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The Second Petition—God Comes to Us and to Others

GOD COMES TO US FREELY

"Hey! Victor! Connie! Come quickly!"

"What's the matter?"

"Nothing. Just come quickly!"

"Why? We're doing our algebra."

"The freezer in the school cafeteria is broken, and the cook is giving away all the ice cream!"

"Really? Free?"

"Yes, really! Come quickly! And tell the others in class!"

"Okay, we're coming right now!"

God comes freely to us, even without our asking. He gives us the Good News of our salvation and asks us to share it—happily and willingly—with everyone else. Think of a time when someone gave you something freely. What did they give? Did they ask you to share it?

GOD'S PLAN FOR US

Read Galatians 4:4–7. Here we see God's plan for us. When the time was just right, God sent His Son, Jesus, to redeem us from our sin by living a perfect life for us, by dying on the cross and rising again to new life. God made us His children, brothers and sisters of Jesus. We belong to His family (and His kingdom). As His children, we become heirs—inheritors—of His treasures.

Imagine that you are an orphan. You're lonely and afraid, without a home. How would you

feel if one day a man and a woman came to the orphanage and asked you to be their child, to call them Dad and Mom, and to share their home and all they have?

GOD'S "KINGDOM TRILOGY"

A *trilogy* is a series of three parts that are closely related and have the same theme. We frequently find trilogies in musical compositions and in literature series. God's "Kingdom Trilogy" is a series of three kingdoms, all related to the work of our Triune God.

I. The *kingdom of power* is God's rule over the whole universe—over believers, unbelievers, and all other earthly and heavenly creatures. Christ rules with His omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence.

II. The *kingdom of grace* is God's gracious, loving rule through His Word and sacraments. This kingdom includes only those who have received God's gift of faith in Christ Jesus. It is the whole Christian church on earth.

III. The *kingdom of glory* includes Christians who have passed from the kingdom of grace

In a specific way, each believer is an orphan adopted by our heavenly Father. What you just wrote might be much like what you would say to God for making you His child!

The Second Petition

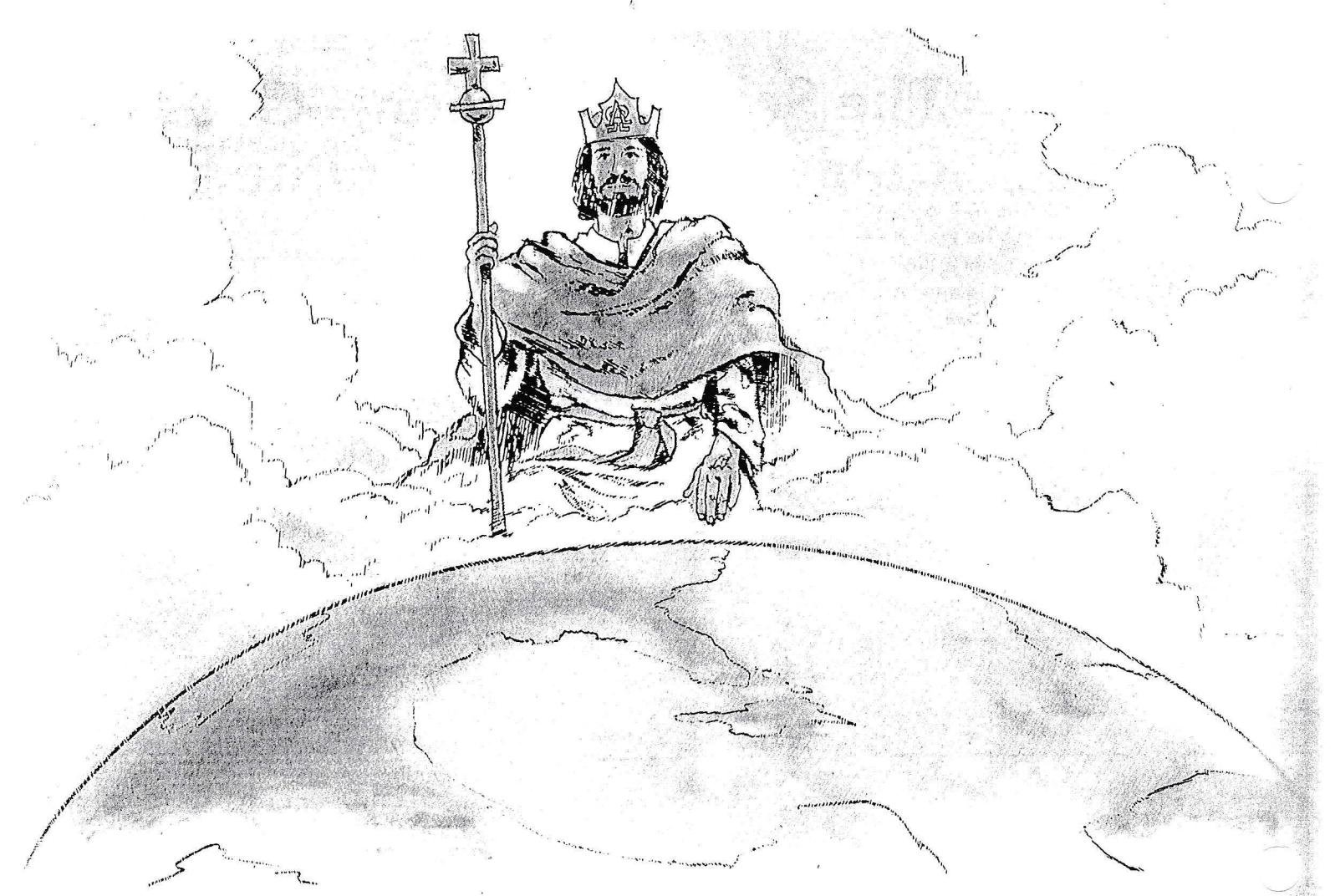
Thy kingdom come.

