### PRAYING ABOUT THE KINGDOM

# Sunday Morning: February 15, 2004

**Text: Matthew 25:34** "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, **ye blessed** of my Father, **inherit the kingdom** prepared for you from the foundation of the world:"

We've been studying about accountability and consequences of life after salvation and trying to help us to focus upon the way the Lord would have us to walk. We do want to hear 'well done thou good and faithful servant." We do want or we should have the desire to please him in our daily walk. We know that without faith it is impossible to please Him and the only way to gain faith is through the study of God's Word. "Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God." So therefore it's important for us to study the Bible. So we've been going over the fact that salvation has been provided for through the Lord Jesus Christ's death on the cross, and then He expects us to behave ourselves in our daily walk with him. And there are consequences to pay; we've been sharing that and emphasizing the fact that there are many terms that the scriptures use; like the fiery furnace and outer darkness and being rejected from going in to the wedding feast and being beaten with many stripes and going into prison. These all are used to help us to appreciate the fact that we're not going to like the consequences. And so there are several means that the Lord has provided for us to help us to behave. One of them is rewards. If you'll do the right thing, I'll reward you, I'll give you rewards in heaven. If you don't do the right thing, it's going to cost you. Your work will be burned and so therefore it's important for us to appreciate the fact that when Jesus told His disciple in the Sermon on the Mount, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God," He wasn't telling them to seek salvation. He was telling them to seek to rule and reign with me in my coming kingdom. In fact the word 'seek', is in the present tense. It's not an event. It's an ongoing thing and it's a daily thing. And it has to do with planning your walk with the Lord. A time of prayer, a time of devotions a time of reading of the Word of God, time of reading the scriptures and there's a difference between the Word of God and the Scriptures. And so this morning I want us to focus on the fact that we need to be praying about the coming Kingdom. In Mathew chapter twenty-five verse thirty-four "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." To enter the Kingdom is a blessing. And the entrance into the Kingdom is an inheritance; it's a family matter. Inheritance has to do with rewards based upon service. In fact the sheep were those who ministered to the Lord by ministering to each other in situations. I've included Mathew seven twenty-one.

# WARNING

Matthew 7:21 "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."

That's what He's telling us here. Those that were blessed and inherited the Kingdom in Mathew twenty-five thirty-four, they were doing the will of the Father. And so we want to do the same thing. We *want* to do the will of the Father. In First Corinthians six nine through ten, we find that there are going to be some that will be denied entrance into the Kingdom.

# ENTRANCE DENIED

1 Corinthians 6:9-10 "Know ye not that the unrighteous [unjust] shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither (you can be unjust and not be a) fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, 10. Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God."

"Know ye not that the unrighteous [<u>unjust would be a better translation of that</u>] shall not inherit the kingdom of God? And we could stop right there. The unjust! And then he tags on greater sins. Did you know that you can be unjust and *not* live in adultery. You could be unjust and not be a thief. You know being unjust is just simply *not* trusting the Lord in your life. Let's just read this. "Be not deceived: **neither**"; neither what? Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." In other words, you can be unjust and not commit any of these other sins and be denied entrance into the Kingdom. Doing the will of the Father is important and part of doing the will of the Father is seeking first the Kingdom of God. There are a lot of people that just get saved and they're resting on that. And God wants you to do more than that.

# SEEK THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Luke 12:31-32 "But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you. *32.* Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

### SEEK THE KINGDOM FIRST

Matthew 6:33 "But seek [present tense] ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

Mathew six thirty-three tells us, seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you. In other words, we can wring our hands over the fact that we don't have what we think we need as far as food, clothing and shelter. The Lord says, "Don't worry about that, you worry about seeking what's important to me and I'll provide what's important to you." And I'll tell you food, clothing and shelter is important particularly in Minnesota. Now if you lived on the equator, you won't need shelter, you can live outside. In fact it's implied that Jesus often times slept outside and He didn't have something to eat when He came into Jerusalem to teach. Remember when He came in to Jerusalem? Obviously He wasn't in someone's home that provided Him breakfast, because when He came in, He looked for the fig tree to give Him some breakfast and there wasn't any breakfast there so He used it as a teaching lesson and He cursed the fig tree, which is actually the nation of Israel, but anyway. So we need to seek first the Kingdom of God and the righteousness, which is by faith. I believe that's what this is referring to because of verse twenty of Mathew chapter six. Now, in the Sermon on the Mount, the disciples were taught how to pray in Mathew chapter six verses nine and ten He says

# PRAY FOR THE KINGDOM TO COME

Matthew 6:9-10 "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. *10.* Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as *it is* in heaven."

