

**June 28, 2009**  
**“Taking It To The Streets”**  
**Matthew 6:10 NIV**

your kingdom come,  
your will be done  
on earth as it is in heaven.

Many grew up thinking, and may still think that, “Thy Kingdom Come” was a prayer for the return of Jesus, the end of the earth as we now know it, and the ushering in of a new world where Christians will feel at home. The Jews who first heard the prayer thought Jesus was praying for Israel’s freedom from Rome’s rule. But the phrase, “Your kingdom come” refers to God’s spiritual reign.

Luke 17:20-21 (NLT)

One day the Pharisees asked Jesus, "When will the Kingdom of God come?"

Jesus replied, "The Kingdom of God can't be detected by visible signs. <sup>21</sup> You won't be able to say, 'Here it is!' or 'It's over there!' For the Kingdom of God is already among you."

Jesus’ followers recognized that the kingdom began with His coming to earth. The kingdom is present in the heart of believers as Christ reigns there (in the heart). The Kingdom of God is not something that will only come when Jesus returns, His kingdom is here now, ever since the first coming of Christ. And to pray for His kingdom to come is to pray that more and more people will be touched by and will enter His kingdom.

The second part of v10 is, “your will be done on earth as it is in heaven” is further indication that the Kingdom of God is here now and needs to spread, bringing others into the Kingdom. His kingdom is where His will is done here on earth, as in heaven. This is a prayer that God’s perfect will be accomplished in this world (on earth) as it already is in heaven.

This means that God is always at work, not just in the church, but in the world. When the church is the church, or when Christians are engaging the world, the world will find Jesus. Wherever we, Jesus followers go we bring Jesus, and Jesus went out into the streets, the communities to connect with all people, for He is pursuing everyone to bring them into His Kingdom and give them abundant life.

Our responsibility is not to get people into the church, but to get them into the Kingdom (of God). We bring good news into people’s lives right where they live, work, and play. Remember you don’t go to church, you are the church. You don’t bring people to

church; you bring the church to people. Abundant life is lived out with loved ones, friends, and acquaintances out there in your home, in the neighborhood, in the world. You are the church and the role of the church is to bless people in the world, revealing God's heart to the world. Someone has said that when it comes to the gospel it must not just be proclamation, it must also be demonstration. People must see Jesus in us as we bless them. We are to bless all people; people like us, and not like us, people we like, and don't like, people who believe like us and share our values, and people who don't.

I challenge you to ask three people this week: "How can I ask God to bless you?" Imagine if each of us could bless three people this week...and make sure at least one of them doesn't deserve it ...of course none of us deserved God's blessing. The undeserved blessing of God is known as grace. God's grace is for all and God blesses everyone on this planet...it's what He does, it's Who He is.

I'm not so sure we need to train people to evangelize. If people are Jesus followers, it will just naturally happen. Evangelism should be natural by –product of a Jesus follower's life, who wants to bless others. You don't need an evangelism strategy, you need a blessing strategy, using actions and words that will open up spiritual conversations because those actions and words reflect the heart of God. Warning: if you want to bless people be prepared to be invited into their pain once they know you really care. If you want to bless people you will have to believe God not just believe *in* God. If we are to be a blessing people we must believe God is at work in the lives of people even when they don't recognize it and trust Him to "show up and show off." Someone had asked me to pray for a family member that was sick. The person who asked me to pray does not go to a church, but knew that I would pray. They called me and was very excited that there was a turn for the good since they asked me to pray. It wasn't because of me, it was God and I just love when God shows up and shows off like that.

Jesus went into the streets, to the marketplace, now we are the body of Christ in the world. The church is the body of Christ meant to do what Jesus did, going where people live their lives. We are the church not just connecting to one another, but to the world beyond the four walls of the church.

You have opportunities every day to bring God to people giving Him the possibility to show up and show off. You have opportunities to do that in church, but many more opportunities to bless the world you live in. You may not only be a Sunday School teacher influencing a few children, you may be an elementary school teacher influencing many students in the public school. You may not only be leading a prayer meeting at church, you may be a nurse, pray with a patient or helping a family who just lost a loved one. You may not only bless us with music in the church, you may be asking people where you work, "How can I ask God to bless you?" You get the point. Be Jesus followers not just here, but beyond these walls. Be people blessers (is that a word? We'll make it a word, be a people blesser!)

Brian Franco gave a devotion at the end of our softball game Monday night (each player takes a turn after each game to bring a devotion, Monday was Brian's night). He talked

about our lives demonstrating that we know Jesus. He commented that before the game there were hand shakes and hugs...with the opposing team, and after the game we shake hands with the opposing team. He said, "Who does that." Most teams only congratulate each other at the end of a winning game. Brian's hope was maybe someone would see that and ask why we are different.

I knew many people were going to be away this week-end and we would not see them in church. I can get upset about people not coming to church, but perhaps I need to have a new perspective. Let me illustrate with a joke.

Ted got a call from a friend who said he could use Ted to play on his softball team on Sunday. By the time Ted arrived at the softball game, it was already the 5<sup>th</sup> inning.

"Why are you so late?" his friend asked.

"I had to toss a coin to decide between going to church and coming to the game."

"How long could that have taken you?" he asked, "it only takes a second to toss a coin."

"Well", said Ted, "I had to toss it 14 times."

I could understand Ted's dilemma if his choice was not the temptation between thinking he is suppose to go to church, but would rather play softball. I mean what if his choice was between going to church or going to a softball game where he was determined to bring Jesus, and demonstrate what it means to be a Jesus follower? Would that be ok?

Today some people aren't here because they are involved with a walk for cancer, to raise money to find a cure for pancreatic cancer. Maybe that will really speak to some of the others who are there. Maybe it would speak about a Jesus follower's concern for families dealing with cancer. Maybe this family will have opportunities to bless people, offer prayer, maybe even talk about Jesus.

We have others who are away at a family reunion. Maybe they are causing relatives and friends to engage in spiritual conversation. That would be a good thing.

I know of another couple who went away for the week-end with another family who hasn't been in church for a long time. Perhaps being with them will bless them, and bring the Kingdom of God to them.

Maybe we need to be reminded that worship is not just a worship service, but service is worship. If we were obeying God all week long by being His people who bless others that too would be worship, for God would be honored.

Maybe we should not just count the people who are here in this building on Sunday, but all those who are not here, as long as they are blessing people. Maybe we should not count who shows up here on Sunday, rather we should count how many are being ministered to out there all week long. I would love to hear from you about how many people you served, and blessed each week, and how you did that. They are people who may not be in church but you brought the church to them, because of you the Kingdom of God was among them. How many were prayed for, how many did you give a listen ear to, maybe you gave someone a ride, or food, or met some other need. How many saw something different, asked why and entered into a spiritual conversation with you.

Please don't misunderstand me, it is good for the people of God to meet together like this, to worship together, pray together, hear the Word together, encourage one another. But those we have contact with all week long may never come to a church, yet you have an opportunity to bring God to them.