

THE KINGDOM



A Sermon Series
by Phil Waldo

The Kingdom

October 15, 2006

“Kingdom” is used over 150 times in the NT with 78% in the four Gospels, and 95% of those in the Gospels by Jesus, himself.

This was the first message Jesus preached in his public ministry.

Matthew 4:17

17 From that time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the *kingdom of heaven* is near."

It was his emphasis throughout his ministry and after his resurrection.

Acts 1:3

3 After his suffering... He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the *kingdom of God*.

Paul, the principle writer of the NT, spoke about the kingdom repeatedly.

Acts 14:22

"We must go through many hardships to enter the *kingdom of God*," they said.

Acts 19:8 (in Ephesus)

Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about *the kingdom of God*.

Acts 28:23, 31 (while under house arrest in Rome)

From morning till evening he explained and declared to them the *kingdom of God*

31 Boldly and without hindrance he preached the *kingdom of God* and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ.

At least a dozen times Paul wrote about the kingdom in his letters. And, it is explicitly mentioned by all the NT writers, except Jude.

Romans 14:17

17 For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of *righteousness, peace and joy* in the Holy Spirit

There are various terms used when speaking of the Kingdom.

- The Kingdom of God
- The Kingdom of Heaven(s)
- The Kingdom of the Father
- The Kingdom of the Son
- The Kingdom of Christ
- The Kingdom

These are often used interchangeably. Otherwise, the different terms speak of various aspects of the Kingdom.

Kingdom of Heaven can emphasize the contrast with earthly kingdoms.

Kingdom of God can emphasize the contrast with human governments.

Kingdom of Heaven(s) can indicate the location & nature of God's kingdom. It is over the universe. It is spiritual.

Kingdom of God can indicate his authority. His kingdom is wherever and whoever comes under his authority.

Let's try to define the Kingdom...

Generally – an area or people ruled by a king. It has to do with royal power, dominion or rule.

Specifically – the area or people over which God rules

His kingdom is both physical and spiritual spanning the earth and the entire universe.

Psalms 22:28

dominion belongs to the LORD and he rules over the nations.

Daniel 7:13-14

13 "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. 14 *He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.*

Ephesians 3:10

...rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms,

1 Peter 3:21-22

Jesus Christ, 22 who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand-with *angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.*

However, planet earth is caught up in a rebellion against his authority and there are forces of darkness exerting influence on mankind.

The enemy has some control:

Luke 4:5-6

5 The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. 6 And he said to him, *"I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to.*

1 John 5:19

19 We know that we are children of God, and that *the whole world is under the control of the evil one.*

He works to keep people blinded from the truth:

2 Corinthians 4:4

4 *The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel*

Jesus came to destroy his work:

1 John 3:8

the devil has been sinning from the beginning. *The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.*

He has called all believers into the light:

1 Peter 2:9

declare the praises of him who *called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.*

We now work with Jesus to defeat the enemy:

Ephesians 6:12

our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and *against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.*

Since the earth is in rebellion, those who enter the Kingdom come into conflict with the rebellion.

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. 4 The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine

power to demolish strongholds. 5 *We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God*, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

1 John 5:4-5
everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. 5 Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

So, God's kingdom is over all authorities and powers throughout the universe. However, since planet earth is still caught up in the rebellion against him, his kingdom on earth consists currently of those people and areas in which his rule is acknowledged. Therefore, currently, God calls all people to voluntarily submit to his rule.

Matthew 4:17
17 From that time on Jesus began to preach, "*Repent*, for the kingdom of heaven is near."

Acts 3:19
19 *Repent*, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord

James 4:7
7 *Submit yourselves, then, to God*. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

Entrance into the Kingdom is by new birth.

John 3:3-6
"I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is *born again*." 4 "How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!" 5 Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the

kingdom of God unless he is *born of water and the Spirit*. 6 Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.

Matthew 18:3
"I tell you the truth, unless you *change and become like little children*, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

New birth is made evident by obedience, so obedience is also required for entering the Kingdom.

James 2:17
faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

Matthew 7:21
21 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but *only he who does the will of my Father* who is in heaven.

2 Peter 1:10-11
my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For *if you do these things*, you will never fall, 11 and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The Bible speaks of the "mystery" of the kingdom or gospel. ("Mystery" is used 21 times in the NT.) This is because currently, here on earth, his kingdom is not fully accepted, and therefore, not readily obvious to all. It is only recognized by those who believe and submit to his rule.

Luke 17:20
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*...

John 3:3
Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, *no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again*."

1 Corinthians 2:14

14 The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because *they are spiritually discerned*.

1 Corinthians 15:50

50 I declare to you, brothers, that *flesh and blood cannot inherit* the kingdom of God

So, currently, the Kingdom is mysterious, being only partially recognized and understood. But, one day very soon God will assert his rule universally and his Kingdom will come in glory and be made obvious to everyone.

Matthew 25:31-34

31 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. 32 *All the nations will be gathered before him*, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 33 He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. 34 "Then the King will say *to those on his right*, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.'

Philippians 2:9-11

9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus *every knee should bow*, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and *every tongue confess* that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The Kingdom is both present and future. Present – the Kingdom is in those who believe and surrender to his rule. Future – the Kingdom will be over all with rewards for those who have believed and punishment for others.

The fundamental principle of the Kingdom is "Where the King is, there is the Kingdom."

Luke 17:21

the kingdom of God is *within* (or among) you."

Individually:

1 Peter 3:15

in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord.

Galatians 2:20

20 I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but *Christ lives in me*.

In the church:

Ephesians 1:22

God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be *head over everything for the church*

Universally:

Ephesians 1:10

to bring *all things in heaven and on earth* together under one head, even Christ.

God's ultimate plan is for believers to share in ruling the Kingdom with him!

Matthew 25:34

34 "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take *your inheritance, the kingdom* prepared for you since the creation of the world.'

James 2:5

5 Listen, my dear brothers: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to *inherit the kingdom* he promised those who love him?

2 Timothy 2:12

12 if we endure, we will also *reign with him*.

Revelation 22:4-5

4 *They will see his face*, and his name will be on their foreheads. 5 There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And *they will reign for ever and ever*.

