



His Word Is Truth!

“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.” Now, if we want to understand the Second Petition we must first understand what Jesus means by “*The kingdom of God.*”

Many in Jesus’ day did not understand what God’s kingdom was, just as many today do not understand what the kingdom of God is. For example, in Matthew 16:13-28 we learn what God’s kingdom IS and what it is NOT. Jesus asks his disciples who people say he is. They offer the opinions of a various people, and all of these opinions are wrong! Then Jesus asks them who THEY say he is. By the grace of the Father, Peter says: “**You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.**” Peter confesses the truth about Jesus’ identity! Not only is Peter correct in saying that Jesus is the Savior promised in the Old Testament Scriptures. Peter is

also correct in saying that Jesus is God himself in human flesh! (See Matthew 1:22-23)

However, knowing Jesus’ true identity is not enough. We must also understand the nature of Jesus’ kingdom and see our need for it. After Peter gives the correct confession about Jesus’ identity, Jesus then tells them about his upcoming suffering, death and resurrection (see Matthew 16:21). However, Peter refused to believe that this was part of Jesus’ kingdom. Peter said: “**This will never happen to you!**” Jesus then rebuked Peter and said: “**Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men.**” These words also rebuke US when Satan tempts us to think that we have no need for the salvation won for us by Jesus’ death for our sins!

We find another teaching about Jesus’ kingdom in Matthew 20:17-28. Jesus tells his twelve disciples about his upcoming death and

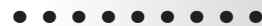
resurrection. After this the mother of Zebedee’s sons (James and John) asks Jesus if he would grant that her two sons would sit at his right and left in his kingdom. Sadly, this woman as well as the twelve disciples were still thinking of God’s kingdom in terms of earthly power and authority. They expected Jesus to conquer the Romans, and give them positions of power and authority. But God had already chosen the two who would sit at Jesus’ left and right in his kingdom! See **Matthew 27:38!** Jesus wants his disciples (and US!) to understand that his kingdom is found in his work of salvation on the cross. See **Matthew 20:28!** Jesus came to save His people from their sins (see Matthew 1:21).

In John chapter 20 we read about Jesus’ trial before Pilate who asks Jesus: “**Are you the king of the Jews?**” Jesus answers: “**My kingdom is not of this world.**” Jesus does not merely mean that he is God from all eternity (unlike the kings of this world who have a

beginning and an end). Jesus also means that his kingdom is of a different *kind* than the kingdoms of this world. Jesus’ kingdom is the forgiveness of sins and eternal life that is given to lost sinners through their faith in Jesus’ death and resurrection for them. In Colossians 1:12-13 Paul writes: “**...the Father ... has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.**”

Therefore, when Jesus teaches us to pray “**Your kingdom come**” he is thereby teaching us to see our need for the forgiveness of sin and new life with God that only he can give us. As Luther said in his Small Catechism, God’s kingdom comes by itself without our prayer. God’s kingdom comes among us when he sends his Holy Spirit who works through Baptism and the preaching of God’s Word to convict us of sin and give us faith in Jesus, our Lord and Savior. This same Holy

Spirit then moves us to lead godly lives in this world and for all eternity in the New Creation we will receive when Christ returns in glory (see 2nd Peter 3:11-13). As sinners who have been saved by God’s kingdom, Jesus teaches us to pray “**Your kingdom come**” so that we might rejoice every day in the salvation he has given us and share the Good News of Christ’s kingdom with others (see Matthew 3:1-3 and Matthew 4:12-17).



Please read the next “His Word is Truth” on Monday, May 19th! Pastor Eckstein will continue his series on The Lord’s Prayer with the Third Petition: “Your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.”

For more resources about Christian teaching and issues, go to Concordia Lutheran’s web page: www.concordiajt.org

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