

## **‘Thy Kingdom Come’ Podcast 1, an Introduction, Wednesday 20 May**

With tomorrow being Ascension Day, the 40th day of Easter, I find myself at this point each year rather surprised at just how quickly Eastertide has passed! This year however, for many of us, these same 40 days will have passed rather slowly – whilst for others they will have seemed even quicker than usual. As the lockdown continues, these are challenging times for all of us, and in different ways the learning curve has been steep for each of us. How we need something to hold on to – something that is good.

Eastertide will last a further 10 days, thus completing the so-called ‘great fifty days’ of Easter – culminating in the Day of Pentecost. As the risen Christ ascends to heaven, leaving his disciples and returning to the Father, he asks the disciples to continue his work here on earth. Indeed, he ‘commissions’ them, promising in place of his physical presence with them to send them the gift of the Holy Spirit. The arrival of that gift, a gift to *all* who wish to receive it, is what we will celebrate at Pentecost, the ‘birthday of the Church’.

So those Ascension Day themes of commissioning, of being given a sense of purpose – but also of waiting, of preparation for empowerment, they surely speak to our current situation. We are being reminded that we have not been left ‘comfortless’ and that we do have a role to play, each and every one of us, in fulfilling the coming of God’s Kingdom here on earth – where chaos is transformed into order, as proclaimed by Jesus himself.

As we think about the nature of this mission in which we are all involved through what we think and say and do, we have the opportunity in these next ten days to grow more confident, more rooted in that which is good. Our prayer must be for the coming of God’s Kingdom – captured in the third line of the prayer Jesus himself taught us, ‘Thy Kingdom come’. We pray, too, for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit so that the world may see God’s very presence in us, the people he has commissioned as co-creators with him.

So join us in this ten-day ‘Thy Kingdom Come’ season, praying for the wellbeing of our neighbourhood, our community, our locality, our nation, our world. And as we pray for these things we are surely expected to act to help bring that prayer to fulfilment. Perhaps in lockdown our options for action seem limited, but there will always be something we can do to make a difference, to help proclaim the reality of God’s just and gentle rule in our lives. Please see our church website for ideas and resources.

Each day, through until Pentecost there will be a podcast through which we can learn more of the nature of God’s presence and how he may transform the world around us through us. We can all learn from each other.

Today, the day before Ascension Day, is the last of three consecutive days known as ‘rogation days’. Rogation is essentially about ‘asking’, and so today we ask God to bless our

community and our work as we seek to be good stewards of the gifts, the resources and the good earth entrusted to us. These things we will continue to ask as we pray 'Thy Kingdom Come'.

Amen