Daniel 7:26-27

the court will sit, and his power will be taken away and completely destroyed forever. 27 Then *the sovereignty, power and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High*. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him.¹

1 Corinthians 2:9 (even beyond what we think)

"No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him"-

Colossians sums this up very well...

He has rescued believers from the dark kingdom:

Colossians 1:12-13

giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. 13 For he has *rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom* of the Son he loves,

Originally, everything and all rulers were subject to him:

Colossians 1:16

by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; *all things were created by him and for him*.

Christ's work was to bring this back under God's control:

Colossians 1:19-20

19 For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, 20 and through *him to reconcile to himself all things*, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

Those who believe are put back in place with God:

Colossians 1:21-22

Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. 22 But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body

Jesus disarmed the enemy by his work on the cross:

Colossians 2:15

disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

Because of all this, we need to keep an eternal perspective and not get overly caught up in worldly concerns:

Colossians 3:1-2

3:1 Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, *set your hearts on things above*, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. 2 *Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things*.

We will rule the Kingdom with Him!!!

History of the Kingdom

October 22, 2006

Review last week: October 15, 2006

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He has called all believers into the light
We now work with Jesus to defeat the enemy

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New birth is made evident by obedience, so obedience is also required for entering the Kingdom.

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So, currently, the Kingdom is mysterious, being only partially recognized and understood. But, one day very soon God will assert his rule universally and his Kingdom will come in glory and be made obvious to everyone.

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Daniel 7:26-27

the court will sit, and his power will be taken away and completely destroyed forever. 27 Then *the sovereignty, power and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High.* His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him.'

We will rule the Kingdom with Him!!!

Today:

What are some common thoughts about the gospel? What is "the gospel?"

Good news
Jesus saved us from our sins
We get eternal life
We can go to heaven

I say it's much more! Traditional concepts of the gospel are something like a prisoner realizing that he can be set free if he only talks to the judge. And that is a partial picture of the gospel. Jesus said he came to proclaim freedom for captives. But, the overall picture is much bigger. In reality, mankind is like "The Man in the Iron Mask." Not only are we prisoners who can be set free, but we are supposed to be kings, ruling the Kingdom!

Why am I making such a big deal out of the Kingdom? Because we need to understand that Christianity is much more than simply a religious viewpoint or some attempt at a moral life. Rather, it is about restoring God's original plan for mankind. His original plan for mankind is to become heirs and co-rulers of His Kingdom! Being a Christian is more than just "fire-insurance."

God had a plan from the very beginning

Isaiah 46:9-10

I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me. 10 I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please

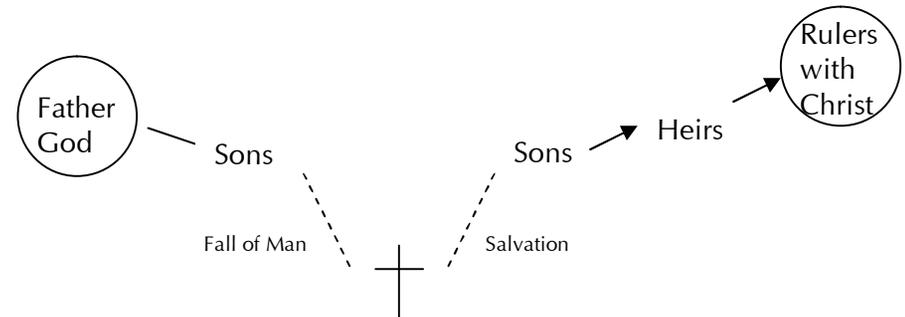
Ephesians 1:9-11

he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, 10 to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment-to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ. 11 In him we were also chosen, having been predestined

according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will

God's plan included mankind even before creation (July, 2006)

Father God wants sons
Sons become heirs
Heirs become rulers with Him



God has always been & always will be the supreme King

Psalms 95:3

3 For the LORD is the great God, the great King above all gods.

Jeremiah 10:10

the LORD is the true God; he is the living God, the eternal King.

1 Timothy 6:15

God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords

The creation as we know it was made for mankind

Genesis 1:16-18

16 God made two great lights — the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. 17 God set them in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth, 18 to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness

Genesis 1:29

29 Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food.

Father God created man with a purpose in mind

Genesis 1:26-27

26 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." 27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

Ephesians 1:4

he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.

Ephesians 2:10

we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Man's purpose began in Eden tending the garden & ruling the earth

Genesis 2:8, 15

8 Now the LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed

15 The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.

Genesis 1:28

28 God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

God's plan for man is to become His heir and co-ruler with Him

Romans 8:17

17 Now if we are children, then we are heirs-heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ

Matthew 25:34

34 "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.'

-- Eden represents God's tangible Kingdom on Earth; man was to tend to it and cause it to expand to cover the entire Earth.

God created angels as His servants in eternity past

Job 38:4-7

4 "Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me, if you understand. 5 Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know! Who stretched a measuring line across it? 6 On what were its footings set, or who laid its cornerstone- 7 while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy?

Hebrews 1:14

14 Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?

Somewhere in this early time frame an angelic rebellion occurred and Satan was cast to the Earth

Isaiah 14:13-14

"I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. 14 I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High."

-- Perhaps this was in response to God's plan of creating man in His image and sharing rulership with mankind. Satan, as God's highest angel, may have thought it should have been him instead of man.

Ezekiel 28:12-19

12 "Son of man, take up a lament concerning the king of Tyre and say to him: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: "You were the model of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. 13 You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone adorned you: ruby, topaz and emerald, chrysolite, onyx and jasper, sapphire, turquoise and beryl. Your settings and mountings were made of gold; on the day you were created they were prepared. 14 You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. You were on the holy mount of God; you walked among the fiery stones. 15 You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you. 16 Through your widespread trade you were filled with violence, and you sinned. So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God, and I expelled you, O guardian cherub, from among the fiery stones. 17 Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor. So I threw you to the earth; I made a spectacle of you before kings. 18 By your many sins and dishonest trade you have desecrated your sanctuaries. So I made a fire come out from you, and it consumed you, and I reduced you to ashes on the ground in the sight of all who were watching. 19 All the nations who knew you are appalled at you; you have come to a horrible end and will be no more."

