

 <p>ASSEMBLY OF GOD</p>	<p><b>Chris Woodham</b> Senior Pastor PO Box 196 Waiuku 1852 PH: (09) 235 7341 MOB: (021) 187 1928 Email: waiukuag@wag.org.nz Web: www.wag.org.nz</p>
--	---

<b>Sermon Title</b>	<b>: A King's Authority</b>
<b>Series</b>	<b>: <i>Living in the Kingdom of God</i></b>
<b>Date Preached</b>	<b>: 29<sup>th</sup> May 2005.</b>

## Introduction

We're continuing this series on "Living in the Kingdom of God."

So why are we spending so much time looking at this? What's the big deal? The Bible is filled with references to God's Kingdom, Jesus Himself mentions the Kingdom of God over one hundred (100) times!!!

Jesus didn't waste any words and He spent more time talking about the Kingdom of God than about anything else – if Jesus is consumed with the Kingdom of God then we'd better get consumed with it too!!!

Jesus summed up His life's mission in Luke:

**NIV Luke 4:43** *But he said, "I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent."*

If it was Jesus' obsession then we need to take up this mission for ourselves.

So far we've looked at how God's Kingdom is His rule, His rank and His authority. The Kingdom of God is God's authority – not a specific geographic location or even a specific group of people.

When Jesus talks about the Kingdom of God He is talking about His right to rule in situations, His Kingly right to exercise His authority.

Whenever you read the phrase "Kingdom of God" in the Bible, replace it with the "Rule of God" – that's what Jesus is talking about.

The "Good News" that we have been commanded to proclaim to the world is that God's authority has come among us.

## The Chain of Authority

The question we come to, then, is that surely God's authority is already here because He is God, right?

The very nature of God requires that He be supreme ruler over everything.

Well...let's go back to the beginning of time, to the creation of the world and see if we can chart this whole issue of authority from beginning to end – that way we can better understand how this all fits together.

We looked in the first message in this series at the picture the Bible paints of God as supreme, eternal King over everything.

**NIV Psalm 145:13** *Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures through all generations. The LORD is faithful to all his promises and loving toward all he has made.*

**NIV 1 Timothy 1:17** *Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

From forever to forever, God is and always will be the Most High, the most powerful, the absolute authority over everything – it goes along with the territory of being 'God' and all!

When God created humans, He made us to rule over the earth with Him.

**NIV Genesis 1:26** *Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."*

**NIV Psalm 115:16** *The highest heavens belong to the LORD, but the earth he has given to man.*

We were created for a relationship with God and for rulership with Him.

When Adam and Eve succumbed to temptation, then mankind lost not only their relationship with God, but also their rulership with God.

Satan tempted Adam and Eve to become gods themselves, apart from God. In losing their fellowship with God mankind actually surrendered the authority over the earth that God had given them to Satan.

The "Fall of Man" as some Bibles describe it is the loss of relationship and the loss of authority.

Satan revealed his authority and how he obtained it when he tried to tempt Jesus:

**NIV Luke 4:5** *The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. 6 And he said to him, "I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to.*

Satan claimed that the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory of all the earth were his. He claimed that they had been given to him.

Note that Jesus doesn't reject this claim – Satan was quite correct in saying this.

Look closely at the words that Satan uses here: Kingdom, Power, and Glory. They seem quite familiar don't they? We find them in the Lord's Prayer; Jesus proclaims to God that His is the "Kingdom, the power and the glory."

But at this point in time, Satan's authority is seen over the earth because mankind gave it to him when Adam and Eve sinned.

Satan used the phrase "for it has been given to me."

That word "given" means 'delivered' or 'handed over', even 'betrayed to'. That perfectly describes what happened when Adam and Eve fell; they betrayed their God-given authority over the earth to God's enemy.

It's the same word that is used to describe Judas when he *betrayed* Jesus.

The rulership God gave mankind over the earth was handed to Satan when Adam and Eve sinned. Satan had been given authority over the earth.

The Bible describes Him as:

"The god of this world"	2 Corinthians 4:4
"The Prince of this world"	John 14:30
"The prince of the power of the air"	Ephesians 2:2
"The whole world is under the control of the evil one"	1 John 5:19

In this current setting, the world that God created to be good has come under the power of Satan.

