

June 7, 2020 James Gallahe

The Kingdom of God Series: Kingdom Living: Hindrance or Power

Jesus speaks of The Kingdom over 100 times. In the 40 days beyond the cross, Jesus teaches about the Kingdom of God, giving instructions on the coming and the filling of the Holy Spirit, with an infusion of power from the Holy Spirit in a new way. The coming Holy Spirit would come to dwell in the hearts of men and women and would remain in every person that believes in Jesus Christ.

One of the primary hindrances to the Kingdom of God is a believer's lack of conviction of the power that dwells within the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is not weak but our conviction and faith in the power that is available is weak. We tend to limit the Kingdom to what we can understand, but then we won't see the fullness of the Kingdom on this Earth. We cannot limit the spiritual to what we see in the physical. We must see beyond.

Acts 3:1-10 Peter and John encountered a crippled man asking for money for his daily needs. Peter and John didn't have what he asked for. How much are we inadequate to meet other's needs? We don't know what to do even today in this racial uprising - feeling bad and feeling helpless with the result of doing nothing. But what have we tried? We can't remain silent. We must become the herald of the answer - of Jesus and what He has already done. The Kingdom of God has the sufficiency that this world needs for our current problems.

Peter and John answered with conviction and faith. What kind of faith did it take for them to tell that man to stand up and walk? It wasn't logical. They believed in a sufficiency of a greater Kingdom that produced a faith that would speak words that can't exist in reality. The Church is called to the same faith and conviction. **Acts 1:8** *You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you.* Does our faith lack conviction? Our conviction and our faith will lead us to places we don't want to go. Would we opt out if we understood where He was taking us? Am I under conviction that this same power would give life to these hands to bring forth God's Kingdom so that faith rises up and lives are changed around me? The church needs to direct the conversation to things beyond this world.

First, it begins with acknowledging the problem. Have we heard this term that diminishes the value of people - Colorblind? When we say we are "colorblind" and that we see everyone the same, it implies that we don't see the problem. Peter and John were not cripple blind. They saw the problem – he was crippled. When we try to level the playing field, we ignore the problem. The Kingdom of God is the great equalizer but to experience it we must first acknowledge the problem and the differences.

We are all created in His image and should not shame but celebrate the differences. We don't want to be colorblind but see and recognize creation as God created and bring the Kingdom in the midst. The church is to be the delivery system for the Kingdom to be experienced by everyone.

We can feel good about what we do but not affect real change. The Kingdom of God is called to affect change - to be different. Jesus came to make us different. Peter and John focused on the abundance of what the Kingdom offered not on their lack. If we focus on what we don't have, then we will never acknowledge the abundance of a life lived in the Kingdom of God. We serve a Mighty God.

Kingdom living disrupts the world system but results in an explosion of Kingdom growth. **Acts 4:1-4** *As they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to them, being greatly disturbed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And they laid hands on them and put them in jail until the next day, for it was already evening. But many of those who had heard the message believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.*

Peter and John came to disrupt the worldly system and were thrown into jail, but the Kingdom of God gained 5000. If you want a comfortable life, then the Kingdom is not for you. These disciples did not live comfortable lives: stoned, crucified, jailed, shipwrecked...but the Kingdom of God will give purpose.

Do you want people to remember your preferences or purpose? Are we more passionate about our preferences or our purpose? We are called to be people of purpose. It must reside within us with conviction that it produces a faith to disrupt the systems around us for the building of the Kingdom above us.

The history of today is a place we have not been to before. Yesterday's tactics will not satisfy today's struggles. **John 14:16** *I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever.* Jesus talks about the Helper, The Holy Spirit, that would come and be with us forever. He is the sufficient One and He comes in our lack. He comes to convict, to bring faith, to disrupt, to unite, to build, to establish, to comfort and to fill us with power to change, with power to bring healing, and with power to bring God's Kingdom to this Earth.

Do we ask others how they want us to pray? Do we understand the injustice of others? How do we see others? Do we listen to other's stories? Do we see humanity in everyone? Jesus came to save humanity. Do we have real conversations with persons of another skin color? We can't be blind anymore or take sides. We hold the answer in Jesus! The Kingdom implores us:

- to do something
- to have a conversation
- to see the problem
- to see humanity that Jesus died for
- to move on the other side
- to be the herald to the solution
- to be the bridge

Peter and John didn't give the crippled man what he asked for but gave him what he needed. It's what we can give the world. There are two different sides of the street looking for the same solution and we get to be the bridge.

- What am I passionate about – my preference or my purpose?
- Explain this quote: "We cannot limit the spiritual to what we see in the physical."
- What relationship in my life do I need to examine and expand my understanding?
- Have I been colorblind? How? Do I want to change that? How?
- Where can we commit to being a bridge and helping to unite in our racial situation today?