

## I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord

### Introduction:

1. Feelings of patriotism are common to man.
2. It is natural to love the land of one's birth and to feel pride for one's country.
3. However, Christians are citizens of a far greater kingdom – the body of Christ and the family of God.
4. Thus, the child of God should feel even greater emotions toward his spiritual country.
5. Every Christian should delight to declare, "I love thy kingdom, Lord."

### I. The Background of the Song

- A. This song was written by Timothy Dwight in 1800.
- B. He has been called "the most important name in early American hymnology."
- C. Timothy Dwight was born on May 14, 1752, in Northampton, Massachusetts.
  1. His mother was the third daughter of Jonathan Edwards, the influential Congregationalist preacher of the First Great Awakening.
  2. She educated her son in his early years and quickly recognized his bright intellect.
  3. He was ready to enter the freshman class of Yale College in the study of Latin and Greek when he was eight years old, but waited until he was thirteen to begin his time there.
  4. He graduated at age 17 in 1769 and became a tutor in 1771.
- D. For a time he served as chaplain of the army during the American Revolutionary War, where he became a close friend of George Washington.
- E. In 1783 he moved to Fairfield, Connecticut, and became the minister for a Congregationalist church.
- F. He also served as a representative in the State Legislature of Connecticut and became a faculty member of Yale College.
- G. In 1795, he was appointed as the eighth president of Yale College where he served until the year of his death in 1817.
- H. It was while he was serving in this position that he penned this song.
- I. At its heart, the message of the song was the love of the Lord's kingdom even surpassing the love of one's earthly country.

### II. The Message of the Song

- A. The Identity of the Kingdom

I love thy kingdom, Lord,  
 The house of Thine abode;  
 The church our blest Redeemer saved  
 With His own precious blood.

1. The kingdom belongs to the Lord (Matthew 16:18-19; John 18:36).
2. The kingdom is the Lord's dwelling (Mark 14:25; 1 Timothy 3:15).
3. The kingdom is saved by Jesus (Ephesians 5:23; 1 Cor. 15:24).
4. The kingdom is bought with His blood (Acts 20:28; Ephesians 5:25).

B. The Divine View of the Kingdom

I love thy church, O God!  
 Her walls before Thee stand,  
 Dear as the apple of Thine eye,  
 And graven on Thy hand.

1. The kingdom stands before God, always in His view.
2. The kingdom is the apple of His eye (Deuteronomy 32:9-12; Psalm 17:8; Zechariah 2:8; Acts 9:1-4).

C. The Citizen's View of the Kingdom

For her my tears shall fall,  
 For her my prayers ascend;  
 To her my cares and toils be giv'n,  
 Till toils and cares shall end.

Beyond my highest joy  
 I prize her heav'nly ways,  
 Her sweet communion, solemn vows,  
 Her hymns of love and praise.

1. The Christian weeps when the kingdom is troubled.
2. The Christian prays for the kingdom.
3. The Christian labors for the kingdom.
4. The Christian values the kingdom (Matthew 6:33).

D. The Reward of the Kingdom

Jesus, Thou Friend divine,  
 Our Savior and our King!  
 Thy hand from ev'ry snare and foe  
 Shall great deliv'rance bring.

Sure as Thy truth shall last,  
 To Zion shall be giv'n  
 The brightest glories earth can yield,  
 And brightest bliss of heav'n.

1. The reward of the kingdom is deliverance.
2. The reward of the kingdom is the abundant life (John 10:10).
3. The reward of the kingdom is Heaven (Matthew 25:34).