

The Prayer of the Meek

Isaiah 63:15 – 64:12

Halifax: 19 June 2011

Introduction

I wonder, how do you think of God when you come to Him in prayer?

- I mean, what do you think He is like?
- It tells a lot about you and about the condition of your heart.

The LORD Jesus taught us to come to Him as “Our Father in Heaven.”

- By saying that He is in heaven, we recognise His glorious transcendence—
 - that He is high above us, a holy God, who is to be approached with reverence.
 - But at the same time, in calling Him “Our Father,”
 - we recognise that He is tender toward us—one who loves us and is willing to help us in our weakness and show mercy to us in our sin.
- In the passage I read to you from Isaiah today,
 - we have a beautiful example of such a prayer.
 - It is a model for us of what it means to come to God as the one who is Almighty, yet who receives us as dear children.
 - Indeed, you can see that Isaiah refers to God as our Father several times in this prayer—
 - He speaks of Him as one who is eager to bless His people.
 - It is exactly the opposite of the way the chap who buried his talent in the ground came to Him...
 - “I knew that you were a hard man...”
 - Not a loving Father at all, but as one implacable, harsh, unapproachable.

Before we get into the prayer itself, it will be helpful for us to look at the context.

- We need a little review anyway after being away from Isaiah for several weeks.
- Mercy has been Isaiah’s theme from chapter 40 where He presented the LORD as coming with forgiveness and grace to restore His people after He had been forced to judge them.
 - Isaiah, having foretold of the Babylonian captivity which would bring an end to the theocracy, foretells of restoration in Jesus Christ, the One He calls “The Servant of the LORD.”
 - We must never forget the remarkable prophecy in Isaiah 53 where Jesus as presented as the One who is offered as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.
 - Forgiveness comes to us because He bears the complete punishment due to us for our sins.

- More recently, in chapter 61, the LORD Jesus was presented to us as coming with the message of the Jubilee...
 - This speaks of the whole period in which we live that began with His ascension to sit at God's right hand 2000 years ago.
 - He goes into all the world with the glorious message of complete redemption through His blood for all who will receive Him.
 - We saw that the Jubilee was referred to as the acceptable year of the Lord, but also a Day of Vengeance...
 - because there is no freedom for His servants until Satan and all who are league with Him are crushed.
- In chapter 62, we saw our Lord Jesus' commitment to this great work!
 - There, he is presented as one who will not rest until He has made Jerusalem (the world-wide city of God that now is) a praise in the earth.
 - He will do whatever it takes to make this happen so that the church will be called:
 - The Holy People, The Redeemed of the LORD; Sought out, A City Not Forsaken.
- And then in chapter 63:1-7, Isaiah describes our Lord Jesus coming with blood-stained garments to bring destruction to His enemies.
 - It is a work that He must do if His church is to be blessed at last.
 - This vision brings the prophet's mind to sweet memories of how the LORD had gone forth for His people in times of old to free them from their enemies.
 - He recounts these times in 63:7-14 that led to a Sabbath rest for the people of God in the land...
 - Yet, he recounts this with lamentation that because of the sin of God's people in his day,
 - the blessing of their inheritance is not so evident.
 - Indeed, they are headed for judgement because of their sin and impenitence...
 - And that is what stirs up Isaiah's prayer that we are looking at today.
 - He knows that it is God's purpose to lead His people to a final rest and so he turns to the LORD to pray that it may be so.
 - He knows that God has promised to be their God and to make them His people in the fullest way—of all that that means!

And I tell you, that is what ought to fuel your prayers.

- The LORD has told us that His kingdom will come and that His will will be done on earth as it is in heaven!
- God has promised that it will be so, but clearly it is not yet so!

