

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Greetings from the parsonage! As we wrap up another calendar year of the Lord's blessings, we may feel as we did about a month ago—remembering all that the Lord has done for us over the last year and giving thanks for it. At the same time, we look forward to the new year to come, as well as to our Lord Jesus' return. A bit of Gospel-good news to this is that we don't have to wait for Jesus' return for His kingdom to come to us. That's what we'll find as we continue our study of Luther's Large Catechism, looking at the second petition of the Lord's Prayer.



Thy King--dom Come

As we enter a new calendar year, we consider a new petition of the Lord's Prayer. "In the first petition we prayed about God's name and honor, that God would prevent the world from using his glory and name to dress up its lies and wickedness but would instead keep his name sacred and holy in both teaching and life so that he may be praised and exalted in us. In the same way in this petition we ask that his kingdom may come. Just as God's name is holy in itself and yet we pray that it may be holy among us, so also his kingdom comes of itself without our prayer, and yet we pray that it may come to us, that is, that it may prevail among us and with us, so that we may be a part of those among whom his name is hallowed and his kingdom flourishes (BoC, p.446)."

It is objective truth that Jesus Christ died on a cross at a place called Calvary and that that sacrifice paid for the sins of the world according to God's Word. Yet this truth has no good effect for those who do not believe. Faith is the open hands through which we receive for ourselves that forgiveness, life, and salvation. As our Confessions make clear: "we are not talking here about the faith possessed by the devil and the ungodly, who also believe the story that Christ suffered and was raised from the dead. But we are talking about true faith, which believes that we obtain grace and forgiveness of sin through Christ...For the devil and the ungodly do not believe this article about the forgiveness of sin. That is why they are enemies of God, cannot call upon him, and cannot hope for anything good from him. Moreover, as it has

now been indicated, Scripture talks about faith but does not label it knowledge such as the devil and the ungodly have. For Hebrews 11 [:1] teaches that faith is not only a matter of historical knowledge, but a matter of having confidence in God to receive his promise (The Augsburg Confession—German Text, BoC, p.56).”

Therefore, God will act in the earth—that is objective truth. But for God’s work to be of benefit to us—for His kingdom to come to us, to you and to me—we must have faith that He will. Of ourselves, we have neither the desire nor the nature to hope that God would work anything good for us. That is why we pray this petition. In the faith and confidence that we have—not because we are perfect but because we have been given faith to believe that Jesus Christ died for and paid for your specific sins and my specific sins—we pray that God’s kingdom would come to us. We did not have that faith of ourselves to begin with, and now that we have it, our new nature does not desire to lose it. Yet we have a real enemy, Satan, who will stop at nothing to steal that faith away from us. So we pray to the One who has already defeated Satan, the world, and our own sinful natures, Jesus Christ, to keep us in the faith, that God’s kingdom would flourish among and including us, you and me.

The fact that Jesus has paid the price for sin is objective truth, and as you have received faith, God will keep you in that one true faith to life everlasting. In Jesus’ Name. Amen.

Your brother and under-Shepherd in Christ,

Pastor Josh

Have a Blessed
2019!!!