

Sermon JULY 21,2013 by Mary Brodhead, Lay Church Professional

Source : Gospel of John :Jesus Son of God, Son of Man

Thy Kingdom Come..Thy Will be Done... on earth as it is in heaven. We say this prayer at least once a week. What does those words mean to us? What will or does Thy Kingdom Come mean to you. The first thought that comes to my mind is PEACE on earth. Do we expect Christ to appear again on earth? There is an expectation presented in scripture that he will return as he left..as the resurrected Christ. Or possibly, has The Kingdom come and we never noticed? Did the Kingdom come when Christ was born, when he was crucified as the ultimate sacrifice, when he was resurrected, or perhaps when the Holy Spirit came to those in the upper room as they grieved over losing the physical presence of Jesus? Can the Kingdom of God come to us personally, at our death, or perhaps even in our daily lives? Jesus left the Holy spirit with all of us as Comforter and source of power. My experience with the Holy "Spirit is the presence of God every day in my life, helping me to believe, trust and serve following the example of Jesus, God on earth. In this world of technology I can understand the presence of the Holy Spirit as the electrical current all around us that can be caught and used by many folks at one time with cell phones, etc. The power source is right there just waiting to

be used by us. Prayer and the Bible are the plug ins to communication with the Holy Spirit. That is as real and easy to understand as Google and Blue Tooth and the I-Phone, etc.

We do need to cultivate and learn the techniques necessary to use this energy. We need to grow on our journey with God the Father and Creator, God the Son, Jesus and make use of the gifts of the Holy Spirit God for Thy Kingdom Come Jesus shows us how to live and participate in the Kingdom.

How important is the humanity of Christ described in John as “The Way”? The Gospel of John is known as the “Love Gospel” God, in Christ, shows us his love, his patience, his acceptance and inclusiveness. He also clearly shows us his pain and frustration that even his chosen 12 do not truly understand God’s plan. The Gospel of John tells us that he was present at the Creation with God and as God the co-creator, He came as a radical in the religious and social/political culture but not as a King or a Warrior. He did not experience justice for himself, yet sought justice for all the people. He was misunderstood by his family, and was persecuted for the truth. He came as a servant, healer, teacher, and suffered the humility of dying on a cross unjustly. How can His life as just described be appealing:?

Yet people came to him and followed him wherever he went. Strangely but probably not surprising, it was the religious leaders who angered him and who feared him the most. He

didn't follow all the religious and social rules and didn't bow to the pressure of the "holy leaders". He said to them that he was God's son come to fulfill the scriptures. They thought he was blaspheming. According to Jewish custom one did not come into God's presence unless they were prepared to die. They didn't even speak God's name for he was too Holy and they were unclean. These leaders became focused on tradition and ritual . This had become more important than justice, love of all people, healing and service to God and others.

IN His humanity he seemed to need friends like Mary and Martha, Mary Magdalene and the Disciples. He also sought solitude and rest. He continually sought Justice for the poor. Most of the population was too poor to make rules, to have access to the sacrifice required to be in the presence of God. He continually did the unexpected especially in his relationships with others. He taught by telling stories using symbols familiar to the people of that time. He did not theologize or speak in ways to impress others but instead spoke the truth simply . Yet even his disciples did not completely understand. At times he was frustrated and impatient but he continued to seek out people. He did not come to be only a healer physically and mentally but to bring forgiveness and salvation . He came bring grace and mercy with new beginnings.

Most importantly, he came bringing the gift of the Holy Spirit to empower others to carry on his work for God here on earth. He knew the people and he understood their way of life. He resisted the temptations of the Devil in the wilderness to satisfy his hunger, to feed his ego for power that the Devil thought he owned and could offer him. Although great crowds gathered around him he sought out simple fisherman and others like them to carry on his work after his death and resurrection. Surely, the kingdom of heaven was on earth in his presence, and also in his resurrection. God's will was always clear to him, and as we avail ourselves of the resources of the Holy Spirit we too can recognize God's presence and love and direction for our lives and our ministries.

