

SMALL GROUP NOTES
Morning Service. Sunday July 7th, 2024
'Your kingdom come' (Mt 6:10)

Reading: Matthew 6:9-13.

Matthew 6:10: *'Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.'*

The 'kingdom of God'

The phrase '*the kingdom of God*' is a characteristic term used by Jesus. It can also be understood as 'the kingship of God.' It is not simply a place, a location, spatially expressed. It is, more fundamentally, about a state of mind and a personal position. It is what happens under God's authority.

In the teaching of Jesus, 'the kingdom' is both a present reality and a future experience. In short: while we await the final action of God to restore broken creation, we live our lives in line with his rule (a rule which will eventually be seen and understood by all in a restored creation). The 'kingdom' both needs to be sought now and will one day be revealed in undeniable power.

The 'coming' of the 'kingdom'

The coming of the kingdom relies on the actions of God. It does not rely on believers bringing it into being. As one commentator put it: 'It asks for the establishment of the Kingdom of God, *by God for us, not by us for God.*'

Where does this leave us?

In the book *Jesus and the Powers*, by Tom Wright and Michael F. Bird (SPCK, 2024), the authors argue strongly that the Christian objective is 'not of "building the kingdom" but of building for the kingdom.' In other words, we witness to Christian outlook - and others *choose* whether to adopt this for themselves, and it is God who will bring it to fruition in his own time.

There is no New Testament authority for forcing Christian values on a recalcitrant society. There is only a warrant for loving service.

Applying the scripture:

1. What comes to mind when you read Matthew 6:10? *'Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.'*
2. In the book *Jesus and the Powers*, by Tom Wright and Michael F. Bird (SPCK, 2024), the authors argue that the Christian objective is 'not of "building the kingdom" but of building for the kingdom.' What is the difference? What do you think about this?
3. How should Christians approach access to political power & what to do with it?
4. Take into prayer these thoughts as you pray for the new government of the UK and for Christians in politics.