

**Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ according to Saint Luke 17: 20-25.**

Asked by the Pharisees when the Kingdom of God would come, Jesus said in reply, "The coming of the Kingdom of God cannot be observed, and no one will announce, 'Look, here it is,' or, 'There it is.' For behold, the Kingdom of God is among you." Then he said to his disciples, "The days will come when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, but you will not see it. There will be those who will say to you, 'Look, there he is,' or 'Look, here he is.' Do not go off, do not run in pursuit. For just as lightning flashes and lights up the sky from one side to the other, so will the Son of Man be in his day. But first he must suffer greatly and be rejected by this generation."

Luke 17:20-25**Introductory Prayer:**

Lord, I believe in your presence in my life. You have called me to share in your faith and love. I trust that you will help me grow closer to you. I love you, Lord, here and now. I will live this day in prayer.

Petition:

Lord, help me to understand your Kingdom better.

1. When?

Since the Pharisees had the wrong notion of the Kingdom of God, they could hardly ask the proper questions concerning it. Their expected kingdom was a worldly kingdom that would cast off foreign domination and restore sovereignty to Israel. But Christ's kingdom is concerned more about the state of the soul and the struggle between good and evil than external nations. The Pharisees' misperception kept them from recognizing Christ and his kingdom. Thousands of years later we, too, can be susceptible to the errors of the Pharisees. For us, a lack of faith can keep us from seeing that the Kingdom of God comes only when we accept Jesus as king of our souls. Only when we allow him to rule and order our lives does his kingdom come. The when is now. Now is the moment for me to encounter Christ and make him my king.

2. Where?

Christ's disciples also struggled to understand the nature of the kingdom. They sought to see the days of the Son of Man, a powerful reign where Christ was supreme with the entire world subject to him. Yet, Christ comes first to reign in the heart of each person. In my own heart, do I believe in Christ and accept his will? Do I love him and sacrifice myself in order to respond to his will? Am I building the kingdom from my prayer and life of grace?

3. How?

If the kingdom is here and now, then how do we enter? We enter the same way our King enters -- through the door of suffering and perseverance. First he must suffer greatly and be rejected. Belief is not just a one-time acceptance. Faith must be lived throughout the great and little trials we encounter in life. In this way we make faith and the kingdom more our own. We need to remember that in the end, it is the kingdom -- and the King himself -- who comes to us, like lightning across the sky.

Conversation with Christ:

Dear Jesus, help me to understand your kingdom. Build your kingdom within me, in my thoughts and desires. Become my life and my love. Cut away any distance between us. Make my life the light and salt to spread your kingdom effectively to those with whom I cross paths.

Resolution:

I will dedicate a longer and calmer time to examine my conscience tonight, and look for progress as well as the struggles of the kingdom within me.