Now, this is a model prayer, this isn't a prayer that we pray, it's a model to help us to fashion our own prayers after it. And I'm not going into all the things that He's asking us to pray about, but the main thing that I want us just to focus on is, 'Thy Kingdom come." Seeking the Kingdom is praying about the Kingdom. It's praying that it will come and I'm praying that it will come in my lifetime. And you know what? When you're praying about seeking the Kingdom and you're praying about His Kingdom coming, you know what? That's going to make a difference in your life. Because it's in your prayer life that you're meditating upon things that are important to Him and one of the things that are important to the Father is that His will be done. In fact He says, when you pray "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth," you know what that's saying to me? I want God's will to be done in my life whether I like it or not. That's what's important. There are times when we don't like the things God has planned for us, and Jesus had that experience in the garden. And He was praying if it be possible this cup pass from me, let it pass, but if not, Thy will be done. We'll see that in just a moment. So we need to be praying about His coming Kingdom, we need to be praying that His will be done in our lives, as it is done in heaven. Now, one of the things that can happen when we stop praying is that there is the possibility of us fainting or quitting. When you stop your prayer life, you're on the verge of throwing in the towel. That's what happens in the boxing ring. A lot of times when the guys are out there boxing, the guys fighting don't know when to quit, so his trainer throws in the towel in the ring, he says, "we quit." And we don't want to throw the towel in when it comes to following the Lord.

# PRAY AND DON'T FAINT

Luke 18:1 "And he spake a parable unto them *to this end,* that men ought always to **pray**, and **not** to **faint** [weary];"

And the word 'faint' there is to grow weary. When you're weary, your prayer life needs to step up a notch. You need to be more in contact with the Lord and be more in prayer. Prayer is not something, at least not in my life, prayer is not something I just do in the morning, or do when I go to bed. Prayer is something that I am involved in all day long. When the phone rings I pray about answering the phone, and when information comes in the email on the Internet, I'm praying about answering questions, I'm praying about responding to people that come or that write me on the Internet. So prayer is a daily thing. Now one of the things we need to be aware of, that can also affect our prayer life is that in these last days lawlessness is going to abound. Things around us can affect us.

# LOVE GROWS COLD

Matthew 24:12-13 "And because iniquity [lawlessness] shall abound, the love of [the] many (called unto his kingdom and glory) shall wax cold. 13. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved (delivered)."

"Iniquity" that is lawlessness, **aignoma** is the Greek word shall abound, the love of the many shall wax cold. And there's the definite article, 'the' before 'many.' And this is a reference to the many that have been called unto His Kingdom and glory. But it says "he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." How do we endure? Prayer! Our prayer life helps us to endure. And this enduring to the end doesn't mean that we'll get saved if we keep on keeping on, this word here carries the idea of deliverance, deliverance from what? Deliverance from the effects of lawlessness around us! We hear swearing and cursing, just like it was sin the days of Noah: "men's thoughts were evil continually, violence filled the earth." We're living in that day. And the affairs of man around us can affect us and cause us to become discouraged in our walk with the Lord. And so therefore if we will endure to the end by praying, the effects of lawlessness around us – we will be delivered from it.

# FERVENT PRAYER

James 5:16 "... The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

Now we need to appreciate the fact that the effectual fervent prayer of a just man or a righteous man does make a difference. You may not be able to see the difference right away, but it doe make a difference; it does count. And He is a rewarder of those who pray. It says

# **RENEWED BY PRAYER**

2 Corinthians 4:16 "For which cause (the glory of God, v.15) we faint [weary] not; but though

our outward man perish, yet the **inward** man is **renewed** day by day."

