

When times are tough, the Bible says to seek God first and then the great promise of His provision comes.

Matthew 6:33 *But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.*

Acts 1:3 *To these He also presented Himself alive after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God.*

Everyone at that time wanted to know when this Kingdom would come. Jesus was all about the Kingdom that He died to establish. Many of Jesus' parables (46 recorded) were about the Kingdom of God; they were little mysteries; they were important. **Matthew 13:13** *Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.*

Start reading of the parables in **Matthew 13**:

- **Verse 18-30** The Parable of the Sower: The Good News is not sweeping in souls like we'd like - 3/4 of our efforts are aborted.
- **Verse 24-30, 36-43** The Parable of the Wheat and the Tares: The Kingdom will be laced with corrupt seed until God separates them.
- **Verse 47-50** The Parable of the Net: The Kingdom of God draws in all kinds of people and are separated in the end.

Two truths of these Parables:

- 1) The Kingdom has come! We are the recipients of that Kingdom. Many, though, say all the right things but are posers.
- 2) The Kingdom is also to come! The power of the Kingdom of God draws all kinds of people. Everything in the net is separated between the good and the bad - some are true disciples and some are hypocrites. On that final day, all will become clear.

The kingdom is present and it is future. One presents a blessing and the other a warning.

Matthew 7:22-23 *Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.'*

To understand the Kingdom is to understand our mission. To understand our mission is to live this life with purpose, with direction, and with fulfillment, to someday hear the words of **Matthew 25:21** ... *'Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.'*

Understand what the Kingdom is all about by first going back to Genesis. Man was:

- Created to rule the Earth. **Genesis 2:26**
- Created to receive God's blessing. **Genesis 2:28**
- Created to multiply and subdue. **Genesis 2:28**
- Created to receive seed to sow and enjoy the fruit of labor. **Genesis 2:29**

Eve was deceived and the result was spiritual death. Then Jesus comes and the battle line was drawn between the second Adam and the same devil. Three temptations followed. All that was lost in the Garden becomes the great temptations for Jesus. Jesus refuses.

- What was God's world was given to Adam and Eve.
- What Adam and Eve ruled over was given to satan.
- What was controlled by satan was won back by Jesus.
- What was won back by Jesus has been offered to you and I - His Kingdom citizens.

Matthew 16:19 *I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven."*

Our mission is not to be a good church, but to be Kingdom saints. Jesus' true disciples will be so led by the Spirit that they will be following the heavenly pattern that God established. In other words, what they "forbid" or "permit" on earth will be consistent with the Divine rules.

Psalm 103:19 *The Lord has established His throne in the heavens, And His sovereignty rules over all. Luke 1:33 and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end.*

And if He rules over all and His kingdom has come, then what is left for us? The fact that Jesus has complete authority, releases us to abide under that authority and do whatever we are called to do. **Matthew 28:18-20** *And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."*

Therefore, Jesus says take no thought about tomorrow's troubles because: * I and the Father know what you need. * I will be with you through all circumstances. * Ask whatever you want and desire and I promise to hear you. * My control of life events is motivated by the cross and its results.

Here is "The Kingdom" summarized:

- Who? **Matthew 28:18** You go
- What? **Matthew 28:19** make disciples of all nations, preach the gospel of Jesus, make disciples, baptize.
- Where? **Acts 1:8** Jerusalem (home), Judea (community), Samaria (where you are at odds with people), remotest parts of the earth (till you've exhausted all opportunity).
- How? **Matthew 22:36-40** Great commission living empowered by great commandment love.
- When? **Matthew 28:8** When the Holy Spirit has come upon you in power.

The mission of the church is to make Christ known. The method of the church is to use every resource, every moment, every thought, every desire. To be part of this kingdom say this prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, I believe You are the Son of God. I believe that on that cross You took my guilt, my sin, and my shame and You died for it. You faced hell for me, so I wouldn't have to. And You rose again to give me a place in Heaven, a purpose on Earth, and a relationship with Your Father. Today, Lord Jesus, I turn from my sins to be born again. And now, God is my father, Jesus is my Savior, The Holy Spirit is my helper. And Heaven is my home. Amen.

How is your living in the midst of this crisis? your thinking? your speaking? your doing?

How is The Kingdom both present and future?

How do we struggle with Kingdom living and Kingdom loving? How do we overcome those temptations?