

## **WELCOME 18<sup>th</sup> August 2019 – 10 Pentecost '19 C**

Isaiah 2:2-4 & John 18:33-37 & Luke 11:2-4

Good morning! Welcome to worship today! Special welcome to our visitors/guests! It's our privilege & joy to serve you in worship.

One author writes... "We typically pray as casually as we'd order a burger at the takeaway: 'I'll have one solved problem please; two blessings, hold the hassles, & no heartache.'" Maybe we even say "Thank you."

But Jesus taught us to pray, to ask of the Father, "*Your kingdom come.*" Of that Luther says, "We pray here not for a mere crust of bread or a temporal, perishable good, but for an eternal inestimable treasure & everything God Himself possesses... God desires nothing more earnestly of us than that we ask much & great things from Him."

To pray for God's kingdom to be manifest on earth as it is in heaven is to ask the Father to transform the world according to his desire & intent through his Spirit and his Word at work through us. This is the largest of all requests not because we pray to change the world, (eliminate evil, overthrow injustice, bring peace), but that the Father would use us for his purposes in all things.

That the Father's Kingdom which comes without our prayer would come also among us and the Father's will triumph over every earthly will and desire...especially ours: That prayer and that transformation of human heart...is precisely the prayer the Father longs to hear and grants without delay...and all things are made new.

We'll explore and experience that together today...and we'll see firsthand how God answers that prayer with his presence, his power, his promise through his Word at work in his people as the MacKenzies share their experience with Lifeway Lutheran Church in Cambodia....

**Let's pray...**

### **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Heavenly Father, your kingdom comes without our praying for it, but we ask today that you would come and rule over our lives as King. Take from us our will and make us willing to follow you. Give us your Holy Spirit that we carry Christ's presence, love, forgiveness, hope and joy to others. We ask this in Jesus' name, Amen.

## 10 PENTECOST '19 C – FROM HIS FULLNESS: THE FATHER'S KINGDOM

### FAITH CHAT:

1. Have you ever prayed for something that really changed your life?
2. How easy or difficult is it for you to pray: "Your will be done"? eg...

Of the 50 individual states that make up the United States of America, only 1 of those states was ever its own sovereign nation. Any guess which 1? Absolutely...the great state of Texas. In fact, over the course of history there are 6 recorded flags that have flown over what is now Texas. At any given moment in that changing political landscape, among the general population there would have been those whose loyalties/allegiances didn't always shift with the changing flag...or shifted before the flag did. No surprise there.

How different are we...really? Oh...maybe not so much national loyalties...although I admit a strain on my heart at times over varied occurrences in the US...but I live here...my life investment is here...I don't "what if" over there...But what about those other strains on our hearts that call for our allegiance loyalty or at least capture our attention & focus & effort? To talk of "kingdom/rule/reign" is to suggest a power over which we have no real control at all. We are in its grip, claimed by it or possessed by it. Which powers might those be...fear, addiction, confusion, anxiety, grief, despair, even our pride/vanity. God's kingdom, this life says, can't be trusted/counted on to deliver the real things we need. Not when my job is on the line my child is in distress my spouse is sick or faltering...it's on me...

There are other powers eager to dominate our thoughts & hearts, other powers that threaten our hope of the kingdom for which we pray. You don't have to look far. Look inside or listen to your friends & sometimes find nothing but our own fears, our own struggles, our own crises/cries, our own denials/dependencies, our own bitterness/unfilled wants. These are not the devil's snares; these emerge from inside Mt 15:19-20 – For from the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, all sexual immorality, theft, lying, & slander. These are what defile you. Eating with unwashed hands will never defile you. The devil may exploit them, but they belong first to us. We get caught & paralyzed by these & lose sight of hope, faith, courage or the Father's love

Deep inside each of us the prayer we may never give voice but is there like an old scar, "Hallowed be My name, My kingdom come, My will be done." So I can do whatever I want, when I want, how I want, as often as I want...We default to living out the prayer of our fallen Adam/Eve/self...I want it all & I want it now.

So we pray, "Your kingdom come; your will be done; on earth as it is in heaven." St. Augustine says, "God must make us obedient. He must bend us & shape us to his purposes." It is here that the battle of kingdoms & wills is most decidedly fought. *Then, calling the crowd to join his disciples, Jesus said, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, & follow me. If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake & for the sake of the Good News, you will save it. For what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul?" – Mk 8:34-36*

That's no "...mere crust of bread or a temporal, perishable good, but an eternal inestimable treasure & everything God Himself possesses..." It is here that the battle of kingdoms & wills is most decidedly fought to be lived out here...made real here...made visible here...And I want Jan & Graeme to share a bit about how that went for them in living out the Kingdom of Christ from here to Cambodia.

We're going to take a minute or two to get the computer set up & see their slides, but then they'll share some of what it all means...

Thanks...Why? What did that mean there? What does it mean for you going forward?

The culture of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is so self-centered & so self-indulgent. Whatever you want go do it go get it & pay for it when you get around to it...or not. No one has a right to judge you as long as you are happy within yourself & love the you who you are right now... 'cos you can be a different you next week & who's to judge?

But Jesus taught us to pray, to ask of the Father, "Your kingdom come; your will be done; on earth as it is in heaven." Father, we pray that you take hold of my life now in such a way that I can count on you in every faltering doubt, in every low & frantic moment. You, Father, you take hold of my heart now & put it under your control, because as you take hold of me, then I know I shall be free...free indeed.

To pray for God's kingdom to be manifest on earth as it is in heaven is to ask the Father to transform the world according to his desire & intent through his Spirit and his Word at work through us. This is the largest of all requests not because we pray to change the world, (eliminate evil, overthrow injustice, bring peace), but that the Father would claim us & use us for his purposes in all things.

That the Father's Kingdom which comes without our prayer would come also among us & the Father's will triumph over every earthly will and desire...especially ours: That prayer and that transformation of human heart...is precisely the prayer the Father longs to hear and grants without delay...and all things are made new.

Let's pray with that in mind...**Heavenly Father, your kingdom comes without our praying for it, but we ask that you would come and rule our lives as King. Take from us our will and make us willing to follow Jesus. Give us your Holy Spirit that we carry Christ's presence, love, forgiveness, hope and joy to others. We ask this in Jesus' name, Amen.**