advance the kingdom. But as Christians, we are conscious agents. We are ambassadors and we are representatives.

We stand in the place of God. Gerhard von Radt says this, just as a powerful earthly king, kings to indicate their claim to dominion erect an image of themselves in the provinces of their empire, usually on a horse made of bronze, there they are, and they erect these statues to themselves. Of course in the communist era they have pictures everywhere, pictures of Mao Tse Tung.

And you go into Latin America and there's a picture of the dictator and they kind of turn it around depending which way the revolution is going. And there's all these images of the one who's in charge all over the place. The dominion reaches as far as here and therefore there's a statue.

And there's another statue, another picture here, another picture there, because they want to say, well, this is our territory. So man is placed upon earth as God's image, as God's sovereign emblem. And brethren and sisters, we are God's agents.

So put up your collar and pull down your hat and think of yourself as a special agent of the kingdom. Does that grip you? Roy Pointer, special agent. Think of it.

It's wonderful, isn't it? But you are a special agent of the kingdom. God has placed you where you are. But Christians, we don't accept these responsibilities.

Why? Because we fail to grasp the significance of our salvation and who we are in Christ. Some of us are so busy trying to smuggle our souls into heaven that we forget we have work to do down here. John Stott in a book called *Decisive Issues Facing Christians Today* argues that one of the problems we have is that we have an inadequate doctrine of salvation.

He says we need a fuller doctrine of salvation. There's a constant tendency in the church to trivialize the nature of salvation as if it meant no more than self-reformation, or the forgiveness of our sins, or a personal passport to paradise, or a private mystical experience without social or moral consequences. It is urgent that we rescue salvation from these caricatures and recover the doctrine in its biblical fullness.

For salvation is a radical transformation in three phases, beginning at our conversion, continuing throughout our earthly life, and brought to perfection when Christ comes. In particular, we must overcome the temptation to separate truths which belong together. We must not separate salvation from the kingdom of God.

For in the Bible, these two expressions are virtually synonyms, alternative models to describe the same work of God. According to Isaiah 52.7, those who preach good news of peace are also those who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, your God reigns. That is, where God reigns, he saves.

Salvation is the blessing of his rule. Again, when Jesus said to his disciples how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God, it seems to have been natural for them to respond with the question, who then can be saved? They evidently equated entering the kingdom with being saved. Once this identification has been made, salvation takes on a broader aspect.

For the kingdom of God is God's dynamic rule, breaking into human history through Jesus, confronting, combating, and overcoming evil, spreading the wholeness of personal and communal well-being, taking possession of his people in total blessing and total demand. The church is meant to be the kingdom community, a model of what human community looks like when it comes under the rule of God, and a challenging alternative to secular society. Entering God's kingdom is entering the new age, long promised in the Old Testament, which is also the beginning of God's new creation.

Now we look forward to the consummation of the kingdom when our bodies, our society, and our universe will all be renewed, and sin, pain, futility, disease and death will all be eradicated. Salvation is a big concept. We have no liberty to reduce it.

Wow! We need a fuller doctrine of salvation. Brethren and sisters, we are called to pray for the advancement of God's kingdom. We are called to serve the King.

Now I don't know about you, but sometimes I get a little bit, you know, why don't people grasp the truth and the reality and the majesty of being a Christian? Some of us are going, we haven't really grasped what we are in Christ. Special agents of the King of Kings. That's who you are.

So we pray for the advancement of the kingdom. And we pray for the arrival of God's kingdom. Now there was a teaching at some time that we in some way could bring in the kingdom.

Well of course we can't, it's all of grace. The kingdom is God's work through us and through others as we've seen. But the kingdom will come in all its fullness and all its glory and all its majesty when the King comes again.

When we pray thy kingdom come, we pray for the King to come. And when we pray your will be done, we pray for the universal obedience to God's will. And when we pray on earth as in heaven, we pray for heaven on earth.

We pray for Jesus to come and to establish his kingdom. Matthew 25 31 when the Son of Man comes in his glory and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. And all the nations, all the nations will be gathered before him and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.

The King is coming and the judge is coming. And there is a great and glorious day when the whole of human history will come to an end. And Jesus will reign.

And the whole world and the whole cosmos will acknowledge it. Brethren when? Well even the Jehovah's Witnesses don't know now. Because the JW's have just pronounced they don't know.

And of course nobody knows when. We have some insight into how. We also have some insight into the kind of scenario that if you turn to Matthew 24 you get some sort of insight into the sort of things that are going to happen.

Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his disciples came up to him to call his attention to its buildings. You see all these things here? I tell you the truth, not one stone here will be left on another. Every one will be thrown down.