What does this mean?

The kingdom of God certainly comes by itself without our prayer, but we pray in this petition that it may come to us also.

How does God's kingdom come?

God's kingdom comes when our heavenly Father gives us His Holy Spirit, so that by His grace we believe His holy Word and lead godly lives here in time and there in eternity.



into eternity. The angels and the church in heaven are in Christ's kingdom of glory.

This trilogy—the threefold kingdom of God—reveals Christ as King of *all* things. God's kingdom comes to us through the Holy Spirit, who enters our hearts and causes us to believe the Good News. This happens through no actions of our own and without our even praying for it.

FOR WHAT DO WE PRAY IN THE SECOND PETITION?

We do not pray in the Lord's Prayer that God's kingdom of power may come because it is already present everywhere. So what *do* we pray for? See catechism question 257 (and, as always, the accompanying Bible texts) and

then restate the answers in your own words.

c. _____

a. _____

b. _____

GOD'S KINGDOM OF GRACE

How can we be sure God's kingdom comes? Our sinful nature would not lead us to this certainty. But God knew our tragic circumstances, and He demonstrated His love for us in His kingdom trilogy. He guarantees that His means of grace (His Word and sacraments) establish and sustain His kingdom.

1. Read *Isaiah 55:10–11*. What assurance does this word of Scripture give us?

2. How does Jesus affect your life on this earth?

3. How does the Holy Spirit affect your life through the means of grace?

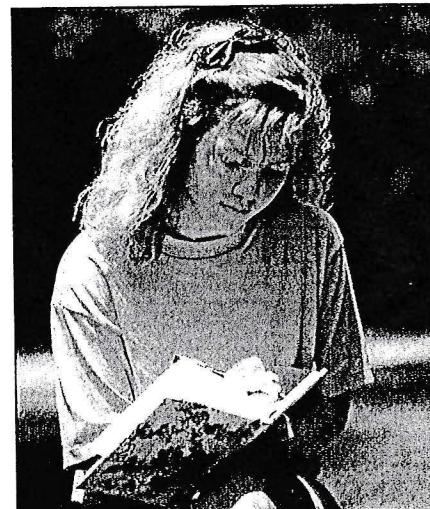
4. God has given His kingdom to us and expects us to share it with others. We are to do this *now*. (Note Christ's sense of urgency in *John 9:4*.) Begin at this moment. Think of people you know who do not have a personal relationship with our Savior. Write a short prayer asking God to open their hearts.

5. Prayer is an important way we can help to spread God's kingdom. God promises to always hear and answer our prayers. Brainstorm with a partner or small group and list other things you can do to help spread God's kingdom.

6. Our concern for God's kingdom doesn't stop with people we know. Read *Matthew 28:19*. How might you help Christian missionaries in all parts of the world to share the Gospel with people who have not yet heard of Jesus' love and forgiveness? What else can you do to enlarge God's kingdom of grace?

