

How Near is Near?  
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[Jesus said]: "And proclaim as you go, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.'" (Matthew 10:7)

How near is near? "Near" is a tricky word. It is much like its cousin word "close". Can a door be "close"? Can something be "near"? Must it not be either "there" or "here"?

When you ask, "How near is near?" you ask a Law question. You seek to control how near something, in this case the kingdom of heaven, gets to you. Given your druthers as a sinful person, you would rather the kingdom of heaven not get too near. Holiness and sinfulness shouldn't be in the same area.

Maybe it is because you are afraid of the kingdom of heaven. What if God's kingdom comes, just as I pray in the Lord's Prayer, and His kingdom isn't what I expected? What if He comes to me with guns blazing and smelling like brimstone? What if it's all a sham? It's better to stay where you are and hope the kingdom of heaven doesn't come too near.

In spite of your fear, the kingdom comes. God's kingdom comes right to you, proclaiming both God's no and God's yes. His kingdom is one of power, grace, and glory. Yet His power, grace, and glory proclaim Messiah's coming to die for your sin and rise for your justification.

Stand still. Don't move. Let Jesus work on you with His blood and righteousness. Let Him take you to the font, the pulpit, and the altar, where His kingdom comes anew in the Divine Service. Let Him take you through the grave and into eternal life when you die. Let Him do all the work, for He works for your salvation.