

Kingdom Living #1
A Revolutionary Kingdom
Matthew 6:25-34

Jesus is in the *happiness* business.

Sadly, not everyone really understands or believes that truth. In fact, many Christians are not sure that they can even experience true happiness. And yet, the very first sermon ever recorded as having been preached by Jesus Christ begins with the constantly ringing theme of happiness, and its revolutionary truth hit the world like a bomb exploding in the minds of those who heard Him!

In Matthew 6, our Lord gives us a list of those things, which seem to give us contentment and/or security, which in turn lead to some measure of happiness. I want you to understand that Jesus is not talking to the world here, He is talking to His disciples. And He says unto them “...seek ye first the kingdom of God...”

On another occasion Jesus said that the kingdom of heaven is something to be sought after; it is something to be looked for, as seen in Matthew 13:44 that “...the kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy of it goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.”

Now, listen very carefully, Jesus is saying that after we have been saved by the grace of God, it becomes very important that we begin a search for the kingdom of God! I think this is a truth that by in large has been totally overlooked in theological circles.

Please understand that we are not talking about salvation here. We are talking about Christians living our lives under the rule of God, about being conformed to the image of Jesus Christ, in our everyday living.

And that brings us to this question: What is the kingdom of God and how does it relate to us today? The kingdom of God is a spiritual relationship. It is not an external kingdom, but internal kingdom. **The kingdom of God is something that takes place on the inside of you. In its truest sense the kingdom of God is the rule of God in our own lives.**

Listen, in every life there is a throne and a cross. If Jesus is on the throne, then we are on the cross; but if we are on the throne, then we are crucifying the Son of God afresh and anew!

In Matthew 3:2 John the Baptist cried out, “Repent; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Immediately after Jesus’ baptism, and as He began His ministry, Matthew 4:1 says, “Then was Jesus led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tested by the devil.” The temptations of Jesus Christ prepared Him to enter in and seek out the things of the kingdom of God.

And, child of God, I want to tell you something today, you will never enter into kingdom living, with spiritual understanding, until your faith has been tested. And the sad truth is that many of God’s precious children will never experience kingdom living because they will not get past the testing!

The first part of Jesus’ test is seen in Matthew 4:2-3, “And when he had fasted for forty days and forty nights, he was afterward hungry. And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.”

Now here is the test - **The first test is placing one’s appetite under the control of God’s Word, which is the true bread.** The true bread is the Word of God, and it will begin to search out and test you in terms of your control over your God-given appetites.

So, the first test you undergo in kingdom living is a test to see if your appetites are under the control of God’s Word (sexual, physical, and financial).

The second test is seen in verses 5-6, “Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down; for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee, and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.”

Test number two is that you shall not be a god unto yourself, nor unto your circumstances, nor unto your occupation, nor in life’s decisions. Listen, if you do not confer with the Holy Spirit about your choices in life, you are tempting God, and you will never experience kingdom living.

The third test is found in verses 8-9, “Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, and saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.”

Child of God, I promise you this today, before you ever experience kingdom living, you will be tested in the object of your worship and the

purpose of your life. Whatever we worship is what we ultimately end up serving. **Our nature demands that we worship something.** **What we worship is up to us.** Revelation 14:6-7 instructs us to give God our praise and worship.

Genuine praise and worship must be based on an intimate and abiding relationship with Jesus Christ. But true praise and worship must develop beyond the point to where we praise and worship God for what He does for us. **We must praise Him for who He is.** **Our worship must transcend a superficial expression that is dependent on our feelings alone.** We must develop a relationship that is consistent even in the midst of trials. **The trials should deepen our relationship with the Lord, not weaken it.**

The storms of life should mature our relationship with the Lord to the degree that our worship is expressed not only externally by the fruit of our lips in praise, but also our love for Him expressed through our continual obedience to His Word. It is the obedience that flows from the heart, freely without coercion.