Luke 10:18

18 He replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.

Revelation 12:7-9

7 And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. 8 But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. 9 The great dragon was hurled down-that ancient

serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.

2 Peter 2:4

God did not spare angels when they sinned

Jude 6

the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home-these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day.

Since the beginning there has been a struggle between the Dark Kingdom and the Kingdom of God

Ephesians 6:12

our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

2 Corinthians 4:4

4 The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ

Ephesians 2:1-2

2:1 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, 2 in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient

Colossians 1:13

he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves

God's goal is for man to become rulers over the Kingdom with Him

Daniel 7:18, 27

18 the saints of the Most High will receive the kingdom and will possess it forever-yes, for ever and ever.'

27 Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him.'

Satan's goal is to subdue man and rule over the Earth in place of mankind. At Adam's fall Satan temporarily succeeded and his Dark Kingdom has grown

Genesis 3:1, 22-23

3:1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"
22 the LORD God said, "The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever."
23 So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken.

1 John 5:19

We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one.

Jesus came to thwart Satan's goal and accomplish God's goal

1 John 3:8

The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.

John 12:31

Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out

Colossians 2:15

having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

Those who receive Christ are 1) brought back into God's plan, 2) join in His triumph over the Dark Kingdom, and 3) will inherit the Kingdom of God

1) Colossians 1:21-23

21 Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. 22 But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation...This is the gospel that you heard...

2) Ephesians 6:12

our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

Luke 10:19

19 I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. 4 The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. 5 We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ

3) Colossians 3:24

you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward

Revelation 22:3-5

The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. 4 They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. 5 There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

We will join Him in ruling the Kingdom which includes all of creation and the angels

Daniel 7:27

27 Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him.'

Some may wonder, "Well, what will we rule over? The unrighteous will be gone and all that will be left is believers, who are all supposed to be rulers." Remember that creation is for man? Even in Eden, Adam had work to do. He was to tend to the garden. Even in eternity we will have work to do. I believe our work will be to tend to the universe. We will rule with Christ; and Christ will fill the whole universe (Ephesians 4:10). How big is our universe? Here's some concepts to help us grasp this:

If the distance from the Sun to Pluto were represented by a one-foot ruler, the nearest star would be over a mile away. If our galaxy were represented as the size of North America, our entire solar system would fit in a coffee cup. Astronomers estimate that there are as many galaxies outside our Milky Way as there are stars in it. That would mean there are more than 100 billion galaxies in the visible universe, many with more than 100 billion stars each.
David Coppedge, ICR

Slides of the Earth, Sun and other stars

Arcturus is 36.7 ly from earth; 3rd brightest star in our sky
Antares is 600 ly away; still among brightest stars

God's kingdom encompasses all of this. And, that's just the universe, not to mention all the possible "other dimensions" that likely exist. Plus...

1 Corinthians 6:3

3 Do you not know that we will judge angels?

-- Perhaps our responsibilities will be like Adam's in Eden

Genesis 2:15

15 The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.

Genesis 1:28

28 God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

Envision what the Garden of Eden was originally like: A perfect life on a higher plane, where we were doing splendid work and didn't have to spend half our time on damage control for our own stupidities. Yet now, in this heart-stopping endgame, God is raising us to an even higher level.

Don't just slide into heaven under the wire; become the kind of person who keeps defeating the evil in this world, and when you get to Heaven, you won't just barely qualify for a condo, you'll "own the joint!" Now, there's a goal worth shooting for!
---James Rutz, *The Endgame of God*

What will there be to do in Heaven on Saturday nights? If this question bothers you, you need to seriously rethink the purpose of your life. God has good reasons for your existence. And big plans. Part of that, of course, is what you do here on earth. You're not just marking time, waiting for your promotion to the Great Upstairs. You're learning to be a powerful, loving person; you're learning to defeat evil; and you're becoming a living, walking vessel who contains the very Spirit of God. Yet there is

far more. You're being prepared for a long future that can be more challenging than Mt. Everest and more exciting than catching a 50-yard pass in the final seconds to win the Super Bowl. What you're being prepared for is, ideally, to take your place at the right hand of Christ and help him run the entire universe – plus perhaps a few more universes that haven't been invented yet. You must admit it doesn't get any more head-spinning than that. For sure, you won't need to bring a magazine.

James Rutz, The Endgame of God

Conclusion:

God's first call to man was to rulership over the earth, and his last call to him is throneship with Him above the highest heaven. To enter into such a joint throneship with the Lord Jesus is almost beyond our comprehension, but this is the intention of our Father for those who qualify.

--DeVern Fromke

God is building a kingdom for his sons to oversee. As believers we will be part of his ultimate kingdom, ruling over the entire universe & every dimension! We can be part of this kingdom even now. We need to enlarge our vision and see the Big Picture. We tend to focus on our own little issues in our own little time frame, when all along God is focused on the entire universe and all of eternity! We must not be satisfied to simply receive salvation and then settle down. We must not be satisfied to grow a little and then settle. We must always be growing and moving toward God's ultimate intention

Why am I making such a big deal out of the Kingdom? Because it's inspirational and motivational to understand that Christianity is much more than simply a religious viewpoint or "fire insurance," or an attempt at a moral life. Rather, it is about restoring God's original plan for mankind. His original plan for mankind is to become heirs and co-rulers of His infinite Kingdom!

Inheriting the Kingdom

October 29, 2006

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His kingdom is both physical and spiritual spanning the earth and the entire universe. However, planet earth is caught up in a rebellion against his authority and there are forces of darkness exerting influence on mankind.

So, God’s kingdom is over all authorities and powers throughout the universe. However, since planet earth is still caught up in the rebellion against him, his kingdom on earth consists currently of those people and areas in which his rule is acknowledged. Therefore, currently, God calls all people to voluntarily submit to his rule.

Currently, the Kingdom is mysterious, being only partially recognized and understood. But, one day very soon God will assert his rule universally and his Kingdom will come in glory and be made obvious to everyone.