GOD'S KINGDOM OF GLORY

The Kingdom of Glory is that kingdom Jesus prepares for us in heaven, the kingdom He will give to all who believe in Him, the kingdom to which all believers will belong on the Last Day.



Read *Revelation 21:1–4, 10–21*. Describe St. John's "word picture" of our glorious heavenly home.

TO REVIEW AND REMEMBER

Psalm 103:19: The Lord has established His throne in heaven, and His kingdom rules over all.

John 3:5: Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit."

2 Timothy 4:18: The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom.

The Second Petition and its explanation.

The Third Petition—God Protects and Keeps Us

WHAT IS GOD'S WILL?

Read the first and last chapter of the book of Job. Many people read this story of Job's faith in God and think that God never should have allowed Satan to torment Job the way he did. But this Bible story reminds us that God does not send the evil into our lives. Suffering, pain, and death are part of our lives, but these are not the result of God's will. Evil comes because Satan and sin exist in this world.

Nevertheless, God remains in control. God keeps evil from going too far. He gives us strength to bear pain and remain faithful to Him. When temptations come our way, He gives us the power to resist. He can bring good to us even within the misfortunes we encounter in this world. And His will to bring us to our perfect, happy, heavenly home will be accomplished.

Discuss with a partner or small group some of the temptations and hardships Satan throws in the path of you and your family. These might be wars, earthquakes, illnesses, forms of abuse, and jealousies, just to name a few. Then discover in God's Word what God's will is for you.

a. Deuteronomy 4:2—It is God's will that we

b. John 6:40—It is God's will that we

c. 1 Timothy 2:4—It is God's will that we

d. 1 Thessalonians 4:3—It is God's will that we

GOD'S OPPONENTS

The evil powers in our world working against God's will are most evident in violent crimes, bloody warfare, and social injustices. These evil powers (see catechism question 216) also actively tempt us to do things we know we shouldn't do.

1. Julia's teacher caught her copying a friend's answers onto her homework paper. Julia gave the excuse, "The devil made me do it." What evil power does 1 Peter 5:8 warn us against?

The world, Satan, and our sinful nature are constantly working to pull us away from God's kingdom. But God promises to save and protect us, and through the power of the Spirit, keep us in His kingdom of grace and (future) glory.

The Third Petition

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

What does this mean?

The good and gracious will of God is done even without our prayer, but we pray in this petition that it may be done among us also.

How is God's will done?

God's will is done when He breaks and hinders every evil plan and purpose of the devil, the world, and our sinful nature, which do not want us to hallow God's name or let His kingdom come; and when He strengthens and keeps us firm in His Word and faith until we die.

This is His good and gracious will.

2. Sean's aunt caught him taking a \$20 bill from her wallet. Sean retorted, "But I really need it. See, I've just got to get this new kind of jacket so I can look cool. What will the other guys think if I wear this ratty, old thing?" Write what 1 John 2:15-17 reminds us:

b. What does Paul mean when he says, "Christ Jesus took hold of me"?

c. What does God provide for you so that you successfully continue on toward the goal?

3. Stephanie's homeroom teacher reprimanded her and then called her parents because she has been late to school 17 times this quarter. Stephanie whines, "Yeah, I know. But it's not my fault. I really do try to get here on time. I'm just not a morning person and I can't get moving any faster." What does Romans 7:18 tell us?

4. Picture this: The soccer team takes its position on the field. The opposing team looks big, tough, and determined to prevent the offensive team from moving toward the goal. In much the same way, the church constantly faces opponents which seek to keep Christians from reaching the goal God provides for them. Read Philippians 3:10-14.

