

O Son Of Man, Let Your Kingdom Come!

There's a young man named 'John.' John got up early in the morning and finished the homework he still had left over from the previous day. He dreaded finishing it because there was the question: 'how old is the earth.' And in the textbook, 10,000 years or less was not one of the answers. He went to school. And what he had been hoping for actually happened. Jenna, the girl he wanted to ask to the prom was not surrounded by her mob of friends for a change. In a rare moment of courage, he goes over to her and asks her to the prom. She says 'no' and walks away. John goes to biology class. He hears his teacher drone on and on about how long it took for simple organisms to morph into more complex ones. But, all the while he's terrified that the teacher will ask him how old *he* thinks the earth is. And he'll have to answer that he believes what the bible says. The school day ends. He goes home and hears the TV blaring in the background. It says that there are wars in Afghanistan and Abortion at home. But what hurts him the most isn't what the TV says. It's what his parents say. They are in the middle of a fight. So, he goes downstairs. He eats a snack and does his homework. At the very end of the day, he says his prayers and goes to sleep. He sleeps like a baby who is warm and full of milk.

Now, if you've been listening closely, you might be saying to yourself: "that's not how his day is supposed to end. He's supposed to be staying up awake late into the night pining after Jenna or praying for courage in his biology class." But, you're wrong. He slept well that night. Why? Because before he went to sleep he spoke those treasured words of the LORD'S Prayer. And in that prayer he said those three precious words "*Your kingdom come.*"

You see, John has learned what we need to keep learning throughout our lives. John took the words of our gospel this morning to heart. "*Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" "Is that your own idea," Jesus asked, "or did others talk to you about me?" "Am I a Jew?" Pilate replied. "It was your people and your chief priests who handed you over to me. What is it you have done?" Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place."*" (John 18:33-36 NIV)

Christ's kingdom is not from here. It is hidden. And it is through this hiddenness that God brings salvation to us. For everything about Jesus was hidden, humble and lowly. Our Savior was born and placed not on a throne, but in a manger. Our Savior grew up as a normal looking human. He would not have been handsome enough to be cast as a hero in any modern movie. He was as we read in these words "*one like a son of man*" (Daniel 7:13 NIV)

And not only is our Savior hidden and humble, so is his kingdom. The apostles went out and preached the good news about Jesus. And what was their reward from the world? The world put most of those apostles to death for sharing life with the world. The kingdom of the Son of Man is hidden. It's real. But it's hidden. That is what gave John the solace and comfort to sleep after a day of defeat and disappointment.

This is a very important fact for us to focus on. For Satan always seeks to take our focus off of these words of Jesus. And our sinful nature is a willing ally. We sin when we look for Christ's kingdom in what is visible. And you might say to yourself: 'what does that mean? what does that look like?' Making Christ's kingdom a visible kingdom is when you say that two words: "if only..." If only we had the right *president*. If only we had the right president to preside over this nation. Then we could make this nation a Christian nation once again. But, notice what you've done. You've made the hidden kingdom of Christ a visible one.

Or, you might think "If only we had the right *pastor*." Indeed, if only we had a pastor who was more experienced and didn't make so many rookie mistakes. If only we had a pastor who was younger and could magically relate to the younger people out there. But it isn't the pastor who grows a church. God grows the church.

Or you might think: "if only we had the right *people*." If only we had more people in the church. If only we had more dedicated people in the church. But Christ's kingdom is not in the number or quality of the people in the pews. Christ's kingdom is hidden. And every time we forget that fact and replace his kingdom with something visible, we show our sinful hearts and our lack of understanding God's clear word.

The kingdom of the Son of Man comes to us not with the right president, pastor or people. No, Christ's kingdom comes to us in his word. It is in the pages and promises of the bible that Jesus crushes our sins and creates faith. If you want to see the *glory* of the kingdom of the Son of Man, then look at this baptismal font. God

performed miracles here. Here he connected sinners to his resurrection. Here he gave them faith and brought them into his kingdom. If you want to see the *power* of Christ's kingdom, then look no farther than this altar and this rail. Here Jesus gives us his body and blood. And where there is holy blood and a holy body of a holy Savior there is forgiveness of sins and strength.

And you might say to yourself: "But I don't see it. I don't see the kingdom of the Son of man. I don't see it in this dusty book. I don't see it in the water there or the wine here." Yes, that's true. But when has faith ever been by sight. And when did Christ's kingdom ever come by sight. Look at the words of this gospel. Jesus promises that he has servants. Jesus promises that he even has a whole kingdom. But he never *shows* his kingdom. For only God's word has the power to forgive and create faith. And Pilate rejected that word.

So my brothers and sisters, we repent of the times we have wanted and even prayed for a visible kingdom. And we rejoice that this kingdom has come to us through word and sacrament as we say in the prayer: "your kingdom come."

Christ's kingdom is hidden. But, it will not always be hidden. Listen to the words Daniel speaks to us: *"In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed."* (Daniel 7:13–14 NIV)

Today we do not see the kingdom of the Son of Man. But there will be a day when we will see it all. We will see the holes in his side and in his hands. We will see the angels the Son of Man sent to guard and protect us. We will sing with them around the throne. We will sing with them and with the saints who have gone before us. And we will sing with new bodies and new voices which are not weakened by aging on this earth.

But, above all of this, what will be our greatest joy? Christ's dominion. The fact that we know by faith we will see with our own eyes: Christ lives and rules eternally. In verse 14 we see how true this fact is. In this verse we find three lists of three. Daniel says three important facts about Jesus three times. First, we read: *"He was given authority, glory and sovereign power"* (Daniel 7:14 NIV)

Daniel here is answering an unasked question. The question is this: how will Jesus be treated in heaven. Notice the answer. God, the Father will give him dominion, honor and kingdom. In other words, the kingdom, honor and power that we do not see now, we will see in heaven.

Then, there's the second triplet: *"all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him."* (Daniel 7:14 NIV) When everyone sees that Jesus has this dominion and power, what will their response be to this? All people will bow down before him.

And finally the third triplet: *"His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed."* (Daniel 7:14 NIV) Notice the triplet: 1) forever. 2) not pass away. 3) never be destroyed. This triplet answers the question: "how long will his kingdom last?" And what's the answer? Forever!

Daniel writes these words to fill us with hope and strength. What do we do with the fact that on Judgement Day we will see the honor, authority and power of our Savior? We rejoice that we will have the privilege of seeing it. We rejoice that all those who denied that power—who said that Jesus was dead and his word was useless, they will see that power too.

What do we do with the fact that *all* people will see this power and bow down? We rejoice. We rejoice at the great grace, the underserved love that God has poured out on us that we be bowing down in joy. For there will be many on that day who will try to hide from Jesus. And they will be forced to bow down. And they will be terrified.

What do we do with the fact that his kingdom will last forever? We sing with the hymn-writer: **"By pow'rs of empire banned and burned, By pagan pride rejected, spurned, The Word still stands, the Christians' trust, While haughty empires lie in dust."** (CW 291) When every government tries to write out or root out God's kingdom, rejoice that those kingdoms all will end and the kingdom of the Son of Man will endure forever.

And finally, pray. Pray as our teenager John did: *your kingdom come*. O Son of Man, may your kingdom come. May it come to us hidden in your word now. May it come visibly and powerfully in heaven. Amen.