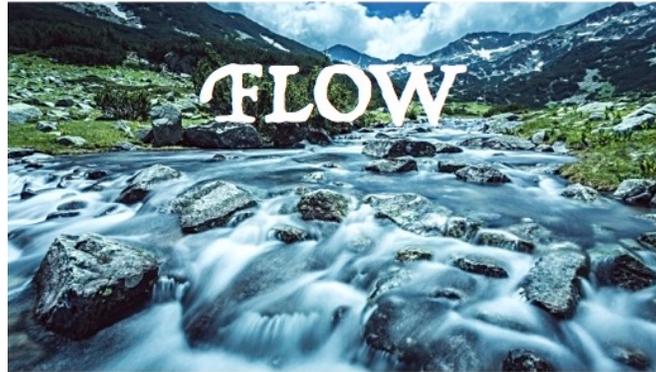


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Thy Kingdom Come

by Laura Martin

"Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."
Matthew 6:10



They sat scattered across the hillside, the heat from the afternoon sun penetrating the cloaks on their backs and illuminating the face of their teacher. Jesus' teachings intrigued them and drew them in as he breathed new life over the ancient truths, bringing substance and meaning to the law of Moses that they had grown up with.

"You are the salt of the earth," he said, *"and the light of the world."* Layer upon layer, with vivid real life images, Jesus painted a picture for them of a new way to see and a new way to be. *"You've heard it said... but I say to you..."* And nestled there in his teachings, in between loving your neighbor and the right way to fast,

Jesus teaches those hillside followers how to pray, including the instruction to pray these three powerful words: Thy Kingdom Come.

I wonder what images those three words stirred up for them. “*Thy kingdom come*” are words of petition asking God to make his kingdom a full reality here where we live. Maybe the questions rolling around in their minds mirror the ones we often have: What *is* God’s Kingdom? *Where* is it? How will it get here? Maybe they wondered if Jesus was talking about a military turnover where they would finally be free from oppressive Roman rule. Is the Kingdom of God a place where we always win?

In one sense, all of Jesus’ teachings are about his Kingdom. He came to show us the way to not have only the outer shell of life, like a zombie, but to have the life inside that we were created to have. He came to expose the emptiness of religion without relationship, of law without love. When we pray for his kingdom to come we’re asking that His way of thinking and living... everything he taught... would be our reality. In Matthew 13, he gives us some amazing parables about the Kingdom of God:

- 1) Matthew 13:31: *It starts small*. Like a mustard seed, or a baby in a manger, seemingly insignificant at first, but grows to become the strongest, life-giving plant in the garden.
- 2) Matthew 13:33: *It’s hidden*. Like a small amount of yeast in a big batch of dough it’s not visible to the eye, yet its influence and power are life changing.
- 3) Matthew 13:44, 46: *It’s worth more than we could ever imagine*. Like a treasure in a field. Like a rare pearl.

After many hillsides, parables and synagogues, Jesus, one wonderful night, landed in a conversation with a man stuck in his understanding of the Kingdom. And Jesus got personal with Nicodemus. All of the external trappings of a religious, or in any other way successful, life would not let one enter the Kingdom because entrance is an inside-out experience and it begins in relationship with the King.

A Kingdom implies... a King. A king who is perfectly present and in full control. While we live here in this world diminished by the evil one, the way for God’s kingdom to be present is for the King to be present... in us. We, the residents of

his kingdom, are how the yeast grows in the dough and how the mustard seed grows to become strong.

Questions:

- 1) You're sitting on a hillside listening to Jesus teach about the Kingdom. Besides wishing you had brought more water to drink, what is one thing you wish you understood more about his words?
- 2) What will you do to find the answer to your questions?

Prayer:

Father God,

You are beautiful beyond words, and you are our King. Thank you for your Word and for the wonders of your Spirit working in our midst. Father, come and fill our Kingdom today with your world changing presence. Come and fill us. May we be yeast in the dough today. May we live with courage and love as inhabitants of your Kingdom where love is the law, where the lowliest person has great status and where weakness is stronger than strength. We are yours. Thy Kingdom come in us today we pray."

In the precious name of Jesus, our Redeemer, Amen.