



For the coming of God’s kingdom to us happens in two ways: (a) here in time through the Word and faith [Matthew 13]; and (b) in eternity forever through revelation [Luke 19:11; 1 Peter 1:4–5]. Now we pray for both these things. We pray that the kingdom may come to those who are not yet in it, and, by daily growth that it may come to us who have received it, both now and hereafter in eternal life. All this is nothing other than saying, “Dear Father, we pray, give us first Your Word, so that the Gospel may be preached properly throughout the world. Second, may the Gospel be received in faith and work and live in us, so that through the Word and the Holy Spirit’s power [Romans 15:18–19], Your kingdom may triumph among us. And we pray that the devil’s kingdom be put down [Luke 11:17–20], so that he may have no right or power over us [Luke 10:17–19; Colossians 1], until at last his power may be utterly destroyed. So sin, death, and hell shall be exterminated [Revelation 20:13–14]. Then we may live forever in perfect righteousness and blessedness” [Ephesians 4:12–13].

Large Catechism 1.94-95, 3.39-54; Concordia: *The Lutheran Confessions: A Reader’s Edition of the Book of Concord* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2006).



Ad Te Levavi

THE THIRD COMMANDMENT

Therefore, the force and power of the third commandment lies not in the resting, but in the sanctifying, so that a special *holy exercise* belongs to this day. For other works and occupations are not properly called holy exercises, unless the person is holy first. But here a work is to be done by which a person is himself made holy. This is done (as we have heard) only through God’s Word. For this reason, particular places, times, persons, and the entire outward order of worship have been created and appointed, so that there may be order in public practice [1 Corinthians 14:40].

So much depends upon God’s Word. Without it, no holy day can be sanctified. Therefore, we must know that God insists upon a strict observance of this commandment and will punish all who despise His Word and are not willing to hear and learn it, especially at the time appointed for the purpose....

THE FIRST PETITION

“But how does God’s name become holy among us?”

Answer, as plainly as it can be said: “When both our doctrine and life are godly and Christian.” Since we call God our Father in the Lord’s Prayer, it is our duty always to act and behave ourselves as godly children, that He may not receive shame, but honor and praise from us.

Now, God’s name is profaned by us either through our words or in our works. (For whatever we do upon the earth must be either words or works, speech or act.) In the first place, then, God’s name is profaned when people preach, teach, and say in God’s name what is false and misleading. They use His name like an ornament and attract a market for falsehood. That is, indeed, the greatest way to profane and dishonor the divine name. Furthermore, men, by swearing, cursing, conjuring, and other such actions, grossly abuse the holy name as a cloak for their shame [1 Peter 2:16]. In the second place, God’s name is profaned by an openly wicked life and works, when those who are called Christians and God’s people are adulterers, drunkards,

misers, enviers, and slanderers [1 Corinthians 5:11]. Here again God's name must come to shame and be profaned because of us. It is a shame and disgrace for a flesh-and-blood father to have a bad, perverse child that opposes him in words and deeds. Because of that child the father suffers contempt and reproach. In the same way also, it brings dishonor upon God if we are called by His name and have all kinds of goods from Him, yet we teach, speak, and live in any other way than as godly and heavenly children. People would say about us that we must not be God's children, but the devil's children [1 John 2:29].

So you see that in this petition we pray for exactly what God demands in the Second Commandment. We pray that His name not be taken in vain to swear, curse, lie, deceive, and so on, but be used well for God's praise and honor. For whoever uses God's name for any sort of wrong profanes and desecrates this holy name. This is how it used to be when a Church was considered desecrated, when a murder or any other crime had been committed in it. Or a monstrance or relic was desecrated—as though they were holy in themselves—when they became unholy by misuse. So this point is easy and clear if only the language is understood: to hallow means the same as to praise, magnify, and honor both in word and deed.

Here, now, learn what great need there is for such prayer. Because we see how full the world is of sects and false teachers, who all wear the holy name as a cover and sham for their doctrines of devils [1 Timothy 4:1], we should by all means pray without ceasing [1 Thessalonians 5:17] and cry out and call upon God against all people who preach and believe falsely. We should pray against whatever opposes and persecutes our Gospel and pure doctrine and would suppress it, as do the bishops, tyrants, enthusiasts, and such [2 Thessalonians 2:3–4]. Likewise, we should pray for ourselves who have God's Word but are not thankful for it, nor live like we ought according to the Word. If you pray for this with your heart, you can be sure that it pleases God. For He will not hear anything more dear to Him than that His honor and praise is exalted above everything else and that His Word is taught in its purity and is considered precious and dear.

THE SECOND PETITION

Thy kingdom come.

In the First Petition we prayed about God's honor and name. We prayed that He would prevent the world from adorning its lies and wickedness with God's name, but that He would cause His name to be valued as great and holy both in doctrine and life, so that He may be praised and magnified in us. Here we pray that His kingdom also may come. But just as God's name is holy in itself, and we still pray that it be holy among us, so also His kingdom comes of itself, without our prayer. Yet we still pray that it may come to us, that is, triumph among us and with us, so that we may be a part of those people among whom His name is hallowed and His kingdom prospers.

“But what is God's kingdom?”

Answer, “Nothing other than what we learned in the Creed: God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, into the world to redeem and deliver us from the devil's power [1 John 3:8]. He sent Him to bring us to Himself and to govern us as a King of righteousness, life, and salvation against sin, death, and an evil conscience. For this reason He has also given His Holy Spirit, who is to bring these things home to us by His holy Word and to illumine and strengthen us in the faith by His power.”

We pray here in the first place that this may happen with us. We pray that His name may be so praised through God's holy Word and a Christian life that we who have accepted it may abide and daily grow in it, and that it may gain approval and acceptance among other people. We pray that it may go forth with power throughout the world [2 Thessalonians 3:1]. We pray that many may find entrance into the kingdom of grace [John 3:5], be made partakers of redemption [Colossians 1:12–14], and be led to it by the Holy Spirit [Romans 8:14], so that we may all together remain forever in the one kingdom now begun.