

GiFT

The Lord's Prayer

4: Your Kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven (ii)

Welcome and Opening Prayer

Last session we thought about what the Kingdom of God might be like and where we might see it? This week we are continuing to reflect on this line in the prayer, in which the enormity and scope of its yearning is staggering when we think deeply about it: that the beauty and joy of heaven would be seen in our world – transforming, healing and renewing. For a short time this evening, we are invited to think about those people, situations and places where we long to see the healing, transforming love of God at work – and to think about how we might commit ourselves to be part of that Kingdom life.

Some opening conversations: Sharing in twos:

- When you pray, especially when you ask God for something to happen, or to change, what are you expecting God to do? How are you hoping he might act, or expecting him to do?
Can you now share your thoughts with the whole group?
- Again, sharing in twos: Are there times when you thought and felt that a prayer had been answered? Can you share something of the experience and what happened to make you feel the prayer had been answered?
Once again, can you share your thoughts with the whole group?
- Again, sharing in twos: Do you think God has ever used you to be the answer to someone else's prayer?
Once again, if you feel able to, can you share your thoughts with the whole group?

An Activity: *Please ensure everyone has a postcard size card and a pen. You are now invited to reflect quietly and to think of two situations (one local and one national or global) which deeply concern you and where you long to see transformation – the Kingdom of God breaking in. You may have many to choose from but try to think of the ones most important to you (and limit yourself to one in each category). On one side of your card please write your situations on the card: “The situations that concern me are...”*

- In your twos please now share what you chose and what transformation you long to see?
Once again, can you then share your thoughts with the whole group?
- Once again, in your twos, and thinking about the situations you have chosen, can you think of any ways in which God might be calling you to help answer your prayer/concern?
Can you think about how you have, or how you might, contribute to making a difference to the situation which concerns you?

Once you have talked about it, if you feel able to, write down that commitment on the back of your card “For God’s Kingdom I will commit to...” (A commitment might be to volunteer, to give money, to commit to social action etc.)

If you feel able to, it would be good to share your **“situations”** and your **“commitments”** with the whole group (but please feel able to pass if you prefer).

Now take a short break to recover!

You might have gathered by now that the writer of this session thinks that we have a pretty big part to play in working with God in answering prayer and in the transforming work of his Kingdom – God needs us to play our part! We are going to continue this session with two more

parables in which Jesus may be longing to instill in his listeners the desire to be people of transformation – Kingdom People! See what you make of them! Please ask someone to read each parable before discussing it.

For each of the parables these questions might help you?

- What is your reaction to the parable?
- What puzzles or excites you about the parable?
- What does the parable mean (or suggest) **for you**?
- What might the parable be challenging **you to do or think**?
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Luke 16.19-31 The Rich Man and Lazarus

‘There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who longed to satisfy his hunger with what fell from the rich man’s table; even the dogs would come and lick his sores. The poor man died and was carried away by the angels to be with Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried. In Hades, where he was being tormented, he looked up and saw Abraham far away with Lazarus by his side. He called out, “Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in agony in these flames.” But Abraham said, “Child, remember that during your lifetime you received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in agony. Besides all this, between you and us a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who might want to pass from here to you cannot do so, and no one can cross from there to us.” He said, “Then, father, I beg you to send him to my father’s house— for I have five brothers—that he may warn them, so that they will not also come into this place of torment.” Abraham replied, “They have Moses and the prophets; they should listen to them.” He said, “No, father Abraham; but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.” He said to him, “If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.” ’

Matthew 25.14-30 The Parable of the Talents

‘For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money. After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, “Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents.” His master said to him, “Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.” And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, “Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents.” His master said to him, “Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.”

Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, “Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.” But his master replied, “You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

CLOSING PRAYERS