

15th May 2022

Kingdom

**“Thy Kingdom come!” – on bended knee
The passing ages pray;
And faithful souls have yearned to see
On earth that Kingdom’s day.”**

Frederick Lucian Hosmer, *Thy Kingdom Come*

When I was beginning to be aware of the history of my country, I heard about “The Kingdom of the Picts”, an ancient, warrior-like people who refused to be conquered by the invading Roman army. The Picts painted their faces with “woad”, a blue dye, to frighten their enemies. (Mel Gibson in *Braveheart* comes to mind. A bit of historical licence, though ...) Scotland was never subjugated by the Roman Empire. The Picts saw to that!

So “kingdom” was familiar to me early on: a people, defending what they believed in, with a name, a purpose, a history, a cohesiveness. Indeed, “kingdom”, whether ruled over by a member of a royal dynasty, or as a name defining an area and a people, is familiar to us all.

What, then, are we to make of the Kingdom of God, when we pray, “Thy Kingdom come” in the “Lord’s Prayer”? For a start, *this* “kingdom” begins with an upper-case K, an indication that it’s a Kingdom above all others, no earthly kingdom, subject to all the vagaries of the human condition. This is a “Heavenly Kingdom”, of divine origin.

Jesus used metaphors and similes for this Kingdom – a vineyard, being born again, a sower scattering seed, a treasure hidden in a field, for example. This was a call to see more than the earthly kingdom people knew and were subjugated by, a Roman kingdom, where power and might were the order of the day. No, says Jesus, there is a different way. I’m giving you a new image of Kingdom, but you have to *look beyond* what you know to find what is possible. Look beyond what you hate, to a Kingdom of love. Look beyond what oppresses you, to a Kingdom of mercy and peace. Look beyond the failures of humanity, to a Kingdom of forgiveness, and healing, and new purpose. Look beyond ...

Do I understand completely what this Kingdom is about? No I don’t. But does “looking beyond” give me a glimpse of what might be possible? Yes, it does, and that, surely, is worth praying for again and again.

A prayer for today

Where is your Kingdom? I’m working on it, Lord, looking beyond what I know. Amen

An original reflection by @ Tom Gordon

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