The fundamental principle of the Kingdom is “Where the King is, there is the Kingdom.”

God’s ultimate plan is for believers to share in ruling the Kingdom with him!

Review last week: October 22, 2006

What is “the gospel?”

God had a plan from the very beginning which included mankind. The creation as we know it was made for mankind. Man’s purpose began in Eden tending the garden & ruling the earth. God’s ultimate plan for man is to become His heir and co-ruler with Him. However, God will always be the supreme King.

Somewhere in that early time frame an angelic rebellion occurred and Satan was cast to the Earth. Since the beginning there has been a struggle between the Dark Kingdom and the Kingdom of God. God’s goal is for man to become rulers over the Kingdom with Him. Satan’s goal is to subdue man and rule over the Earth in place of mankind. At Adam’s fall Satan temporarily succeeded and his Dark Kingdom grew.

Jesus came to thwart Satan’s goal and accomplish God’s goal. Those who receive Christ are 1) brought back into God’s plan, 2) join in His triumph over the Dark Kingdom, and 3) will inherit the Kingdom of God where we will join Him in ruling over all of creation and the angels.

This important, because it’s inspirational and motivational to understand that Christianity is much more than simply a religious viewpoint or “fire insurance,” or an attempt at a moral life. Rather, it is about restoring God’s original plan for mankind. And that plan is for mankind to become heirs and co-rulers of His infinite Kingdom!

Today: October 29, 2006

Introduce "I.M.A.G.E.S." of the Kingdom

"I" = Inheriting the Kingdom

1. The Kingdom is Available to All

Matthew 22:1-14, the Parable of the Wedding Banquet

v. 2 The King prepared – God had a purpose in mind

A wedding banquet – This is the feast of feasts... not just a banquet, but a wedding banquet... not just a wedding banquet, but a royal wedding banquet. God's plan is a BIG deal!

For his son – Jesus is the key component. It's not just for us; it's for Jesus. Yes, we can inherit the Kingdom, but Jesus also is getting an inheritance in us!

v. 3 those who had been invited – At first it was a specific group of people – Israel. Historically, and Biblically, Israel continually rejected God

v. 7 king was enraged – God dealt with Israel many times

v. 9 invite anyone – This is the "Good News" – all are invited to the Kingdom now!

v. 10 good and bad – Currently, the Kingdom is mixed – his Kingdom is on Earth, but it is not fully accepted by all... and, not everyone who claims to be "Christian" is really following Christ.

Matthew 13:24-30, the Parable of the Weeds
Matthew 13:36-43, Parable explained

Matthew 13:41

41 The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil.

v. 11-13 without wedding clothes – Custom of the time was for wedding clothes to be given to the guest to wear. It was an insult to the host to not accept the clothes. Here, it's not that the man couldn't dress appropriately, but that he refused to dress appropriately. God, through the Holy Spirit, provides righteousness to us, if we will only willingly receive it.

Isaiah 61:10

10 I delight greatly in the LORD; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness,

Romans 13:14

clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.

Colossians 3:12

as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

v. 13 throw him outside – even though some initially respond to the Gospel, not all will remain

v. 14 many invited, few chosen – the Kingdom is available to all, but not many will enter it

God prepared in advance for His Kingdom and it will be grand! God makes every effort to invite people to enter in, but many refuse to come and some refuse to submit to the requirements. But, it still is available to all!

2. Entering the Kingdom is Costly

Mark 10:17-31, the Rich Young Man

v. 17 what must I do? – Man's natural tendency to make his own way by his own effort

v. 19 you know the commandments – Jesus validates outward obedience to God

Matthew 5:20

I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.

Mark 9:43-47

43 If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into hell, where the fire never goes out. 45 And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than to have two feet and be thrown into hell. 47 And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell

1 Corinthians 6:9-10

9 Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders 10 nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

Galatians 5:19-21

19 The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; 20 idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions 21 and envy; drunkenness,

orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

v. 21 one thing you lack – Jesus pressed beyond outward obedience to issues of the heart

Sell everything
Give to the poor
Follow Christ

1 John 3:17-18

17 If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? 18 Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.

Luke 9:23-25

23 Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. 24 For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it. 25 What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit his very self?

v. 22 great wealth – wealth can be a hindrance, instead of a blessing

James 2:5

Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him?

1 Timothy 6:8-10

9 People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have

wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

v. 23 hard for rich to enter – wrong focus on worldly wealth vs. Godly wealth

Matthew 6:19-21

19 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

v. 24 hard to enter – hard for anyone to enter, because of the cost

Luke 14:27-30

anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. 28 "Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it? 29 For if he lays the foundation and is not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule him, 30 saying, 'This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.'

v. 25 camel/needle – actually impossible in the natural; you can't enter the Kingdom by natural means

v. 27 all things are possible with God – God, and only God, makes it possible for you to enter His Kingdom!

v. 28 – 30 will receive 100 times as much – entering God's Kingdom is costly, but it is worth it!

v. 31 1st last/ last 1st – Kingdom principle; put others first; be a servant; be humble and surrender to the King

3. Entering the Kingdom Requires New Birth

John 3:1-21, You must be Born Again

v. 3 can't see Kingdom – The Kingdom cannot be fully understood until it is experienced

Illustration - blind men describing an elephant

Born Again – "Born from above;" "Rebirth"

v. 5 born of water and spirit – water = baptism of repentance; spirit = transformation

Matthew 4:17

Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near."

You can't simply try to improve yourself; you must be completely rebuilt to enter the Kingdom. Kingdom life is not just outward conformity to a set of rules, but instead is about an inward change. We tend to reverse this process, trying to be good enough to change our hearts, but Jesus says the inner change comes first, and then the outward conformity will follow.

Matthew 23:25-26

25 "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. 26 Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean.

Ezekiel 36:26-27

26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a

heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

v. 6 flesh births flesh; spirit births spirit – God’s Kingdom is a spiritual kingdom. You must be “Spirit-born” to enter in.

