

May 24, 2020 James Gallaher The Kingdom of God Series: Gaining Abundant Life

Jesus came to make us different - an act of the cross. The purpose of the Kingdom is to restore our original nature so that we look different than the world in which we live. That change should make a difference in the lives of people. God created us with Kingdom DNA – Jesus came to restore that DNA.

The emphasis of the church has been to focus mainly on salvation – the entry point to the Kingdom of God. Jesus had a moment with Nicodemus who saw something unique in Jesus' life.

John 3:3 *Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God."* Nicodemus asks about "born again" and Jesus answers. He answers again in **John 10:7-10** *So Jesus said to them again, "Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."* Jesus is the doorway but He emphasizes that we shouldn't get stuck at the door. The door is a passageway to abundant life. Jesus had a deeper emphasis in teaching the Kingdom of God - abundant living.

John 14:6 *Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me."*

Life abundantly is the Kingdom of God. Much of the struggle for people coming into the church is that we preach a message only of salvation and neglect the Kingdom of God.

Matthew 6:9-10 *Pray, then, in this way: 'Our Father who is in Heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on Earth as it is in Heaven.* **Matthew 5:3** *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.*

Jesus begins His first sermon with the word "blessed." The Old Testament's last word was "curse." You will feel and live under a curse until you are willing to receive the blessing of the Kingdom of God. Jesus comes to re-establish the Kingdom of God in the hearts of men not just on the other side of this life. Jesus says "theirs *is* the Kingdom..."

The Kingdom of God is not just a future coming but a present coming. It is an inward contentedness that is not affected by circumstances around me. Do we have that? Or is there a constant struggle to fight for something? Are we content enough to be in the presence of Jesus? *Blessed are the poor in spirit* - those who have recognized the utter depravity of their life apart from Jesus and His provision. To be spiritually poor recognizes that every bit of sustenance that we need would have to be found at the throne of the Father.

Some of us have become more concerned about our country citizenship instead of Kingdom citizenship. In order to receive the benefits of the Kingdom of God, we need to surrender all other allegiances.

Martin Luther says, "This is true. We are all beggars." But we are rich beggars because our Father is the King. He owns all things and will give all things. True satisfaction comes when every day we approach His throne empty-handed, eager to receive whatever He would offer us for the day.

It was the lesson for the Israelites in the desert: Manna given only enough for each day - every day His provision for that day would be given to them. Take more and it would rot. If every day they would come empty before Him, He promised to provide them what they needed.

Are we not living a Kingdom life because we are living on yesterday's blessing? Every day we need to come before God to live in His fullness. **Matthew 6:33-34** *But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.*

- In surrendering, we gain.
- His mercies are new every morning.
- His grace is sufficient. We don't have to ration the grace God gives for today.
- Don't worry about tomorrow.
- The King will provide in the moment it is needed.

There is a better way – the Kingdom of God. We are different by passing through the door and taking hold of the abundant Kingdom of God.

1 Peter 5:7 *Casting all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you.* He wants us to cast them on Him. Receive His sacrifice and blessing. Seek Jesus and Jesus alone in everything. It is simple – surrender in order to gain.

What am I carrying on my own? Anxiety, worry, rights, comfort, stresses? What can I surrender and allow God to change?

How does my life reflect the Kingdom of God?

Explain the inward contentedness that is not affected by the circumstances around me?

Am I getting caught up in the hearing and taking sides? in winning an argument? in defending a cause? How can I change that?