People blame God for a lot of things; earthquakes, disasters, pain, heartache, loss and even death. The ironic thing is that these things are the characteristics of the Kingdom of Darkness that we looked at last week.

These things are the result of mankind handing authority over to Satan.

So the situation we're at now is that God gave authority to man who in turn passed it onto the enemy.

Enter Jesus...

Jesus came to challenge the authority of Satan; His birth was a declaration of war – it was an aggressive incursion into enemy territory.

Jesus' mission was to restore mankind's fellowship with God and to reinstate mankind's rulership under God.

This is the "Good news".

**NIV Matthew 9:35** *Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness.*

The "good news" of the Kingdom is that there's a new rule in the earth to those who will accept Jesus as their Lord. The "good news" of the Kingdom is that, for those who choose to respond to Jesus, the rule of Satan over this world and their lives is now more. Jesus was talking about a present power and authority that could invade our present situations!

Jesus' sacrificial death, His descent into Hell and His resurrection from the dead defeated Satan's power and authority over those who choose to belong to God's Kingdom.

**KJV Revelation 1:18** *I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.*

Jesus' power over Satan isn't just over death, but over all of His workings on earth in the here and now. Jesus was sent by God to conquer Satan and restore mankind's relationship with Him. His mission from God was to take back the authority of Satan.

You know what? That same mission has been given to us too!

**NIV John 20:21** *Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."*

The same Spirit that is in Jesus has been offered to Christians; it is the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives!

Our mission is the same as that of Jesus; to *announce* the coming of the Kingdom of God and to *demonstrate* that His Kingdom has come.

Ps. Don Barry of Gateway Church in Hamilton put it this way:

*“We have a message and a ministry. The message illuminates the Kingdom of God and the ministry illustrates it. This isn’t for the elect few – it is for every disciple.”*

Let me ask you this: How is your life illuminating the Kingdom? How is your life illustrating the Kingdom?

If it’s not then we need to take a serious look at where we are and make some changes because this is our mission from God.

The chain of authority over the earth has gone from God to mankind to Satan to Jesus and now it’s offered back to those who will respond to the call of Jesus to come under His authority and share in ruling His Kingdom.

## **Agents of the Kingdom**

When we accept the forgiveness that Jesus offers and embrace a restored relationship with God, when we’re filled with the Holy Spirit and choose to voluntarily submit to God as King, and when we choose to step out in faith and obedience – regardless of the cost – then we become agents of the Kingdom of God.

That’s what we are.

Citizens of another realm, diplomats, ambassadors, colonists, Children of the King of Kings; we’re charged with demonstrating the authority and values of the Kingdom to which we belong. We’ve been given the power and authority to conduct our Father’s business.

## **Exercising the King’s Authority**

So now we’ve laid the groundwork we can begin the *real* part of the sermon!

It’s all well and good to get excited and pumped up at the thought of exercising the authority that God has given us over this world; the authority over sickness and death and all these things; but how do we actually do it?

Once we’ve made the tough call and accepted that living in the Kingdom of God requires nothing less than total obedience and submission to God, complete faith in Him and His ways, a sacrificial life that says “my needs and wants are second to the King’s desires”, once we’ve taken this huge step into the Kingdom – how do we actually exercise this authority in our lives?

How can we experience the rule of the Kingdom of God entering and challenging and taking victory over the situations in our lives that we face?

**KJV Luke 11:1-4** *And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples. And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.*

The disciples had been with Jesus, they'd followed Him and were witnesses to the miracles and power that He had. The disciples saw God's rule come into situations when Jesus entered.

Wherever Jesus was, there you found the Kingdom of God; the rule of God, the authority of God.

The disciples knew that Jesus had strength and a depth that they didn't and they wanted to tap into it. Unlike so many of us who try and excuse ourselves by saying "well Jesus is God – of course He had a power that we can't know," unlike us the disciples accepted Jesus as a real man – as He was, as well as being God – and assumed that they could, in fact, do whatever He was doing.

Jesus was their master, their teacher, their Rabbi. The relationship was not one of rulership over them, but of Jesus the Rabbi teaching and empowering His disciples to be like Him and do the things He did.