- He has been moving His elect people toward this great end through the ages, and the kingdom is nearer now than ever before!
 - Already, the Messiah has come and made His soul and offering for sin.
 - Already, He has gathered people from many nations to be His own.
- But we find the church in a pitiful condition because of our sin today,
 - just as Isaiah did in His day.
 - Like him, we have every reason to pray to our loving heavenly Father because He is both willing and able to do all that He has spoken concerning us!
- In chapter 65-66, we are shown how God will answer these prayers...
 - first with judgement on the house of God...
 - then with that gathering of the elect remnant together with the elect from all nations.
- It is a new creation that has already begun for us in Christ,
 - but it extends into the future and reaches perfection,
 - bringing perfect peace and sweet communion with God.
- Thy Kingdom Come! Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven!
 - There is a Sabbath rest for the people of God.
 - Let us learn from Isaiah in our text to pray accordingly.

I. First, learn from Isaiah's prayer to come to God as the Almighty One who delights to show mercy.

- Away with prayer to Him as if He were either reluctant or unable to show mercy!
- A. Just look—In verse 15-19, Isaiah presents Him as one who has to restrain Himself from showing mercy.
1. It is a wonderful picture of our heavenly Father in times when He must chasten us—
 - Everything in Him wants to break forth with mercy for us, but it is not time yet so He must restrain Himself.
 - We need to see Him in this way.
 - Look at what Isaiah says verse 15 that reflects this view of God—
 - **Isa 63:15: Look down from heaven, And see from Your habitation, holy and glorious. Where are Your zeal and Your strength, The yearning of Your heart and Your mercies toward me? Are they restrained?**
 - Do you see?
 - Isaiah knows that God has zeal and strength for His house!

- Such zeal that He is going to send the servant to bear His peoples' sin.
 - He even describes Him as yearning in His heart to show mercy!
 - He knows that the LORD will not leave His people in their miserable condition, but will act for them.
 - He knows that despite the current state of affairs—when God's people appeared no different than the nations around them—will not prevail...
 - Our Father is eager to break forth with this mercy.
 - He yearns and has to hold himself back—like a levy that is about to burst.
2. Even though they do not presently look like His children they **are** His children.
- a. In verse 16, Isaiah says,
- **“Doubtless”**—it is a sure thing...
 - **“Doubtless You are our Father, Though Abraham was ignorant of us and Israel (that is, Jacob) does not acknowledge us.”**
 - Abraham and Jacob would not be able to identify them as the recipients of the promise in their current state...
 - They were being cast out the land of promise in the same way that the Canaanites had been cast out before them.
 - But Isaiah knows that God is still their Father and has plans for them—plans for their redemption.
 - He says (as verse 16 continues),
 - **“You, O LORD, are our Father; Our Redeemer from Everlasting is your name.”**
 - God's purpose does not change concerning His people.
 - They may not look like a people that God has chosen out for eternal redemption, but that is what they were!
 - He is still their Father.
- b. Isaiah describes their present condition—as contrary to what God has purposed...
- 1) In verse 17, he asks:
- **Isa 63:17: O LORD, why have You made us stray from Your ways, And hardened our heart from Your fear? Return for Your servants' sake, The tribes of Your inheritance.**
 - In saying that the LORD has hardened their heart from His fear, Isaiah is not trying to blame God or make excuses.
 - It is rather a confession that their sin was so bad that it had forced God to harden their hearts as a punishment.

- This God who delights to show mercy and whose way it is to show mercy to them has had punish them.
 - But all He has to do is return to them with His presence and they will be restored...
 - As Psalm 80 puts it, “lift up the light of your countenance upon us and we will be saved.”
 - It is the LORD who opened our hearts to come to Him in the first place, and He will do this again for His elect people.
- 2) Isaiah goes on to describe their present condition, a condition so contrary to what God had purposed for them as His inheritance, in verse 18:
- **Isa 63:18: Your holy people have possessed it but a little while; Our adversaries have trodden down Your sanctuary.**
 - The LORD had faithfully given them the promised inheritance of the land,
 - that He might reveal His mercy to them there through the temple,
 - But it had only been for a short time in the grand scheme of things... now they were being cut off...
 - How could this be?
 - Now they had become just like those who had never known God.
 - Isaiah points this out in verse 19:
 - **Isa 63:19: We have become like those of old, over whom You never ruled, Those who were never called by Your name.**
 - So much of what we see in the church today!
 - We do not appear a people under the mercy of God!
 - There are those in the visible church who question God’s Word!
 - There are those who deny Christ as the only way of salvation!
 - There are those who worship images.
 - There are those who live in open immorality.
 - Clearly, God has sent hardness upon us.