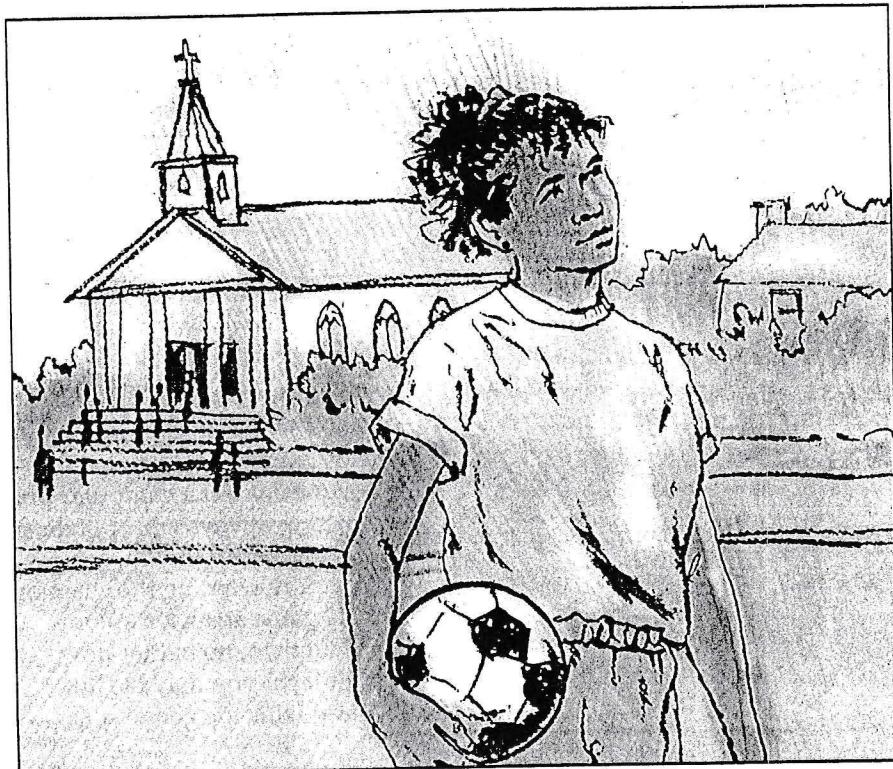
a. What is the "goal" Paul seeks?

GOD'S TEAM

Read the Third Petition and Luther's explanation of it. We don't pray these words so that God's will can be done, because it is done even without our prayer. Rather, we pray that God's will is done in our lives.

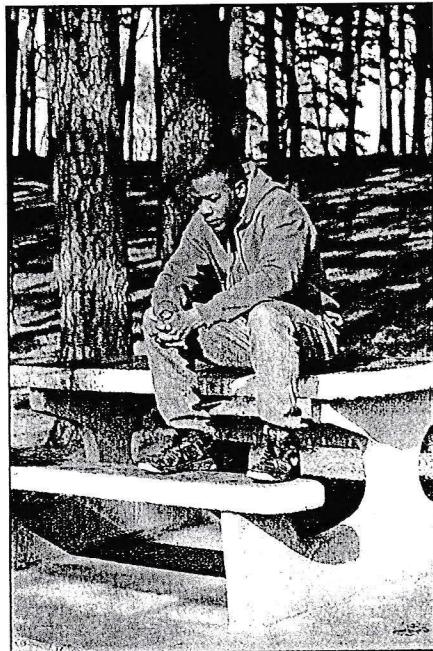
Picture this: The soccer coach assigns players to the positions in which they can help the team win. The goalie needs to be able to watch the ball, perceive its speed and distance, and prevent it from crossing the goal line. An offensive forward must have stamina to run and pass the ball accurately toward the goal. The defensive players need running stamina and ball-stealing skills to prevent opponents' ball-passing and goal-scoring. Most important, the coach enables the team throughout the game with supportive words and actions.

God is our perfect coach. He gives special gifts to each member of His church to make His love known to all people. Read 1 Corinthians 12:1-20. In what



way is the body of Christ "God's team"?

Now read catechism question 218. Write in your words how God's will is done in *your* life.
a. Romans 16:20



b. 1 Peter 1:5

c. Psalm 119:35

d. 2 Corinthians 12:9

It's not like that with God as our coach and victor. God cannot lose His war against the powers of evil. When Jesus rose from the dead, He declared victory over Satan, death, and evil. No matter how difficult and hopeless things may appear to Christians—no matter how many people get on our cases, no matter how much abuse we experience, no matter how heavy the devil's temptations come down on us each day—we can always have complete confidence in God's promise of coaching us through and rewarding us with the ultimate victory—eternal life for Jesus' sake.

Read His promise in Romans 8:31–39. Write God's promise in your own words, and remember to share this with someone who needs to hear God's message.

GOD'S POWER FOR YOU

A computer can be programmed so that it can't lose a game. What would it be like playing a game against a computer programmed to always win? Maybe this has happened to you. For a while, you're winning the chess or Scrabble game against the computer. But then, no matter how good a player you may be, the computer wins the game!

TO REVIEW AND REMEMBER

Romans 8:28: We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.

The Third Petition and its explanation.