I believe that our prayer life helps us to be renewed day by day. And so we're renewed by prayer. By the way, this "cause" is the glory of God in verse fifteen. It says that we faint not though our outward man perish. We can struggle, our bodies will wear out and wear down but we don't have to throw in the towel as far as our walk with the Lord. We studied Galatians last year and we were encouraged not to faint in Galatians six verses eight and nine

# DON'T FAINT

Galatians 6:8-9 "For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the (<u>Abba</u>) Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting [age, (life in the kingdom age)]. 9. And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

We want to reap blessings to enter the Kingdom. You don't *reap* salvation. Salvation is provided when you believe on the lord Jesus. This reaping here has to do with the Kingdom Age. This has to do with entering the Kingdom, ruling and reigning with Christ. And so therefore verse nine says, "Let us not be weary in well doing for in due season we shall reap". Reap what? Life for the age! How? "If we faint not," and it takes prayer to keep from fainting. Men ought always to pray and not to faint. And so therefore if we expect to enter the Kingdom we need to be in prayer. Jesus was our example for that. He endured contradiction of sinners. He endured lawlessness in His day just like we are in our day.

# JESUS, OUR EXAMPLE

Hebrews 12:3 "For consider him (<u>Jesus</u>) that **endured** such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds [souls]."

And I think that it's significant that it's in our minds or souls because that's where we make our decisions. We decide whether to throw in the towel or not and so therefore we need to consider the fact that Jesus Christ struggled with those around Him and yet He endured and He was victorious in His own life and we too can be the same. Now, in Mathew twenty- six verses thirty-nine through forty-two we see Jesus Christ struggling in the garden and it says

# ACCORDING TO HIS WILL

Matthew 26:39-42 "And he (Jesus) went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt. 40. And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour? 41. Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak. 42. He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done."

I think that one of the things that we need to appreciate is the fact that the will of God is important in our lives. If we don't focus on the fact that it's the will of God that's important to our life then we can become weary in praying. Because we often pray for things that God doesn't want us to have or it is not the will of God. Paul prayed, "Lord, take this thorn away from me" and he prayed three times. How many of us have prayed three times about something and then quit? Well, I know my aches and pains and I think about my back. You know the troubles I've had with my back, I think I've prayed more than three times about that! It hurt more than three times and I don't think Paul's thorn in the flesh went away either. And so He says "My grace is sufficient." Well anyway Jesus prayed, "If it be possible let this cup pass from me, Nevertheless, not as I will but as thou wilt." And then it says "And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth

them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour? 41. Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." The Lord is encouraging his disciples to watch and to pray. And I think that we need to be encouraged to watch for what? The second coming of Christ! We need to be looking for His return. Because as we look for His return, we're anticipating the coming Kingdom and we, I don't know about you, but I'm pretty sure you're in same boat I was when I was a kid, when mother was coming home or dad was coming home, we made sure that we got everything we needed to get done, done before they got there. So therefore we were watching to see when they would come so we wouldn't be caught doing something we shouldn't be doing. So we are exhorted to watch and to pray that ye enter not into temptation. That is, when we are into difficulties in our life and testings in our life that we don't succumb to them. We can be overcome by testings and trials in our life and the Lord doesn't want us to be overcome. And the way you are not overcome by things that happen in your life, is trusting that God's will is being accomplished for you. You've got to look at it that way. If you don't, you will become weary and you will quit. And God does not want us to quit. We need to appreciate the fact that there are times when we are really willing that we could do the Lord's will. But you know what? The flesh can enter in, the feelings can enter in, we can feel like that God is not with us, but He is. He will never leave us nor forsake us. And it says, in verse forty- two "He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done". We need to be praying along those lines as well. Then again we need to appreciate the fact that we can get sleepy too. I think about First Thessalonians chapter five talking about the end times. Don't let that day overtake you as a thief in the night. And Paul exhorts us in Thessalonica in First Thessalonians five six through eight

# LET US NOT SLEEP

1 Thessalonians 5:6-8 "Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. 7. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. 8. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation."

