

“On Earth As It Is in Heaven”
Matthew 6:1-13

I imagine you have noticed by now how “Thee-ocentric” this prayer is. It’s about to be even moreso – “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done” – is a rebuke to every prayer that is essentially “my kingdom come, my will be done.” All “ego-centric” praying - “on earth as it is in my mind, in my desires...” – must be forsaken.

This section of the disciple’s prayer is a call to put the government of our lives upon God’s shoulders (Is 9:6) – not a bad New Year’s resolution if you’re into such things! Since He is our Wonderful Counselor, our Mighty God, our Everlasting Father, our Prince of Peace... our King of Kings... we have every reason we need to do so.

The kingdom of God is quite simple – it is where the King is and where the King rules. However, at first, it is unlike anything we may be looking for, certainly unlike any kingdom here on earth. Jesus made that unquestionably clear to a group of very religious people who said they wanted God’s kingdom to come. He basically told them they were looking for it in all the wrong places, in all the wrong things, for all the wrong reasons! In essence, He told them, “It’s not over ‘here’ in your precise definitions and rigid behavioral boundaries. It’s not over ‘there’ in your measurable signs and worldly expectations. It’s right here in your midst – but you are so far off from its reality you can’t see it or hear it when its right in front of you!” (See John 5:37)

The kingdom of God does not come to be “over here” in this practice or “over there” in that mystical secret... it comes to us. It comes when the King of all Kings takes up residence in our human spirits and is released through us when we authorize His rule. In other words, His kingdom comes in and through the God-indwelt, God-governed life. The coming of God’s kingdom doesn’t always change “over here” or “over there,” but it always changes us. As long as “Our Father,” the King, is governing us... the world isn’t!

This makes every crisis on earth a call to worship the God of heaven. The “whats” and “whens” and “whys” below are determined by the King above. Every moment, then, is time to crown Him “King.” We rarely get to decide “what” is in our way – just “Who” will be our Way! “Your kingdom come” is essentially a conversion of trust. The King of the Kingdom is increasingly becoming the object of our faith, the sole referent for our choosing, the standard for all our valuation. We are consenting to the liberating reality of being a submissive self. In that posture, we start realizing something: submitting to the King of the kingdom will not take me where I want to go... it will take me to where He wants me to go!



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Greetings


While writing this newsletter, I am in the process of painting (exterior) our house. For the first time in 25 years (!) I've been able to find enough "space" to accomplish the task. Some, I'm sure, have wondered, "Wouldn't it be more spiritual, a better use of your time, have more kingdom relevance to be leading Bible Studies, doing more counseling, writing a book - you know, something more 'holy' than pressure washing, priming, and painting?"


I think not! For one, everyday in Christ is as "holy" as the next. But moreso, being a good steward, managing resources to God's glory is as righteous as parsing a Bible text in Greek or teaching a conference in Georgia! And while on that ladder, I've been thinking: thinking of how blessed we are to have a dwelling place with such ministry capabilities... thinking all those who cheerfully give to keep this ministry in operation... thinking what we may continue to do to demonstrate how grateful we are for all that God has entrusted to us.


I've been thinking we are all spiritual caretakers of spiritual and material goods. We do not own any of the resources or assets that we manage. We are forbidden by love (!) to manage them merely for self-interested purposes. And, that the oversight, caretaking, and investment of God's assets are daily acts of worship.


Care to join me in 2024 with a little New Year's Resolve? That we intentionally order our lives in such a way that it clearly demonstrates how grateful we are for all God has blessed us with. If so, I don't believe I'll have to wish you a happy new year!

Praise & Prayer

 To put the government of my life upon God's shoulders

 To manage God's resources with Kingdom purposes in mind

 For the King of the Kingdom abiding in us

 For resources sufficient to our needs

Calendar

JANUARY

9 Alachua Study

30 Ocala Study

FEBRUARY 23-25 FLORIDA RETREAT (352-672-1275)

MARCH 22-24 Binghamton, NY (607-341-6062)

APRIL 26-28 Hardin, KY (270-437-4172)

Florida Retreat

February 23-25, 2024

Alachua Florida

"On Earth as It Is in Heaven"

Jesus simply teaches His disciples to ask God to bring Who He is to where we are. Receive Jesus Christ and He will take us to heaven. Receive His Supplied Life in the dailiness of our lives and He will bring Heaven to us.

Come join us as we celebrate heavenly gifts for earthly moments!

Cost:

\$330/couple

\$175/single (2 to room)

\$275 single (1 to room)

\$50 per person deposit due by January 22, 2024