Jesus was the preacher and prophet. He showed us by example to put our faith in God and let ourselves be led by him in our every day walk in life. As his time on earth was to end soon, he prayed for his disciples and other followers to experience the Holy Spirit in their lives which was the presence of God on earth after his death and crucifixion. How strange that those who were the visible leaders rejected him as the Son of God and to this day continue to see him as Rabbi teacher, prophet by not God.

Jesus loved, served, hurt, forgave, believed and trusted in a human and divine way. He lived in the world and showed the world excellence. He gave us motivation and encouragement to reach

beyond our human weakness to be more divine. He showed us that nothing is impossible, and that there is more to life than ordinary daily concerns. He taught us about relationships with God and others., Jesus is "The Way" for us to follow. Jesus died for us and yet overcame the injustice he experienced. There is nothing we can experience in life that Jesus has not also experienced. He accepts us with all our blemishes and sees our value to be servants to God and one another. Every day is a new day, the charts are wiped clean and we can start new. But we can't do it by ourselves. We need to put God first in our lives, trust he has the outcome in his hands, and we can just go along for the ride. For it is God in control not each of us. What surprises does he have for you, and what does he have in mind for the Church, the community of believers. What might we give up and what might we need to change? Let us study his amazing word so on target for today. He understand us and we, in our humanness have not changed from those we get to know in the Bible. Lets remember God's promises and praise him for He is good.

Jesus coming is God interfacing the world both then and now. He is the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies. He comes bringing a New Age ...Thy Kingdom Come on Earth as in Heaven. Jesus is the ultimate sacrifice. Christ gathers us up and will not lose us.

But what about the gift of the Holy Spirit. It is through the gift of the Holy Spirit that we can now witness in our own lives, God's Kingdom on earth. In many ways this gift of the Spirit available to all of us is Christ's Second coming promised by Christ at his resurrection. In this age of technology I think it is easier to understand the Spirit's ability to speak to us with thoughts and visions and through His Word. I like to think of the Holy Spirit as the energy that we now understand is all around us.

People every where can send e-mails and receive communication all at the same time. Each tower erected to enable this activity is like one more step in understanding God's presence in our lives and the power that involves. We are the instruments through which God can work out his will in the world and in heaven. This power can grow within each one of us as we open ourselves to trust God to work things out His way. As we open ourselves up to letting God do His work in our lives and in the world we begin to glimpse his presence in our lives and in our world every day. We begin to trust this and each experience reminds us of the goodness of God, his mercy and forgiveness modeled in Christ's humanity. Until we really begin to meditate and study God's word, do we realize how up to date and clearly stated "The Way" is to creating the Kingdom on Earth.

How are we who care about the church, the community of believers, going to meet the challenges facing us and those who come after us? What can we do about the lack of stewardship of this planet earth? Without this stewardship we are facing a very different way of life that may collapse within itself. We are no longer we and them, we are all them in this global world we live in. We have different backgrounds and cultures yet we are all God's children. There are many examples in the Bible where God uses the "unbelievers" (the non-Jews) to work out his plan for His people . In the early church it was the Gentiles (the non-Jewish folks) who came to know Christ and helped grow the church. How will we deal with the God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in bringing about the Kingdom? We can not be unaware of the diversity among us. God is experienced in different ways by different people. And the Devil seems to be very alive and well . There are so

many decisions to make about what we have in common and how we can respect others who experience God differently, or not at all.

The definition of a mature Christian is one who is in communication and right relationship with God and in a right relationship with each other, not just among those like us, but also those who are different. The challenges are great, and like the disciples, Jesus special friends, we often just don't get it. God is depending on us to pass His Word and His Kingdom along to the next generations. I beg you to study God's word. It is very relevant for these times. People basically don't change. They are tempted by greed, jealousy, fear, vengeance, power and sexuality. We can begin by respecting others, respecting ourselves as made in the image of God, and by showing love to others. Read the Gospel of John this summer and enjoy the blessings of "Love" that is lifted up in a very special way. Let us praise God and encourage one another. God desperately needs us. He won't give up on us and we should not give up on ourselves or each as well.