We need to be watching and to be watching, we need to be awake. That's the reason why it's important to watch and to pray; part of it. I think it's significant that we need to be sober, not drunken. To be drunken is one of the things that disqualify us from what? Inheriting the Kingdom! And so therefore we don't need to let our guard down: when you're sleeping, your guards down. There are times that people can walk unnoticed. There are times Jean's walking in the house and I don't know she's walking in the house, because I'm sleeping! Same with her and so therefore our guard is down when we're sleeping. So he says here in verse eight "But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation." Faith that worketh by love; faith protects the vital organs of the body, the breastplate. The helmet protects the head, our thought life, which has to do with our prayer life and our walk with the Lord. So we need to watch and pray. Luke twenty- one verse twenty-nine through thirty- six says the same thing

# WATCH AND PRAY

Luke 21:29-36 "And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree (<u>nation of Israel</u>), and all the trees (<u>many nations</u>); *30.* When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. *31.* So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. *32.* Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled. *33.* Heaven and earth shall pass away: but

my words shall not pass away. 34. And **take heed to yourselves**, lest at any time **your hearts** be overcharged with **surfeiting**, and **drunkenness**, and **cares** of this life, and so that day come upon you **unawares**. 35. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. 36. **Watch** ye therefore, and **pray** always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all **these things** (verse 34) that shall come to pass, and to **stand** before the Son of man."

I included this in this passage of scripture because we too today are seeing the fig tree blossom or bloom. The fig tree is a type pf the nation of Israel. That happened in (1948) forty- eight. And not only the fig tree has put forth shoots but all the trees. So there are not only the nation of Israel, but you just think of all the nations that have come to pass since nineteen forty eight. You think of all the Third world countries in Africa and other parts of the world that have blossomed and come forth. So you know what that means? It means that the Kingdom of God is at hand. We need to appreciate the fact that it us at hand and so therefore we need to be thinking about it and praying about it and anticipating it. Because if we do then we will be ready when He comes. Verse thirty- two. "Verily I say unto you, "This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled. 33. Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away." You know what that's saying to me? Count on it! This is the truth, believe this, my Kingdom is close when you see Israel become a nation and when you see other nations becoming independent nations themselves, breaking away from the colonization they were under for so many years. Verse thirty- four, "And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares." You know who is responsible for this? I am, we are! Take heed to ourselves, why? Because there are times when we have more than we need. My mother always told me, my grandmother too, that idle hands were the Devil's workshop and part of the problem of the sin of Israel was having too much to eat and having too much time on their hands. And so therefore we need to appreciate the fact that we are not to be overcome with excess. Surfeiting has to do with having too much. Drunkenness, the cares of this life; and you know what? These distractions can cause us not to be prepared for the days when the Lord will come. So we need to appreciate the fact that verse thirty-five is "so that day come upon you unawares. 35. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth." But it shouldn't come upon us unexpectedly. What are we to be doing? Watch ye therefore and pray always that you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things. Now I don't look at these things here as the great tribulation, I look at these things as escaping surfeiting, drunkenness, the cares of this world, things that would cause me to be not sensitive to the time that the Lord is coming. And so these things that are here I believe, found in verse thirty-four and thirty-five, are things that we need to be watching and praying about so that we can escape these, we can be delivered from these so that we can do what? Stand before the Son of Man! There are going to be those that will not be able to stand in His presence. They will have to be excused. First John two twenty-eight tells us that. That we need to abide in Him that when He shall appear we shall have confidence and not be ashamed from before Him. Now, one of the things about praying is praying Jesus' name. I thought it would be important for us to include this.

# **GLORIFIES THE FATHER**

John 14:13-14 "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. *14.* If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do *it.*"

Has anyone ever prayed in Jesus' name and not got your prayers answered? I have! Plenty of times! Sometimes we don't understand what it means to pray in Jesus name. I think this verse

helps us somewhat to understand that. When you pray in Jesus' name, you're asking God to do what you want done so that who is glorified? The Father! If what you're praying about is going to glorify the Father, first of all you need to know if it's the will of the Father, don't you? If it's the will of the Father, you know for sure that you're going to have that? But if it's not the will of the Father, it won't glorify the Father and you're not going to get it. So let's continue, "If ye shall ask any thing **in my name**, I will do *it.*" That's pretty point blank, isn't it? We feel like we've got a blank check, well, I've signed a few blank checks but you know what was filled in? Zero's! Zero! Well let's continue

### ASK WHAT YE WILL

John 15:7-8 "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. *8.* Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples."