2 Corinthians 5:17
if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

Ezekiel 18:31
31 Rid yourselves of all the offenses you have committed, and get a new heart and a new spirit.

v. 4 how?
v. 8 the wind blows wherever it pleases – being “born again” is a spiritual matter and cannot be fully understood in the natural. It’s like wind – you can hear, feel, see its effects, but you can’t really see the wind itself, nor accurately predict where it will go (*the weather man’s limited reliability*)

But, still, wind is real and can be very powerful. It’s the same with being born again. It’s a bit of a mystery, and yet it can be the most powerful experience of your life. It opens the door for you to enter the Kingdom of God.

Conclusion

So, God’s Kingdom is offered to you!

Not just any Kingdom, but God’s Kingdom!
Not just entry, but eventually, co-rulership with Him!

But, God’s Kingdom is costly to enter.

It will cost you everything
You must give absolute surrender to Christ. Follow wherever and in whatever manner He leads.
This is impossible in your own strength and ability.

Therefore, you must be born again.

Don’t just try harder to be a better person.
Ask God to completely transform you from the inside out.

To be born again, pray...

God, I want to be part of your Kingdom.
God, I admit I’m not worthy to receive your Kingdom.
I realize I can’t enter your Kingdom in my own strength.
God, I surrender completely to you. Whatever you say will be my command.
God, change me, make me new. I want to be born again!

Majesty of the Kingdom

November 5, 2006

Video: The Kingdom

Review:

“Kingdom” is a primary subject of Jesus and the NT.

The idea of the Kingdom is this: God had a purpose and a plan for mankind from the very beginning. His plan was for man to become his royal heirs and ultimately share with him in ruling his Kingdom. His kingdom is both physical and spiritual spanning the earth and the entire universe.

Early on there was an angelic rebellion and Satan was cast to the Earth. So, since the beginning there has been a struggle between the Dark Kingdom and the Kingdom of God.

Jesus came to destroy Satan’s work and regain God’s original plan for mankind.

Currently, God calls all people to voluntarily submit to his rule. But, one day very soon God will assert his rule universally and his Kingdom will come in glory and be made obvious to everyone.

God’s ultimate plan is for believers to share in ruling the Kingdom with him!

This important, because it’s inspirational and motivational to understand that Christianity is much more than simply a religious viewpoint or “fire insurance,” or an attempt at a moral life. Rather, it is about restoring God’s original plan for mankind. And that plan is for mankind to become heirs and co-rulers of His infinite Kingdom!

Last Week: Introduce “I.M.A.G.E.S.” of the Kingdom “I” = Inheriting the Kingdom

1. The Kingdom is Available to All Matthew 22:1-14, the Parable of the Wedding Banquet

God prepared in advance for His Kingdom and it will be grand! God makes every effort to invite people to enter in, but many refuse to come and some refuse to submit to the requirements. But, it still is available to all!

2. Entering the Kingdom is Costly Mark 10:17-31, the Rich Young Man

It will cost you everything. God asks for your entire life to be committed to him. He may ask you to sacrifice your plans or your possessions in order to serve him, but it’s totally worth it!

3. Entering the Kingdom Requires New Birth John 3:1-21, You must be Born Again

You can’t simply try to improve yourself; you must be completely rebuilt to enter the Kingdom. Kingdom life is not just outward conformity to a set of rules, but instead is about an inward change. We tend to reverse this process, trying to be good enough to change our hearts, but Jesus says the inner change comes first, and then the outward conformity will follow. So, don’t just try harder to be a better person. Ask God to completely transform you from the inside out.

If you’re sincere about being born again, God will do it. You’ll begin to see and hear things differently. You’ll sense God speaking to you in Bible verses and other conversations. Your priorities and interests will begin to change. Remember, there’s a “spiritual baby” now. Feed it with the Bible. Water it with prayer. Give this new life your full attention. Don’t neglect spiritual things!

Today:

“M” = Majesty of the Kingdom

If the distance from the Sun to Pluto were represented by a one-foot ruler, the nearest star would be over a mile away. If our galaxy were represented as the size of North America, our entire solar system would fit in a coffee cup. Astronomers estimate that there are as many galaxies outside our Milky Way as there are stars in it. That would mean there are more than 100 billion galaxies in the visible universe, many with more than 100 billion stars each.
---David Coppedge, ICR

If the sun were hollow, how many planet earths could fit inside? About 1 million. Astronomy measures the universe in terms of light years. One light year is about 6 trillion miles. It would take 12 million round trips to the moon to equal 1 light year. If you could travel at 8.5 million miles per hour for 80 years, the distance would be about 1 light year. Our fastest space probes travel 500 times slower than that speed. So, at our current speed it would take 40,000 years to travel the distance of 1 light year. The nearest star is 4.3 light years away. Our galaxy is 100,000 light years across. And, there's billions of galaxies beyond that!

1. The Kingdom has been prepared since Creation

Matthew 25:31-46 The Sheep and Goats

v. 31 Jesus will sit on his throne in heavenly glory

Jesus is the King of all kings! He was born to reign.

Philippians 2:9-11

God exalted him to the *highest place* and gave him the name that is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus *every knee should bow*, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and *every tongue confess* that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

v. 32 nations will be gathered before him

All will recognize his authority.

Revelation 15:4

...All nations will come and worship before you...

v. 32 he will separate the people...

He will come to evaluate and judge each person.

Matthew 16:27

the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then *he will reward each person* according to what he has done.

Romans 14:10-11

we will all stand before God's *judgment seat*.

1 Corinthians 4:5

judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. *He will bring to light what is hidden* in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts...

v. 34 you who are blessed by my Father

God will be pleased with some.

v. 34 take your inheritance

Daniel 7:18, 27

18 the saints of the Most High will *receive the kingdom* and will possess it forever-yes, for ever and ever.'

27 Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be *handed over to the saints*, the people of the Most High...

God has rewards for those who serve him. Your place in his Kingdom will be decided by your actions now.

2 Corinthians 5:10

we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may *receive what is due him* for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

v. 34 the Kingdom prepared since the creation...

God had a plan and purpose from the very beginning.

Colossians 1:16

by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; *all things were created by him and for him.*

Ephesians 2:10

we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, *which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

In fact, he's still working toward his ultimate goal for mankind...