As soon as Jesus finished these tests, Matthew 4:12 tells us that He “departed into Galilee.” And then Matthew 4:17 tells us, “From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” And then Matthew 4:23 says, “And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.” Luke 6:19 tells us, “And the whole multitude sought to touch him; for there went power out of him, and healed them all.” 1 Corinthians 4:20 says, “For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.”

Immediately when Jesus started preaching the gospel of the rule of God, power comes out from Him and people began to be delivered from demonic spirits and were healed from all manner of diseases.

Child of God, when we put ourselves under the rule of God there is an automatic power on our lives! Listen, when we are involved in kingdom living, as we ought to be, the power of God is so manifested in our lives to such a degree that people that we pass by may be healed! You say, “Preacher, I have never heard of such a thing in all of my life.” Listen to Acts 5:12-16, “And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people (and they were all with the one accord in Solomon’s porch. And of the rest dared no man join himself to them; but the people magnified them. And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women), Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. There

came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem bringing sick folks, and them who were vexed with unclean spirits; and they were healed every one.” Oh, my friends, I beg that you listen today, some of you have been brought here for such an hour as this - there is power in the name of Jesus!

Luke 4:16-19 tells us, “And he (Christ) came to Nazareth where he had been brought up; and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.”

May I share what I see as a problem in the church today? We all started out originals but we have ended up carbon copies! Everybody is trying to copy somebody else! We want to copy some one else’s anointing. We want to copy some one else’s gift. We want to copy some else’s move of God. We want to copy some one else’s preaching style. But, I must confess to you today, when you get involved in kingdom living, the only Person you will want to copy is Jesus Christ.

Look at what Jesus is telling us about kingdom living in Luke 4. Moffatt’s translation puts Jesus’ words this way, “...to tell prisoners they are free, to tell captives they are released.”

With those thoughts in our minds, listen to what we have been told in Colossians 1:12-13 as we are told about kingdom living, “Giving thanks unto the Father, who hath made us fit to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.” **“The opening of the prison” is God’s figurative way of describing that you have been released from the bondage of Satan: from sin, sickness, disease, torment - all that is involved with the prison house of Satan himself.**

Even though Jesus has come (born of a virgin), lived (established His ministry), died (paid the price for sin) and lives again (arose victoriously), many of God’s children are still living in bondage. Down deep inside, many Christians know that they are free spiritually: They have received Christ as their Savior; they have received the spiritual benefits of the redemptive plan of God; they even know what the Word of God teaches about Holy Spirit anointing and spiritual gifts. **But they live their lives with no apparent freedom, no expectancy, and no excitement, when it comes to the things of God!**

What, then, is the problem? The problem is that we have never been taught the biblical principles of kingdom living. In Matthew 5:21,27, 33, and 43, Jesus said, “You have heard that it was said by them of old...” and then He proceeded to give us instructions concerning the rules of kingdom living. And then in Matthew 22:37 & 39 Jesus draws it all together with these words, “Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.”

Ladies and Gentlemen, when we are willing to love God with all of our heart, mind, and souls, and then to love our neighbors as we love our selves, we will find ourselves under the rule of a revolutionary kingdom where God is obligated to do what He says He will do in His Word.

Listen, child of God, Jesus is taking us away from external commitments and surface relationships to an internal covenant and an expression of the heart. Kingdom living has to do with what you carry inside of you!

Jesus is saying, “I want to be the One you carry inside of you; on the throne of your heart. I want to control your emotions; I want to control your actions in such a way that you can really and truly love those people who are unlovable.”

The Bible is simply teaching us that citizens of the kingdom are merciful, pure in heart, peacemakers, persecuted, reviled, and will still have a right relationship with those people around them. Why? Simply because they are under the rule of God in their every day living!

If you are not saved, why not today?

Everyone please stand for prayer.

Father,

I recognize and confess that Your Word is true. Help me to realize the joy of living under the Rule of Heaven, as I make godly decisions in my everyday living. May my commitment be an encouragement to others in their walk with You. In Jesus' name. Amen.