

## **Commentary on the Gospel for Thu, Aug 3rd 2017**

The readings for today reminded me at once of my old Lutheran catechism training. I hope it is helpful to focus our lessons for today on the second petition of our Lord's Prayer, which is "Thy Kingdom Come." Martin Luther said in his explanation "The kingdom of God comes indeed of itself without our prayer, but in this petition, we pray that it may also come to us." He further explained that this happens "when our heavenly Father gives us his Holy Spirit so that by his grace we believe his holy word and live a godly life here on earth and in heaven forever."

That connects me easily to the example of Moses. As a child I learned that Moses was an example of someone who listened to the word of God and did what the Lord had commanded him. He was a Godly man who followed the Lord's instructions in providing the means by which the children of Israel were led in all the stages of their journey. Our Old Testament lesson today tells the story of how Moses erected the dwelling place of the ark, which contained the commandments and the glory of the Lord. That is how the children of Israel were led forward, it is what guided their soulful journey. The Psalm further reminds us that being in the presence of God in the dwelling place of the Lord is indeed central to the well-being of our souls. The dwelling place of the Lord is not only our guiding light, it is our home. It is the source of our strength and our goodness. It is how we experience the Kingdom of heaven.

No wonder, then, that our souls yearn and pine for the living God, which we find in the dwelling place of the Lord. It is indeed the prayer of all Christians that the Kingdom of God will come -- not just to this earth, but to each of our hearts. So it continues to make sense to me what I learned as a child. "When we open our hearts and listen to the words of Jesus, we receive his Holy Spirit and by his grace, we believe his holy word and live a godly life here on earth and in heaven forever."

The Gospel message today seems to also note that dwelling in the covenant of the Kingdom is not enough. We also must keep our hearts vigilant and listen to the words of Jesus. And we must believe them! The old promises to the children of Israel are still wonderful and true, but our Christian hearts must also listen to the words through which the Kingdom of heaven comes to us alive each day. That we believe those words should be apparent in the Godly ways in which we live our lives. And so we pray, "Thy Kingdom Come" as our hearts and our flesh cry out for the living God.

Barbara Dilly-Creighton University's Department of Sociology and Anthropology