TRANS> Isaiah is saying, how can all this be?

- God is doubtless our Father and our redeemer. This state of affairs cannot last!
 - He is ready to erupt with mercy at the appointed time!
 - It is His way to show mercy.

3. Do you see God like this?

- Do you see Him as One who is so full of mercy for His church that when He withhold mercy He has to restrain Himself?
- Do you pray to Him as the one who has plans of mercy for you and for the church—even when the church seems so weak and defiled?
- You ought to pray to Him as such...
 - Do not be content with the status quo... know that He has so much more to do for us!
 - That is the prayer of faith that characterises His children.

B. Yes brothers and sisters, ask God to break forth in mercy to His church!

1. In Isaiah 64:1-3, Isaiah continues His prayer to God as one who delights to show mercy.

- a. He seems to see Him as like a cloud, heavy with the water of mercy, ready to break forth from heaven for the people of His kingdom!
- Ready to deal with their enemies who removed them from the temple.
 - Ready to come with His mighty power that shakes the earth.
 - Like a levy ready to break forth!

b. He says:

- **Isaiah 64:1-2: Oh, that You would rend the heavens! That You would come down! That the mountains might shake at Your presence—As fire burns brushwood, As fire causes water to boil—To make Your name known to Your adversaries, That the nations may tremble at Your presence!**
- All God has to do to make His enemies tremble is break forth with His presence.
 - That is precisely what He will do in the fullest sense on the day of Judgement.
 - Then all those who have opposed Him and resisted Him will see His glory.
 - It will be like a first breaking out upon them—enveloping them.
 - He had withdrawn Himself for a time to chasten His people and to test them,
 - but the day is coming when He will rend the heavens and come down.
 - The nations may mock Him in their rebellious unbelief now,
 - but they will tremble when He appears for His church at the last day.
 - Pray that He will rend the heavens and come down—that He will do what He yearns to do!
 - Yearn for Him to act for His church!

2. Strengthen your prayers with the remembrance of how God has acted for His people in the past, at various times and in various degrees.
 - a. Isaiah sets the example of this in verse 3 when he says:
 - **Isaiah 64:3: When You did awesome things for which we did not look, You came down, The mountains shook at Your presence.**
 - This appears to be a reference to the deliverance from Egypt that Isaiah spoke about in chapter 63:7-14—
 - when God worked so powerfully and so evidently to gather His people to Himself and to bring them into His presence.
 - It was a rending the heavens and coming down for His people.
 - b. And now we an even great act of His breaking forth for His people...
 - We have the breaking forth of Jesus Christ who came to make His soul and offering for our sin...
 - Who went to the cross and to the grave for all His covenant people and then broke forth with the gospel of salvation and a command to preach it to the ends of the earth!
 - Let that encourage you and strengthen you to seek His mercy for the church today—that He would act for us powerfully and evidently!
 - We are in a pitiful condition, but we can be sure that He will rend the heavens and come down for us!
 - Our enemies will not prevail against us.

TRANS> So we have seen from Isaiah's prayer how we must come to God as the Almighty One whose mercy is pent up until it is spilled upon us as His people!

- What a boon to our prayers!
- Now see in the second place how Isaiah teaches us to:

II. Come to Him as the One who gladly responds to all who seek Him.

- Indeed He does!
 - There is no reluctance in Him at all.
 - He does not turn anyone away.
 - Whoever calls on His name will be saved.

