

June 16, 2013

The Second Petition

Your kingdom come.

What does this mean?

God's kingdom certainly comes by itself even without our prayer, but we pray in this petition that it may also come to us.

How does God's kingdom come?

God's kingdom comes when our heavenly Father gives his Holy Spirit, so that by his grace we believe his holy Word and lead a godly life now on earth and forever in heaven.

1. Jesus is the Christ and as such was "anointed . . . with the Holy Spirit and power" (Acts 10:38) to serve as our Prophet, Priest, and King.

As King, Jesus the Christ rules over a threefold kingdom. Although these aspects of his kingdom are intertwined, we might break them down into his kingdom of power, in which he exerts his almighty power over all things, that is, over the _____; his kingdom of grace, that is, the _____ on earth, in which he graciously rules in the hearts of his people through Word and sacrament; and his kingdom of glory, that is, _____, where he rules in glory with all the saints for all eternity.

The kingdom about which we pray in the Second Petition is Christ's kingdom of _____.

2. According to the following passage, how does God's kingdom come to us? What tools (or means) are used to bring the kingdom to us?

"No one can say, 'Jesus is Lord,' except by the Holy Spirit" (1 Corinthians 12:3).

3. According to the following passages, what are the blessed results when God's kingdom comes to us and Christ rules in our hearts?

"The kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Romans 14:17).

"Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).

"Your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory" (Colossians 3:3,4).

4. Use the following passages to answer the question, If Christians are already members of God's kingdom, why do they continue to pray the Second Petition of the Lord's Prayer?

"Since you already know this, be on your guard so that you may not . . . fall from your secure position. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:17,18).

"[Jesus said,] 'I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd'" (John 10:16).

5. What is your synod doing to assist you so that you might "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" and also reach out to bring others into the kingdom of God? What is your congregation doing to assist you? What additional things might each do?

6. Discuss the following Personal Plan of Action, and adopt it as your own.

(a) Identify someone who is presently unchurched (name: _____).

(b) Pray regularly that the Lord would give you the zeal and courage to share the good news with that person.

(c) Share the good news through a personal testimony, a tract and follow-up conversation, or a simple invitation to worship.

(d) Be persistent, and trust that the Lord will bless your work in his own time.

Luther said:

"When a Christian begins to know Christ as his Lord and Savior, who has redeemed him from death, and is brought into His dominion and heritage, his heart is thoroughly permeated by God; then he would like to help everybody attain this blessedness. For he has no greater joy than the treasured knowledge of Christ. So he begins to teach and exhort others, confesses and commends his blessedness before everybody, and sighs and prays that they, too, may come to this grace. He has a restless spirit while enjoying rest supreme, that is, God's grace and peace. Therefore he cannot be quiet or idle but is forever struggling and striving with all his powers, as one living only to spread God's honor and praise farther among man, to cause others also to receive this spirit of grace and through it also to help him pray." (Plass, Vol. 2, p. 959.)

Closing Prayer

Here we are, Lord. Send us and use us as salt and light in this sin-darkened world. Use us to take the message of your love and salvation into our neighborhoods, to work, to play, and wherever we go, so that many others might know the pleasures of your gracious rule. Amen.

At home: Memorize the Second Petition and its parts.