Well, isn't that interesting? Did you know that the knowledge of the Word of God is going to affect your prayer life. If you don't know the Word of God very well, you're going to be praying for a new car when the Lord says, 'I don't really want you to ride in a new one. \* will do. It keeps you out of the weather and you're not as tired when you get there, even though you're not riding in comfort. I was just noticing on the news today. You heard about having a car that will heat the seats, you know, so that in the winter up here in Minnesota you can sit on warm seats in the car. I saw here they have seats now that will cool so that when you get in the car, your car has cooled your seats so that you don't burn yourself in the summer time! Well, anyways lets go on. It's the will of the Father. Our prayer life should be about bearing fruit and we need to know what the fruit is and let the Word of God help us with our prayer life. John fifteen sixteen gives us a little further information along this line.

#### ASK IN MY NAME

John 15:16 "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall **ask** of the Father in my name, he may give it you."

This verse often bothered me because this verse over here told me He would; and over this verse here it's got the word 'may' in there. And so you've got to know the scriptures. And you've got to be able to understand that God doesn't always give you what you need until you do need it. Now, the bottom line I believe is in John sixteen twenty-three and twenty-four.

#### PRAY IN JESUS NAME

**John 16:23-24** "And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall **ask** the Father **in my name**, he will give *it* you. *24.* Hitherto have ye asked nothing **in my name**: ask, and ye shall receive, **that your joy may be full**."

"In that day", that is the Kingdom. When will my joy be full? When I hear 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of the Lord." I need to be praying that I can be faithful to the Lord, that I can be a profitable servant. And so when I'm praying in the name of the Lord Jesus, I'm praying according to the Word of God.

#### HIS NAME

# Revelation 19:13 "... his name is called The Word of God."

Well, what is the Word of God? Well in Luke chapter eight verses ten and eleven it says

# THE WORD OF GOD

Luke 8:10-11 "And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God (<u>sown seed</u>): . . . *11.* Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God."

This is in the parable of the sower. So the sower was sowing the mysteries of the Kingdom and then in verse eleven it says "Now the parable is this: the seed is the Word of God." When we are praying, we need to have in mind what's in the Word of God and praying about what's in the Word of God has to do with the mysteries of the Kingdom of the Heavens. Our prayer life should be in the light of His coming Kingdom. When we're praying, we should be praying 'Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done here on the earth, as it is in heaven. So we need to be praying in the light of the Word of God, which is His coming Kingdom. And then when we appear before Him, we will hear 'Well done thou good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things, enter thou into the joy of the Lord.

# THE JOY OF THY LORD

Matthew 25:23 "His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord."

So what do we need to be doing? Well, we need to be praying according to His will and I think we have looked on a few things according to His will. And one thing that we can be assured of is that the Holy Spirit is praying according to His will

# ACCORDING TO GOD'S WILL

**Romans 8:26-27** "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the **Spirit** itself **maketh intercession for us** with groanings which cannot be uttered. 27. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what *is* the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh **intercession for the saints according to** *the will of* **God**."

And so we need to know that too. We need to know that the Holy Spirit is praying for us according to the will of God and what is the will of God for us? Well one passage of scripture, First Thessalonians chapter five tells us,

# GOD'S WILL FOR US

**1 Thessalonians 5:16-18** "**Rejoice** always; *17.* **pray** without ceasing; *18.* in everything **give thanks**; for this is **God's will for you** in Christ Jesus."

May the Lord help us to be rejoicing, even when we have to count it all joy! Because there are times when we have to count it all joy, because it isn't much fun, it isn't much joy. And we need to pray without ceasing. This word, 'without ceasing' is like a cough that you can't get rid of, it just happens! Cough, cough! Have you ever laid in bed trying to sleep and you can't because you can't because you keep coughing, that's what this prayer life is all about. I've got to pray about that. And then giving thanks: acknowledging the fact that what you have is come from the Lord and *this* is the will of God for our lives in Christ Jesus.

May the Lord help us with our prayer life that our expectation will be according to the will of God.

Father we just thank you for Your Word, we thank you, Lord, for the insight that you give us from it and we pray, Lord that You'd help us to abide by it and live by it and to pray by it. We pray that You'd bless the message to each of our hearts'. We know Lord, that there are times when we are weary and we are discouraged and yet we can take courage from the fact that accepting Your will for our life glorifies the Father and the Son and when our prayer life glorifies You, we will have joy, we will hear "Well done" and we will enter into Your coming Kingdom with honor and glory and with positions of ruling and reigning with You. Bless the message to each of our hearts, we pray in Jesus Christ's name, amen.