John 14:1-3

14:1 "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. *I am going there to prepare a place for you.* 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.

1 Corinthians 2:9

"No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what *God has prepared* for those who love him"-

v. 35-39 hungry, thirsty, stranger, needing clothes, prison...

Jesus cares about these things. Remember, last week, he called the Rich Young man to give to the poor. Jesus himself came to preach good news to the poor.

v. 40 whatever you did for the least of these...

Jesus identifies with these people. When we reach out to others, it's as if we are reaching out to Jesus himself.

Colossians 3:23-24

23 Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, *as working for the Lord*, not for men, 24 since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward.

v. 45-46 eternal punishment for those who don't reach out

2. The Kingdom is not of this World

John 18:36 Jesus, to Pilate

Sing in a round: Row Your Boat (*life is but a dream*)

This life is something like a dream. There is a reality in the Kingdom that far surpasses our understanding.

John 8:23

"You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; *I am not of this world.*

Daniel 7:14

His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and *his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.*

It's God's Kingdom. Just think about who he is...

God Of The Beginning (Deuteronomy 33:27):
God Of Hosts, or God Of Armies (2 Samuel 5:10):
God Of Justice (Isaiah 30:18):
God Of Heights (Micah 6:6):
God Who Is Near (Jeremiah 23:23):
God Of My Kindness (Psalm 59:11):
God Of My Strength (Psalm 43:2):
God Of My Praise (Psalm 109:1):
God Of My Salvation (Psalm 18:47, 25:5):
God Of Gods (Deuteronomy 10:17):
God Of The Rock Of My Salvation (2 Samuel 22:47):
God Of All Flesh (Jeremiah 32:27):
Holy God (Leviticus 19:2):
Living God (Jeremiah 10:10):
God Of Forgiveness (Nehemiah 9:17):
The Faithful God (Deuteronomy 7:9):
The Great God (Deuteronomy 10:17):
The God Of The Heavens (Psalm 136:26):
The God Who Sees (Genesis 16:13):
The God Of Glory (Psalm 29:3):
The God Of Knowledge (1 Samuel 2:3):
The God Of Eternity or The God Of The Universe (Genesis 21:33):
The God Of Truth (Psalm 31:6):
The God Of My Salvation (Isaiah 12:2):
The God Of My Life (Psalm 42:9):
The One God (Malachi 2:10):
The God Of Compassion (Deuteronomy 4:31):
The Gracious God (Jonah 4:2):
The Jealous God (Deuteronomy 4:24): (see Exodus 34:14).
The Righteous God (Isaiah 45:21):
God The All-Sufficient (Genesis 17:1):
The Most High God (Genesis 14:18):
The Mighty God (Isaiah 9:6):
The God who is with us. (Isaiah 7:14).
Lord God (Genesis 2:4):
The Lord Of Armies (1 Samuel 1:11):
The Lord Who Makes Holy (Ezekiel 37:28): T

The Lord Who Sees: (Genesis 22:14):
The Lord My Banner (Exodus 17:15):
The Lord Of Peace (Judges 6:24):
The Lord Who Heals You (Exodus 15:26):
The Lord Our Maker (Psalm 95:6):
Creator (Ecclesiastes 12:1):
The God Of Abraham, Isaac, And Jacob (Exodus 3:15):
God Of Gods And Lord Of Lords (Deuteronomy 10:17):
The Great, Mighty And Awesome God (Deuteronomy 10:17):
Father (Isaiah 64:8):.
Holy One (Habakkuk 1:12):
Upright One (Isaiah 26:7):
Redeemer (Psalm 19:14):
Deliverer (Psalm 144:2):
Savior (Isaiah 45:15):
Light (Psalm 27:1):
Dwelling Place (Psalm 90:1):
Fortress (Psalm 91:2):
Stronghold (Psalm 18:2):
Tower Of Strength (Psalm 61:3):
Refuge (Psalm 46:1):
Shield (Psalm 18:30):
Hiding Place (Psalm 32:7):
Rock (Habakkuk 1:12):
Strength (Psalm 46:1):
My Portion In The Land Of The Living (Psalm 142:5):
The Portion Of My Inheritance (Psalm 16:5):
Shepherd (Genesis 49:24):
My Lovingkindness (Psalm 144:2):
King of Glory (Psalm 24:7):
Lord Of All The Earth (Micah 4:13):
Ancient Of Days (Daniel 7:9):

The Kingdom is superior to the natural world:

Luke 7:28

28 I tell you, among those born of women there is no one greater than John; yet *the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.*"

Since we belong to the Kingdom, we're aliens here:

1 Peter 2:11

11 Dear friends, I urge you, as *aliens and strangers* in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul.

*We are pilgrims in a strange land
We are so far from our homeland
With each passing day it seems so clear
This world will never want us here
We're not welcome in this world of wrong
We are foreigners who don't belong*

(Chorus)

*We are strangers, we are aliens
We are not of this world*

*We are envoys, we must tarry
With this message we must carry
There's so much to do before we leave
With so many more who may believe
Our mission here can never fail
And the gates of hell will not prevail*

*Jesus told us men would hate us
But we must be of good cheer
He has overcome this world of darkness
And soon we will depart from here*

2 Timothy 4:18

... his heavenly kingdom...

Hebrews 11:16

... a better country-a heavenly one...

1 Corinthians 15:42-44

The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised *imperishable*; 43 it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in *glory*; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in *power*; 44 it is sown a natural body, it is raised a *spiritual* body.

1 Corinthians 15:50

50 I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable

3. The Kingdom is infinitely Valuable

Matthew 13:44-46

v. 44 like treasure hidden in a field

Colossians 2:2-3

Christ, 3 in whom are *hidden all the treasures* of wisdom and knowledge

Proverbs 2:1-5 says God's wisdom is like hidden treasure

1 Timothy 6:18-19

18 Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. 19 In this way they will *lay up treasure* for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.

Like the field, on the surface Christianity looks rather plain – just another philosophy or set of rules, but in reality, there is hidden treasure – abundant, eternal life and ultimately, leadership in God's Kingdom!