When they became His disciples it was with the understanding that they were called to do the same things He was doing.

What the disciples needed to understand, and what we need to understand, it what gave Jesus His extraordinary authority and power.

The conclusion the disciples came to was that the thing Jesus did differently was prayer. His prayer life was the source of His strength and the Kingdom of God in Him and the situations He became a part of.

There is an undeniable connection between the way Jesus prayed and the presence of the Kingdom of God wherever He went.

***"There is a pathway of prayer that introduces heaven's rule into earth's situations"<sup>1</sup>***

---

<sup>1</sup> Don Barry *Prayer and the Coming of the Kingdom*

Think about this; of all the amazing things Jesus did: feeding thousands of people from a couple of bits of bread and some fish, walking on water, raising the dead, healing the sick, restoring sight to the blind, calming storms...of all of the things Jesus did the disciples asked Him to teach them how to pray.

When Jesus prayed earthly situations changed. When Jesus prayed the authority and rule of God brought everyday circumstances into submission to God's power.

When death was at hand and Jesus prayed; life took over.

Where there was sickness in control and Jesus prayed; healing and restoration conquered.

Where there was torment and oppression and Jesus prayed; calm and release occurred.

When Jesus prayed the rule of God took over.

Jesus took the disciple's request seriously; notice that He didn't challenge their assumption that they could do the things He did – He willingly introduced them to this prayer that welcomes the Kingdom of God.

In fact, Jesus even said:

**NIV John 14:12** *I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.*

The Lord's Prayer as we often call it, it's really the Disciples Prayer, it is droned out at funerals and official events, repeated verbatim with little understanding as if the words themselves are important.

The Bible isn't even consistent in the words Jesus prayed here so obviously they're not important. What's important is the template that it provides.

In Jesus' day Rabbi's would teach their disciples to pray, we've just read that John the Baptist taught his disciples to pray. What they taught was not a rote string of words, but rather a *method* of praying. The way we pray reflects our theology, it reveals what we believe about God.

They were a template used to explain and help remember the important elements. The prayer opens up the concepts to be grasped.

It's what is called an "Index Prayer". Each line reveals a concept that we need to focus on and grasp; we're going to go through these briefly

## Introducing Kingdom Prayer

Let's go through this prayer that Jesus taught to His disciples:

1. Our Father – This teaches security in our relationship with God, *our* Father. In order to welcome Kingdom rule we need to know the King. Once we've got this sorted then we have the right to invite His Kingdom and authority into our circumstances.
2. Hallowed be Thy Name – Worship is central to the Kingdom of God, we're going to look at this in a couple of weeks. It's giving God priority and honouring Him in our lives.
3. Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done – This is inviting God's dimension, God's agenda to enter our circumstances. We know God's will – it's to bless us and give us life abundantly, it's to see others come to know Him. This is proclaiming that God's agenda is welcome here.
4. Give us this day our daily bread – We are to ask God to meet our needs, even our boring and everyday needs. God has promised to provide for His people, we need to ask for it though!
5. Forgive us our trespasses.. – We need release and we need God's grace. Unforgiveness obstructs God's grace more than anything.
6. Lead us not into temptation – Living in the Kingdom of God means obedience to God – even to the commands we find hard or that cost us. We can only obey with God's strength and we need to obey so we need to ask for God's strength to obey. This also speaks about trials – when things are tough we need to be praying for God's strength to conquer.
7. Deliver us from evil – This is related to the previous one, but is obviously directly concerned with God's protection from the attacks of the enemy. We need to be guarding our lives – everything from our thoughts to our actions and circumstances and rely on the strength of Jesus to keep us safe.

Prayer is inviting God's rule and authority into our circumstances. Prayer welcomes the Kingdom of God. If we don't welcome God's Kingdom into our family's, our workplaces, our relationships, our finances; our health, every area of our lives – then who will?



## Practising Kingdom Prayer

It's funny, prayer is the easiest thing to do, yet I can guarantee that most Christians are not doing it regularly or as effectively as they could.

How do I know that?

Look around you – is this town experiencing revival? Is this church filled to overflowing? Are the streets packed with the local publicans protesting about the way the churches have ruined their businesses? Is the newspaper saying that the Christians in Waiuku have turned the whole town upside down?

