

The Kingdom Life - Lesson Two
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We're going to look at several scriptures...but most of our time we'll be in Matthew 6

What IS the KINGDOM LIFE?
How do I live it PERSONALLY?
How do WE live it as a class...a small group?

First we have to ask: What IS the KINGDOM OF GOD?

In Matthew 6:10 as Jesus was teaching his disciples a MODEL of prayer, He prayed:

10 your kingdom come,
your will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.

Later in that same chapter in Matthew 6:33, Jesus had been teaching them about living everyday life: "You WORRY TOO MUCH...you're STRESSED OUT about all the wrong things. In fact, YOU SHOULDN'T WORRY at all. God knows what you need and he'll provide it. Instead of spending your time WORRYING and WIGGING OUT...

33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things (you've been worrying about) will be given to you as well. (My comment in parentheses)

- Okay, so we're to PRAY for God's KINGDOM to come and be done on earth
- We're to SEEK FIRST His KINGDOM and His righteousness
- Question: Where do we FIND the KINGDOM OF GOD on EARTH? Any thoughts?

Luke 17:20-21
The Coming of the Kingdom of God

20 Once, having been asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, "The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, 21 nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is within[a] you."

John MacArthur writes:
(This expression) refer(s) to the sphere of God's domination over those who belong to Him. The kingdom is now manifest in heaven's spiritual rule over the hearts of believers; and one day it will be established in a literal earthly kingdom (Rev. 20:4-6).

Translation: If you have had a SALVATION EXPERIENCE, God is the BOSS of every part of your life.

- Let's go back to Matthew 6:10 "thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth"
- Some brave Bible translator here this morning...put that into EVERYDAY LANGUAGE.
- "God, I want what YOU want right here on EARTH!"
- Let's PARAPHRASE Matthew 6:33 "seek FIRST the kingdom of God and His righteousness." Another brave soul...put THAT line into EVERYDAY LANGUAGE.
- "Make what God wants YOUR PRIORITY in life."
- So the KINGDOM of God on earth is when we as believers in Christ DO what God wants.
- But what does God want?
- To live the KINGDOM LIFE we need CONNECTIONS
- Not "CONNECTIONS" as in "It's all about who you know?" "I'm CONNECTED!"
- We're talking about CONNECTIONS with God and others.
- Question: What is the FIRST and MOST IMPORTANT thing God wants for EVERY PERSON?

2 Peter 3:9

9 The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

- God desires a RELATIONSHIP with YOU and Me.
- BTW: My Reformed friends may argue that I am taking that verse out of context...
- But since the Great Commission commanded us to make disciples of "all nations", work with me here!
- Question: Once someone has had a SALVATION experience; What CONNECTION does God desire us to have?
- God also wants us to be CONNECTED to Him 24/7!
- Before there is a CONNECTION there must be a DISCONNECTION
- Example: Ever try to plug the same electrical cord into two outlets AT THE SAME TIME? Or, Ever try to CONNECT your water hose to two spigots AT THE SAME TIME?
- Question: Because of Adam and Eve's SIN, we came into this world CONNECTED to what? SIN
- To be CONNECTED to God and what He wants I first have to DISCONNECT from what the WORLD (translation...SATAN) wants. I can't serve both God and SATAN!

Matthew 6:24

24 "No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money. (or any other substitute " master")

Matthew 6:31-32

31 So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.

- I need to DISCONNECT from my SINFUL NATURE and the influence of Satan...but, there's a problem.
- The problem is...I wake up and find that SOMEONE has plugged my life BACK INTO the wrong SOCKET!
- So, how do I stay CONNECTED?

John 15:4-5

4 Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

- Last week we talked a lot about this How do we we REMAIN IN Him?
- Prayer...Bible Study...Obedience. We can't "export" what we don't have.
- Jesus said, "Remain in me" and you will "bear much fruit"
- Remaining means STAYING CONNECTED...every day

- We need to DISCONNECT from the WORLD and STAY CONNECTED to Him
- But to live the KINGDOM LIFE what is the other CONNECTION we need?
- CONNECTION to our NEIGHBORS and THE NATIONS
- Last week we talked about being WITNESSES of what we have EXPERIENCED

Acts 1:8 says:

"...you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Let me simplify it by quoting my old friend Steve Brown (as I have many times):
Christians are simply "beggars telling other beggars where we found bread."

Doesn't that paint the picture?

"Hey guys, We don't have to starve! I didn't just find crumbs...I found a whole BAKERY!"
"I didn't just find scraps...it's THE GOLDEN CORRAL BUFFET!". "And it's open 24/7...serving the bread of life."

Just "beggars telling other beggars where we found bread." That's living the KINGDOM LIFE

Here's a good summary from our lesson materials:

"When we become who God desires us to BE, then we ACT out of the OVERFLOW of our heart. Kingdom Living is the result and it is INFECTIOUS! As we reach our neighbors and the nations, they become who God desires them to BE, then they ACT

and reach their neighbors and the nations. The Kingdom Life reproduces itself internally (in our hearts) and externally (as we reach others)."

So, how does that work for a Sunday School class?

1. We need to DISCOVER who God designed our class to be (our CALLING and CAPACITY)
2. We need to "experience God's heart for our neighbors and the nations" joining Him where (as Henry Blackaby says) where he is already at work
3. We need to LIVE the KINGDOM LIFE intentionally together to seek God's KINGDOM ON EARTH.

- Question: How do we discover our CALLING and CAPACITY?
- Spiritual gifts and natural talents and passions
- Question: What does it mean to EXPERIENCE GOD'S HEART for our neighbors and the nations?
- Let's take stock of where we are as a class. At the risk of putting people on the spot (you'll forgive us, I'm sure)...QUESTION: Look around at the members of this class and what are some examples of class members using their GIFTS and TALENTS to both SERVE and REACH OTHERS? Let's open up the floor and hand out some BLESSINGS.

(Discussion)

- A complement from Paul Hahn re "RADICAL"

but, this is not just a morning of CELEBRATION and BLESSING...there's also a CHALLENGE! And, that's the TAKEAWAY:

- As your teacher and class leader I want to challenge YOU and ME to spend time over this Christmas and New Years season prayerfully considering this question.
- As we look toward 2012, how will each of us as INDIVIDUALS and ALL OF US as a group live the KINGDOM LIFE?
- If you'd never done a SPIRITUAL GIFTS ASSESSMENT...take 15-20 minutes and DO IT!
- Think about how you can use the things you are PASSIONATE ABOUT and GOOD AT to reach out to those who HAVEN'T FOUND BREAD...the BREAD OF LIFE!
- Make a LIST of the NEIGHBORS you want to focus on.
- Think about how you can be a part of REACHING THE NATIONS either through giving of your time and talents and money (helping OTHERS to GO) or maybe (like some of our class members are already planning to do) GOING YOURSELF to another land.
- And first and foremost, let's commit to REMAINING in Him through daily prayer and Bible study...because we can't "export" what we don't have. It comes from the "overflow of our hearts."