

Wednesday in Lent 2 3/19/2025
Lord's Prayer- Thy Kingdom Come
St. Matthew 6:10

One of my favorite cartoons shows a group of white-robed Christians meeting together in the underground catacombs of Rome. Candles are burning; manuscripts are piled up. The leader is addressing the group with the words, "We have a decision to make. Shall we carpet the catacombs, or shall we send a missionary to Ephesus?"

I like that cartoon because it pictures for us the essence of the 2nd petition, "Thy Kingdom come."

As our King, Jesus reigns in His kingdom. The Scriptures teach us of His kingdom of grace, which is His church on this earth, and His kingdom of glory, which is His church in heaven.

Luther says this about His kingdom, "God's kingdom comes to us in two ways: first, it comes here, in time, through the Word and faith, and secondly, in eternity, it comes through the final revelation. Now, we pray for both of these, that it may come to those are not yet in it, and that it may come by daily growth here and in eternal life hereafter to those who have attained it (LC III, 53)."

Which leads us to the question: For what do we pray in the 2nd Petition?

1. We pray that God would give us His Holy Spirit so that we believe His Word and lead godly lives as members of His kingdom of grace.

I want to take you back to Ash Wednesday for a moment. The ashes were placed on your forehead with the words, "Remember, from dust you came and to dust you shall return." Those ashes were dirty. You had to go home and scrub with soap and water to get rid of them.

Those ashes are a reminder to us of the uncleanness of our heart and lives. We are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against

God by our thoughts, words, and deeds. The Gospel call is a call to contrition, sorrow for our sin, and repentance, faith that God forgives us for the sake of Christ. The Gospel call is a call to us for the renewal of our heart and our life.

In the 2nd petition, we pray that God would give us His Holy Spirit, who comes to us through the means of grace -- the Word and the Sacraments. Through these means, the Holy Spirit, the Sanctifier, comes to us to lead us to Christ, so that we may be cleansed of all our sin in His blood. And, the Spirit recreates us in Christ, so that we have no desire, no appetite, no love, for sin. The Holy Spirit works faith in us so that we trust in Christ and our desire is to do our Father's will.

Even though we are in the world, we are not of the world. The Apostle Paul urges us, *Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth things (Co 3:2)*.

2. We pray that God **would bring** many others into His kingdom of Grace. The 2nd petition has been called the **mission** prayer of the Church. Spreading the Gospel was Christ's instruction to us, "*Go, make disciples of all nations,*" (Mt 28:20). In this petition, we pray simply not for the mission work of the Lord's Church, but that He would use **us** to extend His kingdom of grace.

Deitrich Boneoffer, a young German pastor executed by the Nazis in the closing weeks of World War II, once said, "The church that does not exist for others is no church at all." Which brings us back to our opening cartoon. Most certainly, God has entrusted us with a beautiful House of worship. We are called upon to be wise stewards, caretakers, of it. But, that is not to be our only focus. We must guard against becoming so

inwardly focused that we forget the Church exists to proclaim the Gospel message.

Put very simply, we must be careful not to take the attitude, “I’m so glad I’m going to heaven,” that we forget to tell our neighbor so that they too can be glad Christ has prepared a place for them in heaven. I know, talk of mission work scares us, frightens us; we don’t want to hear anything about it. Honestly, My Friends in Christ, I think our biggest obstacle to overcome is that we don’t want to be embarrassed. Cherish the words of Paul: *I can do all things through Him who strengthens me (Ph 4:13)*. Christ is not only with us, He does His work in us, so that we are equipped to reach out, to tell the good news about Jesus.

3. We pray that God would hasten the coming of His kingdom of Glory.

When you think of your exodus from this vale of tears, your death, or our Lord’s 2nd Coming, what thoughts fill your hearts? Honestly, it unsettles us. Perhaps, downright scares us. But, this is exactly what we pray for in the 2nd petition.

We pray to remind ourselves that we are strangers on this earth. Sin has made God’s creation into a barren wasteland. Heaven is our home. In praying the 2nd petition, by focusing on kingdom of glory, we are delivered from needless, endless worry about the things of earthly life.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus admonishes, *“Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or drink, not about your body, what you will put on.”* He concludes this section with these words, *“Your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself”* (Mt 6:25, 32-34). God has promised us our daily bread.

He has promised to be with us and deliver us from this land of death. We are called upon to walk by faith. We are not to fear today, nor worry about tomorrow. We are to seek His kingdom; that is, look forward to our departure from this earthly life to the kingdom of glory.

In praying this petition, we are also delivered from our fear of death. In Christ, we already possess eternal life. The Apostle John stresses this truth, *I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know what you have eternal life (1 Jn 5:11,13)*. Our Lord assured Martha, *“Whoever lives and believes in me will never die”* (Jn 11:26).

Yes, we are stranger and pilgrims in a hostile and evil world. Yet, even in our troubles and tribulations, we give glory to God, knowing that He has a place in heaven for us and has promised to bring us there,

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you (1 Pe 1:3-4).

Amen, Come, Lord Jesus. Amen.