

“Your Kingdom Come”

Matthew 6:10

Inviting Invasion

August 16th, 2015

(Part 3 of *Lord's Prayer* Sermon Series)

Do you know how World War II started? Germany invaded Poland. Most people remember that from high school history but do you know *why* Germany invaded Poland? They were invited to do so. At least that's what Hitler wanted the world to believe. On the night of August 31st, 1939, a small group of German operatives dressed in Polish uniforms seized a German radio station in Gleiwitz, Poland and broadcast a short anti-German message in Polish. Hitler used this as a pretext to invade Poland “for the sake of the Germans living there who wanted protection from anti-German sentiments.” Everyone saw through Hitler's ruse of course and that's why Britain and France immediately declared war on Germany.

Would any nation really invite invasion? The rebels in a certain country might if they can't overthrow a corrupt leader on their own. Although that country may be a traditional enemy of the West, its rebels may soon welcome air support from NATO to neutralize their own country's air force which their corrupt leader is using against his own people. But generally nations don't invite invasion, they defend against it. That's what makes the Second Petition in the Lord's Prayer so interesting. When we pray, “Your kingdom come,” we're **inviting invasion**. That may sound scary but it's actually a blessing for us. Let's find out how.

True or false? When we pray “Your kingdom come,” we're asking Jesus to reappear in glory and usher in Judgment Day. You're right if you answered, “True.” This world is a battlefield. Satan and his demons have teamed up with evil governments and false prophets to keep unbelievers in the dark and to cause the loss of faith among Christians. Our foe is formidable. In the book of Revelation Jesus compared Satan to an enormous red dragon with seven heads (Revelation 12). It's no wonder we pray: “Your kingdom come. Hurry Jesus! Save us from Satan's onslaughts. Give us eternal rest from the heartaches our own sins have caused. And bring us to that blessed home in heaven where we'll never be frustrated, grumpy, or have back pain again!”

It's good that we keep inviting this invasion lest we forget it's coming with or without our invitation. The Apostle Peter reminded his readers: “***But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives***” (2 Peter 3:10, 11). Don't be like the Russian leader Stalin. He was warned by both Winston Churchill and his own Russian spy network that Hitler was planning an invasion of Russia in 1941. Even after 3.4 million German troops were seen crossing the border into Russia, Stalin still failed to order defensive measures. In the end, Russia managed to beat back the Germans but those who are not prepared for Judgment Day will not be as fortunate. If we are found without faith on that day, we'll have to face God's wrath forever. And so when you pray, “Your kingdom come,” add this thought: “Today, Lord? Will you return today? If so, let me be ready.”

So how exactly do we prepare for Christ's return? Well, how would you prepare for an incoming tsunami like the one that slammed into Japan a few years ago? You wouldn't scurry around looking for your favorite high heels to scoop up, or waste time wrestling your big screen TV into the pickup truck after receiving word that a tsunami was going to hit in a matter of minutes would you? No! You would gather up the necessities of life: bottled water, canned food, batteries to power your flashlights, before hustling for higher ground. Likewise when we pray, “**Your kingdom come**,” it should remind us to stock up on spiritual necessities: not bottled water but baptismal water; not canned food but Holy Communion; and not batteries for your flashlight but the fuel of God's Word for your faith. These spiritual gifts cause us to stand firm on the Rock where we'll be safe from God's surging anger on Judgment Day.

And so when we pray, “Your kingdom come,” we're *not* just inviting Jesus' invasion on Judgment Day, we're inviting Jesus' invasion of our hearts right now. You see, God's “kingdom” is not so much a place as it is an activity; it's God's royal reign or rule. Our sinful nature of course doesn't want this invasion. This morning it may have tried to convince you that you were too tired to come to church. Or it may be telling you right now that listening to this sermon is a waste of time. Your sinful nature doesn't want you to be kind and

compassionate. It doesn't want you to encourage others but to tear them down. And it won't stop clamouring for the throne of your heart until you die. Satan will make sure of that with his constant barrage of temptations.

So what chance do we have against the Evil One whom Jesus compared to an enormous seven-headed dragon? Well, how did Jesus defeat Satan in the wilderness (Matthew 4)? He could have turned Satan away by calling in a battalion of angels. Or he could have called fire down from heaven himself to get that old liar. Instead Jesus turned Satan away with the sword of the Spirit: God's Word. You and I have that powerful weapon at our disposal too! And so when we pray, "Your kingdom come," we're asking God to make us faithful in the use of his Word so that our faith is strengthened and we overcome temptation rather than fall for it.

But you know how tricky Satan is. He gets us to pray, "Your kingdom come...but not yet, Lord. There are still a few pet sins that I don't want to give up. There are a couple of people that I just can't forgive. You'll excuse me if I keep holding a grudge against them, won't you?" And so we invite a limited invasion which is really no invasion at all. We often ask God to come on our terms not his - like the man stranded on top of his house after a tsunami who refuses rescue unless he can bring his big screen TV with.

What is God to do with people like us? When Northern troops invaded the South during the Civil War, they demanded an oath of allegiance from any Rebel who wanted to sell his cotton for profit again. It's only normal that the occupying force would want some sort of guarantee that a former Rebel wasn't going to use his proceeds to fund the ongoing fight against Union troops. But that's not how God operates. *He* pledges an allegiance of love to those who have rebelled against him. This is how God put it to the disobedient Israelites he had sent into exile: "*I will save my people from the countries of the east and the west. I will bring them back to live in Jerusalem; they will be my people, and I will be faithful and righteous to them as their God*" (Zechariah 8:7b, 8). God has pledged his allegiance to you as well. That happened when you were baptized. God put his name on you and forgave you. He promised to send the Holy Spirit who is working through the Word to turn your heart into a throne room for Jesus. Yes, God's kingdom *has* come but we keep inviting its invasion with the Second Petition because Satan is always counter attacking to oust Jesus from our hearts.

Hitler wasn't really invited to invade Poland. He just made it look like he was. In the end he only wanted more territory for himself and could care less what the people of Poland thought about that. But our God isn't like that. He's not urging us to invite invasion because he wants to take over our lives and ruin it for us. Nor does he need our invitation before coming into our hearts. Indeed, left to ourselves we would never invite God to come. But in his love God invaded our hearts and created faith to trust his promises. We now want God's reign to grow stronger in our lives because Jesus' reign brings true freedom. Freedom from guilt. Freedom from fear. And freedom to serve our loving king, Jesus. Amen.