A. In verse 4, Isaiah describes Him as the One **who acts for the one who waits for Him.**

1. There is no God like this!
 - Verse 4 says:

- **Isa 64:4: For since the beginning of the world Men have not heard nor perceived by the ear, Nor has the eye seen any God besides You, Who acts for the one who waits for Him.**
- a. Isaiah is amazed—
- God’s reception of sinners is something that goes beyond all reasonable expectations!
 - That is what Isaiah means when he says that ear has not heard nor eye seen a God like this from the beginning of the world!
 - Paul uses these words in I Corinthians to describe the wonders of God’s grace pertaining to what He has prepared for those who seek Him.
 - He gives far beyond what we could ever ask or even think!
 - We might expect that He would meet us with harshness—
 - “How dare you come before Me after all that you have done against My Holy Name!”
 - “You have ignored Me and mocked Me and resisted Me all these days and now you think you can just come to Me for help!”
 - “Depart from Me you workers of iniquity.”
 - That is what we might expect!
 - And that is what He will say to the wicked at the last day.
 - But as long as the call of the gospel is still open,
 - We come to Him and responds to us with instant mercy!
 - He bestows on us a salvation that gives us an eternal inheritance in His kingdom as His very own sons!
 - He completely pardons all our sins through the blood of the covenant, shed by His Son on the cross.
 - He gives us His Spirit to work in us so that we can become like Jesus, loving as He loved and serving as He served.
 - Eye has not seen nor ear heard all that He has prepared for those who love Him, but God has revealed them to us by His Spirit!
- b. And all we have to is wait for Him.
- **“Waiting for Him”** simply means that we come to Him.
 - We come to Him as those who are in need—looking to Him in faith for His mercy and grace to bless us.
- 1) Isaiah goes on to explain what is involved in this in verse 5 where he says:
- **Isa 64:5: You meet him who rejoices and does righteousness, Who remembers You in Your ways.**

- Isn't that marvellous?
 - The God of heaven meets us!
- We come to Him rejoicing in all that He is—delighting in Him the way we should have all alone!
- We come rejoicing in His promises and His covenant!
- We come simply to do His will—to follow His wise counsel in cheerful obedience—
 - How could we not be cheerful when His commandments are not burdensome—
 - He calls us to love Him with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, and to love our neighbour as ourselves!
- We come remembering Him in all His ways—
 - Remembering what He has done for us in Christ crucified!
 - Remembering Him as our Creator and Redeemer!
- And He meets us!

2) It is so simple, so reasonable, so easy...

- It is surely what everyone in His right mind ought to do!
- We come to waiting upon Him and He overloads us with mercy and grace unspeakable!
- There is no God like Him!

2. What Isaiah says here about God blessing those who wait for Him reminds me of several NT passages...

- Hebrews 11:6 tells us that when we come to God in true faith, we come to Him recognising that it is His very nature to reward those who seek Him.
 - **Heb 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.**
 - He is a God who is ready and waiting to show mercy to all who come.
- In John 6, Jesus spoke these wonderful words:
 - **John 6:35-40: And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not believe. All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son**

and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

- All you have to do is come to Him and He will welcome you.
- In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus promised that those who seek will find.
 - **Matthew 7:7-11** "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.
 - Jesus grounds our hope on the fact that God sustains the relationship of Father to us.
 - **Matthew 7:9-11:** "Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!

TRANS> What an encouragement is laid for every one of us sinners in God's Word!

- Come to Him for mercy and you will be warmly welcomed!
 - There are no exceptions.

B. But though He is a God like this, we do not come to Him!

- How sad! How foolish of us!

1. Isaiah explains this...

- a. In the remainder of verse 5, he explains that God is angry with us because instead of repenting, we go on in sin, still needing to be saved:
 - **Isa 64:5:** **You are indeed angry, for we have sinned—In these ways we continue; And we need to be saved.**
 - How foolish!
 - We are such blockheads!
 - The salvation we so much need is in Him and He is ready and willing to pour it upon us—but we won't come!
 - We just continue on without repentance.
- b. Oh yes, we put up a show of seeking God at times—
 - But even our seeking of Him is unworthy of Him who graciously calls us.
 - In verse 6, Isaiah says:
 - **Isa 64:6:** **But we are all like an unclean *thing*,**
 - An unclean thing is something that is unfit to bring before God.
 - **And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags;**

- Even our righteous works of repentance, or praise, or prayer are but filthy rags.
 - Filthy rags are the soiled menstrual cloths of women during their monthly cycle.
 - That is what our righteous works are before God if measured according to justice!
 - They are all mixed with corruption and defilement.