God is also looking for the hidden treasure:

Exodus 19:5

out of all nations *you will be my treasured possession.*

Titus 2:14

14 who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself *a people that are his very own*, eager to do what is good.

God sees hidden value in people and he gave his very best, Jesus Christ, in order to have us in his Kingdom.

v. 45 like a merchant looking for fine pearls...

You don't just stumble into the Kingdom. You must search for it. The Kingdom is extremely valuable. It is worth everything it may cost in this life.

Matthew 7:7-8

7 "Ask and it will be given to you; *seek* and you will find; *knock* and the door will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.

The Kingdom has been prepared since Creation

God had a plan and purpose from the very beginning. In fact, he's still working toward his ultimate goal for mankind.

The Kingdom is not of this world

This life is something like a dream. There is a reality in the Kingdom that far surpasses our understanding. It's a better country; it's a heavenly Kingdom.

The Kingdom is infinitely valuable

on the surface Christianity looks rather plain – just another philosophy or set of rules, but in reality, there is hidden treasure – abundant, eternal life and ultimately, leadership in God's Kingdom! It is worth everything it may cost in this life.

Attitudes of the Kingdom

November 12

Review:

"Kingdom" is a primary subject of Jesus and the NT. God had a purpose and a plan for mankind from the very beginning. His plan was for man to become his royal heirs and ultimately share with him in ruling his Kingdom.

"I" = Inheriting the Kingdom

1. The Kingdom is Available to All
2. Entering the Kingdom is Costly
3. Entering the Kingdom Requires New Birth

"M" = Majesty of the Kingdom

1. The Kingdom has been prepared since Creation
2. The Kingdom is not of this World
3. The Kingdom is infinitely Valuable

"A" = Attitudes of the Kingdom

The Kingdom belongs to...

1. **The Poor in Spirit** – Matthew 5:3; Luke 6:20

Matthew 5:3

3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Poor in Spirit = One who is deeply aware of his spiritual poverty and wretchedness.

To be poor in spirit is to have a humble opinion of ourselves; to be sensible that we are sinners, and have no righteousness of our own; to be willing to be saved only by the rich grace and mercy of God; to be willing to be where God places us,

to bear what he lays on us, to go where he bids us, and to die when he commands; to be willing to be in his hands, and to feel that we deserve no favor from him. It is opposed to pride, and vanity, and ambition. (Barnes' Notes)

"Poor in spirit" refers to an attitude of dependence on God and detachment from earthly supports. ---Ronald Knox

Absolute dependence upon God is the secret of all power ...

What is meant by entire surrender? It means that just as literally as Christ was given up entirely to God, I am given up entirely to Christ. Just as entirely and absolutely as Christ gave up His life to do nothing but seek the Father's pleasure, and depend on the Father absolutely and entirely, I am to do nothing but to seek the pleasure of Christ. I, who have been bought with the blood of Christ, have been bought to live every day with the one thought—How can I please my Master? Oh, we find the Christian life so difficult because we seek for God's blessing while we live in our own will.

--Andrew Murray

James 4:7

Submit yourselves, then, to God.

Romans 6:13

offer yourself to God... as instruments of righteousness...

Romans 12:1

offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.

We are to walk in total submission to the Holy Spirit, just as Christ walked in constant, absolute submission to the Father... If we're able to grasp this one truth, we can enter in to a life that's free of distress, full of assured direction, and marked by perfect rest. The key is to "just say yes!"

David Wilkerson

2. **The Humble** – Matthew 18:1-4; Mark 10:15; Luke 18:17

Matthew 18:1-4

18:1 At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" 2 He called a little child and had him stand among them. 3 And he said: "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. 4 Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

First, "You must be converted, you must be of another mind, and in another frame and temper, must have other thoughts, both of yourselves and of the kingdom of heaven, before you be fit for a place in it. The pride, ambition, and pretense of honor and dominion, which appear in you, must be repented of, mortified, and reformed"

(Matthew Henry's Commentary)

Humble yourself:

James 4:10

Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

The humble man receives praise the way a clean window takes the light of the sun. The truer and more intense the light is, the less you see of the glass.

Thomas Merton

Lighthouses don't ring bells and fire cannon to call attention to their shining; they just shine on.

Isaiah 57:15

15 For this is what the high and lofty One says — he who lives forever, whose name is holy: "I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.

Because Christ Jesus came to the world clothed in humility, he will always be found among those who are clothed with humility. He will be found among the humble people.

A. W. Tozer

Like this child:

1 Corinthians 14:20

In regard to evil be infants, but in your thinking be adults.

1 Peter 2:2-3

2 Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, 3 now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.

3. **Those who Endure Persecution** – Matthew 5:10

Matthew 5:10

10 Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Luke 6:22-23

22 Blessed are you when men hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man. 23 "Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven.

John 15:20

'No servant is greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also.

The Bible nowhere indicates that God withdraws us from the troubles of life. In fact, we become more involved in life's troubles when we come to Christ. But he gives us power to go on with the battle.

Billy Graham

2 Corinthians 4:8-9, 17-18

8 We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; 9 persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed...

17 our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. 18 So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

A gem is not polished without rubbing, nor a man made perfect without trials.

Chinese Proverb

Take a lesson from tea: its real strength comes out when it gets into hot water.

Acts 14:22

"We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God,"

Trouble is often the lever in God's hands to raise us up to heaven.

Therefore, count the cost and be ready for trouble:

Luke 14:28-29, 33

28 "Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it?

33 In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple.

4. **Those who are Helpful** – Matthew 25:34-45

Matthew 25:34-46

34 "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. 35

For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, 36 I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' 37 "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? 38 When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? 39 When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' 40 "The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.' 41 "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. 42 For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, 43 I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.' 44 "They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?' 45 "He will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.' 46 "Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."

James 2:15-17

15 Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. 16 If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? 17 In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

1 John 3:17-18

17 If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? 18 Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.

To feel sorry for the needy is not the mark of a Christian--to help them is.
-- Vern McLellan

True charity is helping those whom you have every reason to believe would not help you
-- Vern McLellan

A good way to forget your troubles is to help others out of theirs.
-- Vern McLellan

Colossians 3:23-24

23 Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, 24 since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.

