

# WEEKLY SERMON

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## 'It's a Big Ask!'

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We often say that when we are asking a huge favour that we don't feel confident someone will grant us. Perhaps you feel that when you pray the Lord's prayer? **'Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven.'**

Praying 'your kingdom come' feels like a big ask in a time of war in Ukraine and Gaza abroad, a cost-of-living crisis at home, elections at home and abroad, a climate crisis facing the survival of the planet.

We are called to lead God's church in anxious times – and it's easy for church to be anxious too about our own problems or divisions. But we have a God who encourages us to ask big, and to pray in faith – 'your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven.' God's kingdom means the healing of creation, when every knee shall bow and acknowledge Jesus as the world's true king.

Being bold in prayer and asking big for God's kingdom to come is a wonderful antidote to anxiety. I have learned the hard way that there is no problem that will be solved by me working even longer hours or trying to burn the candle at both ends. By contrast, I have seen many looming problems being sorted out because I have chosen to step back, act less and ask more.

Jesus said, **'If you abide in me and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.'** (John 15.7) Rather than letting a big problem fill our mind, Jesus challenges us to rest in him, meditate on his words, and let him work in the situation for good. I used to think that abiding or resting in Christ was rather passive, but I now see it takes time and effort to focus on Christ and meditate on his words in Scripture, so that we learn to pray for the things that are on Jesus' heart. Jesus wants us to spend more time thinking about him than thinking about the problem, and invites us to have the faith to ask big and trust that he will work things out for our best.

Often we ask God for small things, or for rather vague things, because we lack faith and don't want to be disappointed. However Jesus challenges us to ask big, and to ask in faith, trusting that he can do miracles. And Jesus has taught us to ask really big by including this petition into the Lord's Prayer, 'your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.'

Is there a problem you are facing today, where you need to step back, abide in Christ, and have the faith to ask big, trusting that he can sort it out?

**Mark Ireland, Archdeacon of Blackburn**