 - And we don't even continue in our repentance—
 - We come in fits and starts, but we do not endure.
 - In John 2:23 tells us that:
 - **Jn 2:23-25: many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did. But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all men, and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man.**

 - Isa 64:6 goes on to describe this:
 - **We all fade as a leaf,**
 - The picture is that of a leaf that withers up and decays...
 - Our renewed service to God withers quickly away.
 - **And our iniquities, like the wind, Have taken us away.**
 - We seek God, but then sin comes along and sweeps away our devotion... it sweeps away our service like the wind.
 - Isn't it true of you?
 - Be honest—you start out, but then you fade away.
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- c. Verse 7 sums it up...
 - God turns away from us because despite His gracious invitation, no one calls upon Him.
 - **Isa 64:7: And there is no one who calls on Your name, Who stirs himself up to take hold of You; For You have hidden Your face from us, And have consumed us because of our iniquities.**
2. This is one of the most wretched things about us!
- a. We have this gracious God who is eager to receive us.
 - He stretches out His hand to us in mercy—and still we don't come!
 - He provides atonement for us and promises us the baptism of the Holy Spirit, but we refuse to call on His name!
 - Nothing shows the wickedness of the human race more than this!
 - A gracious God calling and a wicked sinner resisting His call.

b. Sure, we like to flatter ourselves and say that we have been seeking Him.

- But it is not true!
 - There is none who calls upon His name.
 - Our hearts are too hard.
 - We are dead in our trespasses and sins.
 - As Jesus said,
 - “No one will come to me unless the Father draws Him.”
 - Surely we ought to come, but we do not come.

TRANS> So now we have seen two things about God...

- First, that He yearns to show mercy.
- Secondly, that if anyone seeks Him, He **will** show marvellous mercy to that one—
 - but sadly, we are too wicked to seek Him.
- So is this the end?
 - Should we despair of praying for God’s kingdom?
 - No, Isaiah teaches us to:

III. Come to God as the one who extends His mercy even to those whose hearts are too hardened to seek Him the way they ought!

A. As we have just seen, that is the condition of all of us if left to ourselves.

1. We are dead in our trespasses and sins.

- There is none who seeks God, no not one.
- No one comes to Jesus unless the Father draws Him.
 - We can be invited with the sweetest, must powerfully presented gospel...
 - We can be told of the danger of Hell and of the wretchedness of our sin...
 - But none of this will move us unless we are transformed by God’s Spirit.
 - As Jesus said, we must be born again or we cannot see the kingdom of God.

2. Paul speaks this terrible in Romans 9-11.

- Many who were in the Covenant community in His day... Israelites...
 - who had the adoption and the law and the promises and the service and for whom, according to the flesh, Christ came...
 - did not come to Christ when He appeared!

- Instead of coming to Him for righteousness through His redemption, they sought to establish their own righteousness through the law.
- Paul explains that not one of them would come to Christ if left to themselves, but God, by election, must gather them!
- In Rom 11:5-7, He explains that this election to salvation is all of God's grace.
 - He gathers those who otherwise would not have come to Him.
 - **Rom 11:5-7: "Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then *it is* no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if *it is* of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work. What then? Israel has not obtained what it seeks; but the elect have obtained it, and the rest were blinded."**
- A lot of people complain about election and say it is not fair for God to have mercy on one and not another.
 - They want it to be left up to the sinner to decide if he will come!
 - But if that were the case, not one would come!
 - That is what Paul is saying.
 - The only reason there are any who come to Christ is because of God's electing grace.
 - Salvation is by grace—if left to ourselves, we will never come to God.
 - It is not enough to hear the gospel—our stubborn hearts must be changed to believe it and to receive Christ.
 - Don't grumble about election—praise God for it!

TRANS> Look, if there is no electing grace, we have no reason to pray.