No?

Well then – Christians aren't praying effectively. My Bible says that God responds to our prayers and I believe the Bible. If God's not responding then we're not praying!

Care to disagree? Go and read the book of Acts.

As hard as it may be to accept, prayer is vital to the coming of the Kingdom of God. You need to understand that the Kingdom of God does not come uninvited!

Too many Christians have embraced a Doris Day theology, "que sera, sera" then they try and spiritualise it by quoting Romans 8:

**NIV Romans 8:28** *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*

You know what – we need to put this verse in context otherwise quoting it by itself makes it mean something that the Bible does not teach. This verse does not mean that if we're Christians then God will make everything work out in the end.

Let's read it, because this is essential if we are to understand the role of prayer in the coming of God's Kingdom into our situations.

**NLT Romans 8:22** *For we know that all creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. 23 And even we Christians, although we have the Holy Spirit within us as a foretaste of future glory, also groan to be released from pain and suffering. We, too, wait anxiously for that day when God will give us our full rights as his children, including the new bodies he has promised us. 24 Now that we are saved, we eagerly look forward to this freedom. For if you already have something, you don't need to hope for it. 25 But if we look forward to something we don't have yet, we must wait patiently and confidently. 26 And the Holy Spirit helps us in our distress. For we don't even know what we should pray for, nor how we should pray. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words. 27 And the Father who knows all hearts knows what the Spirit is saying, for the Spirit pleads for us believers in harmony with God's own will. 28 And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.*

Does this mean that all things work together for good for Christians? No!

The context of this verse is Holy Spirit inspired prayer. How can we be sure all things will work together for good in our lives? Because we've been *praying* for God's Kingdom to come into them, we haven't just sent up a token thirty second "help me!" prayer, but we've been praying in the Holy Spirit, praying in tongues, seeking God for it.

We can only claim this verse if we are praying.

There is a way that the Kingdom of God comes into our lives and situations and circumstances – it is through prayer.

Unless we're praying and inviting Kingdom rule then we're without the Kingdom's authority and resources.

Christians who claim that "all things work together for good" but who don't understand and practice the essential role of real prayer in it, are not proclaiming the Bible.

That's not Christianity – that's Islam. Islam is submission to Allah's wishes. Allah does whatever he wants and nobody can alter his will.

Christianity is about God inviting our participation. He has chosen to work in partnership with us. God doesn't need our help, but there are things He has chosen not to do without our involvement.

Without God we cannot, but without us God will not.

Remember those verses we looked at in the beginning? God gave the earth and its affairs into the hands of mankind. This is a gift from God to us.

When we fail in it God does not take it back and sort everything out. When Adam and Eve sinned and handed the history of the earth to Satan God didn't jump in and take it back. Earth was given to man by God and could only be reclaimed by man.

That's why Jesus was born, God become man, a real man, a genuine Son of Adam. He needed to become like us to reclaim our inheritance.

If we fail in our assigned task, this responsibility and privilege of partnership with God then He's not going to step in and bail us out.

E M. Bounds, the famous pastor of the American Civil War wrote:

*"Praying saints are God's agents for carrying on His saving and providential work on the earth. If His agents fail Him in neglecting to pray, then His work fails."*

***It is not the greatness of our praying that counts, it is that we do pray!***

## **A King's Authority**

Last week we looked at the need for us to fully obey God in faith, to obey even when it's hard and it hurts, when it costs us.

When we take these steps of faith we begin living in God Kingdom.

If we want to introduce God's rule into our circumstances and situations we need to couple this obedience with prayer. Prayer invites God's rule into situations.

Are you sick? Pray! Are you stressed? Pray! Are you always struggling to pay the bills? Obey God, tithe, and Pray!

Living in God's Kingdom is living under God's rule and His blessing.

Prayer is our privilege and our responsibility. As agents of the Kingdom we are individually charged with the responsibility of sharing the Good News of the Kingdom of God with our world, and we are equally charged with introducing the rule of the Kingdom of God into our lives, thereby demonstrating the Kingdom of God.

Jesus taught people about the Kingdom and demonstrated the Kingdom. We are commanded to do the same!