In A.D. 70 they were. As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives the disciples came to him privately. Tell us, they said, when will this happen and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age? And Jesus answered, watch out that no one deceives you.

And then he lists a whole number of things. This isn't all the teaching on the second coming of course but he mentions for example false Christ. Many will come in my name claiming I am the Christ and will deceive many.

And there are false Christs abounding. And then he says there will be wars and rumours of wars. My goodness how many wars have we seen this century? I mean we look around this church and we see the names of men and women who have served in wars and died in wars.

You go to many places in England and you'll go even to small places and you'll see long, long lines of names. In some places in England a whole section of men of a certain age wiped out to a man. Thousands, thousands, not just England, all around the world millions have died in the wars related to communism.

Millions have died. My goodness this century is bathed in blood. Famines and earthquakes.

It's not just that we have the means of finding out now and the media has expanded the possibility of us hearing about a tremor there and a tremor there. It's because there is a growing intensity of earthquake phenomena and of course famines abound. They are the birth pangs says Jesus.

It's the process. It's the process that is unstoppable. Just as the birth pangs of a pregnant woman are unstoppable and some point in time she's going to deliver the child, so the earth is in travail as we await the coming of the Son of God.

And persecution. My goodness 300,000 martyrs a year. You go to some of the churches in Rwanda and you'll see a tide mark of blood all around the church as the Christians ran to the church and were butchered there.

Apostasy. Apostasy abounds. People abandoning the faith, falling away from it.

My goodness we had the head in Canada of one of our Canadian denominations just before he retired. How appropriate. Saying that Jesus was optional.

I suppose he's got his pension and now he can declare it. What integrity is that? False prophets will be there says Jesus. My goodness they're there.

See them on TV all the time. They haven't even had an ABC grounding in Christian doctrine and there they are teachers of the church. Because somebody's foolish enough to put them on the screen.

Increased wickedness. My goodness we see increased wickedness. Did you see on the news this week? Hollywood wants to create a better image for homosexuals and their lifestyle.

So they're going to drip feed one film after another trying to give a more positive image of homosexuality and that kind of lifestyle which is an abomination to God. And so we could go on and on and on. But one of the bright sparks in all of this is world evangelization.

And the gospel of the kingdom says Jesus, verse 14, will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations and then the end will come. And I praise God that the gospel has spread to the very ends of the earth. There's hardly a tribe, certainly no major tribe that has not heard the gospel and in which some members have come to faith.

There are subgroups, clans and others that have yet to be reached. But in the main the tribes, the ethnic of the earth have been touched by the gospel. The king is coming.

Are you ready? Am I ready? Are we praying for the arrival of God's kingdom? Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Are we ready? Prince Charles is coming to Fredericton at the end of the month.

Are you going to get an invitation? Am I going to get an invitation? What are we going to wear? Are we going to put on? When you shake the hand of the future king, what do you wear? Well, I'm just going to wear this. But I don't know about you ladies, my goodness, that wouldn't do, would it? You've got to have your best bib and tucker on then and you'll get into all kinds of fancy things because you want to be ready. I know one story is when I had an invitation to go and see the queen.

And you have no idea. And I thought, well, the queen will be at one end of the table and we'll be sitting at the other. It'll be lovely.

And we got our special sticker from Buckingham Palace to stick in the windscreen of the car. And I thought, well, I'll get the royal treatment today. We'll just go straight through, you know.

And as we got close to Buckingham Palace, we realized there were quite a few other cars with these stickers on. And when we got into Buckingham Palace, there were about 4,000 people there. Canadians as well.

Can you imagine? Now, all these Australians and Canadians keeping us out for goodness sakes and sharing tea. There was a queen way over there. Truth and justice and peace and healing and wholeness.

Pray for it. And pray for the arrival of the king. Am I ready? Am I ready? Let's pray.

Lord Jesus, when you first began preaching the gospel of the kingdom, you called those who heard you to repent and believe. And Lord, that's still the way of entry. It's still the way of wholeness and fulfillment and blessing.

To be constantly turning from sin and trusting in you. And Lord, each and every one of us needs to do that this morning. There's not one of us, Lord, who does not need to turn from our sin and trust more in you.

But Lord, there are some here this morning who have yet to submit to your reign at all. Who have never yet repented. Who have never yet believed.

Who have never yet come to the foot of the cross and found salvation so fully and freely offered. And I pray, Lord, that you would help them to take that step even today. Lord, have your way with us.

By your Holy Spirit, take us and use us for the glory of your name, the advancement of your kingdom. In your precious and holy name. Amen.

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