B. See how Isaiah addresses the LORD in verses 8-12 as the one who will have mercy despite His peoples' wickedness...

1. Once again, He finds His hope in adoption—that God is the Father of His people.
 - Verse 8 says:
 - **Isa 64:8: But now, O LORD, You are our Father;**
 - Even though we are what we are, God has come to take us as His own people and has made promises to us that will not fail.
2. See the implications of having Him as our Father.
 - a. First, it means that He has formed us to be His people.

- The rest of verse 8 says:
 - **Isa 64:8: We are the clay, and You our potter; And all we are the work of Your hand.**
- Isaiah is not talking about God making mankind in the beginning...
 - He is talking about Him forming those whom He has chosen to be His people into His people.
 - He is talking about the remnant according to election of grace.
 - The church is God's creation, formed for His glory.
 - We are the very work of His hands.
 - In Isaiah 65:17-19, the Lord speaks of this great work:
 - **Isa 65:17-19: "'For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; For behold, I create Jerusalem as a rejoicing, And her people a joy. I will rejoice in Jerusalem, And joy in My people; The voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, Nor the voice of crying.'**"
 - You see that the city of God, the church, is His work as our heavenly Father.
- b. Second, that He is our Father means that He will not be angry with us forever, though we are sinners.
 - In verse 9, Isaiah boldly says:
 - **Isa 64:9: Do not be furious, O LORD, Nor remember iniquity forever; Indeed, please look—we all are Your people!**
 - He is able to say that in faith because of God's promises.
 - All through the ages, the Lord has promised to be our God and that we shall be His people—and so it is certain that we will.
 - We are all His people—
 - all of us who have come to Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins and for new life in His Holy Spirit.
 - We are adopted, personally—the sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus—partakers of his Spirit.
 - The LORD will not forsake us!
 - He will not hold our sin against forever.
 - He will bring us to perfect peace.
 - This is what He has promised all through the ages to those He has taken to be His people.

3. In his prayer, Isaiah goes on in verses 10-11 to show the LORD the present condition of His people once again—
 - a. He describes what was soon to come upon Jerusalem as seen by him in his prophecies...
 - **Isa 64:10-11: Your holy cities are a wilderness, Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation. Our holy and beautiful temple, Where our fathers praised You, Is burned up with fire; And all our pleasant things are laid waste.**
 - He seems to show this the Lord as if to say:
 - “This is not what you promised...”
 - “This is not where you will end with us... deserted cities, a ruined temple...”
 - “This cannot surely be the final product of you as the potter.”
 - “There is much more that you will do to form your people and to make them beautiful.”

TRANS> Isaiah is sure that God is restrained until the appointed time.

- He is confident that the LORD has so much more to do for His people.
- b. So He concludes His prayer with a question for the LORD in verse 12:
 - **Isa 64:12: Will You restrain Yourself because of [or at—regarding] these things, O LORD? Will You hold Your peace, and afflict us very severely?**
 - This is a bold question to ask...
 - “Are you just going to leave things in such a mess?”
 - “Are you going to keep holding yourself back from doing anything about the state of your church?”
 - “Are you going to keep letting our enemies trample upon us and do nothing?”
 - We need to learn to pray like this!
 - It is a prayer borne of the assurance that God will indeed act for His church—
 - that He will indeed rend the heavens and come down for His people.
 - that He is even eager to do so!

Conclusion:

- We will see how the Lord answers these questions in the coming weeks as we look at chapter 65 and 66!
 - He will create His people gloriously!
 - He will take vengeance on His and their enemies!
 - He will rend the heavens and come down.

- But today let us learn to pray to our gracious heavenly Father as the God that He truly is...
 - A God who delights to show mercy!
 - A God who shows mercy to all who come to Him!
 - A God who assures us that though no one comes, He will create a people for Himself by the election of grace.

- What encouragement for your prayers for His kingdom!
 - There is hope!
 - His kingdom will come, His will will be done on earth as it is in heaven!

 - Pray earnestly that it will be so.