5. **Good & Faithful** – Matthew 25:21

Matthew 25:14-30

14 "Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them. 15 To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. 16 The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. 17 So also, the one with the two talents gained two more. 18 But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. 19 "After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. 20 The man who had received the five talents brought the other five. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more.' 21 "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!' 22 "The man with the two talents also came. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two talents; see, I have gained two more.' 23 "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with

a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!' 24 "Then the man who had received the one talent came. 'Master,' he said, 'I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. 25 So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.' 26 "His master replied, 'You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? 27 Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest. 28 "'Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents. 29 For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. 30 And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

Good = excelling in any respect, useful, upright, honorable

Faithful = dependable, reliable

Dependability: fulfilling what I agreed to do even though it requires unexpected sacrifices.
--Bill Gothard

An acre of performance is worth the whole world of promise.
--James Howell

Not, "impressive" servant.

Not, "flashy" servant.

Not, "successful" servant.

Not, "super" servant.

Not, "clever" servant.

But, "FAITHFUL" servant!

Good and faithful with what? -what God had given them responsibility of. Not being the most influential Christian, the

best worker or giver, but simply using and improving what God assigned to them.

He who is faithful over a few things is a lord of cities. It does not matter whether you preach in Westminster Abbey, or teach a ragged class, so you be faithful. The faithfulness is all.
George Macdonald

1 Peter 4:10

10 Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.

Galatians 5:22-23

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law

Revelation 2:10 (Smyrna)

Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life.

6. **The Saints** – Daniel 7:26-27

Daniel 7:18, 27

the saints of the Most High will receive the kingdom and will possess it forever-yes, for ever and ever...

27 Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High.

Positionally, every NT believer; (cf. most of Paul's greetings in his letters); experientially, a person eminent for piety and virtue: a consecrated person.

(The New Unger's Bible Dictionary)

People who have been separated from the world and consecrated to the worship and service of God.

(Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary)

A saint . . . has the same spirit, the same judgment, the same will with Christ. --Thomas Watson

Contrast with un-saintliness:

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

9 Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders 10 nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

Galatians 5:19-21

19 The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; 20 idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions 21 and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Overcomers:

Revelation 2:7

To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.

Revelation 2:11

He who overcomes will not be hurt at all by the second death.

Revelation 2:17

To him who overcomes, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give him a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to him who receives it.

Revelation 2:26

26 To him who overcomes and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations-

Revelation 3:5

5 He who overcomes will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out his name from the book of life, but will acknowledge his name before my Father and his angels.

Revelation 3:12

12 Him who overcomes I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will he leave it. I will write on him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on him my new name.

Revelation 3:21

21 To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne.

Revelation 21:7

7 He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son.

7. **Those with Commitment** – Luke 9:62

Luke 9:62

"No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God."

Don't look back; don't fall back; keep on with the Lord.

Luke 17:32-33

32 Remember Lot's wife! 33 Whoever tries to keep his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it.

Genesis 19:26

But Lot's wife looked back, and she became a pillar of salt.

Hebrews 10:38-39

38 And a righteous person will live by faith. But I (God) will have no pleasure in anyone who turns away." 39 But we are not like those who turn their backs on God ... NLT

2 Peter 2:20

20 If they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and are again entangled in it and overcome, they are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning

We can do anything we want to do if we stick to it long enough.

-- Helen Keller

Success seems to be largely a matter of hanging on after others have let go.

-- William Feather

Hang in there! Keep the faith! Don't turn back!

Involvement ≠ commitment. Chicken's egg vs. Pig's ham!

I am a soldier in the army of my God! The Lord Jesus Christ is my Commanding Officer! The Holy Bible is my code of conduct! Faith, prayer and the word are my weapons of warfare!

I have been taught by the Holy Spirit, trained by experience, tried by adversity and tested by fire! I am a volunteer in this army, and I am enlisted for eternity! I will either retire in this army at the rapture or die in this Army; But I will not get out, sell out, be talked out, or pushed out! I am faithful, reliable, capable and dependable!

If my God needs me, I am there! If He needs me in Sunday School, to teach children, work with the youth, help adults or just sit and learn, He can use me, because I am there!

I am a soldier! I am not a baby! I do not need to be pampered, petted, primed up, pumped up, picked up or pepped up!

I am a soldier! No one has to call me, remind me, write me, visit me, entice me or lure me!

I am a soldier! I am not a wimp! I am in place, saluting my King, obeying His orders, praising His name and building His kingdom!

No one has to send me flowers, gifts, food, cards, candy or give me handouts! I do not need to be cuddled, cradled, cared for or catered to!

I am committed! I cannot have my feelings hurt bad enough to turn me around!

I cannot be discouraged enough to turn me aside! I cannot lose enough to cause me to quit!

When Jesus called me into this army, I had nothing! If I end up with nothing, I will still come out even! I will win!

My God will supply all my needs! I am more than a conqueror! I will always triumph! I can do all things through Christ!

Devils cannot defeat me! People cannot disillusion me! Weather cannot weary me! Sickness cannot stop me! Battles cannot beat me! Money cannot buy me! Governments cannot silence me and HELL CANNOT HANDLE ME!

I am a soldier! Even death cannot destroy me! For when my commander calls me from this battlefield, He will promote me to a captain and then bring me back to rule this world with Him!

I am a soldier, in the army, and I'm marching, claiming victory! I will not give up! I will not turn around!

I am a soldier, marching heaven bound! Here I stand!

WILL YOU STAND WITH ME?

-J. Michael Walls

Attitudes of the Kingdom:

- 1. Poor in Spirit – totally dependant on God**
- 2. Humble – like a child**
- 3. Enduring Persecution – ready for anything**
- 4. Helpful – reaching out to the needy**
- 5. Good & Faithful – excellent; dependable; reliable**
- 6. Saintly – devoted to God; overcoming sin**
- 7. Commitment – hang in there, no matter what!**

Growth of the Kingdom

November 26

Review:

"Kingdom" is a primary subject of Jesus and the NT. God had a purpose and a plan for mankind from the very beginning. His plan was for man to become his royal heirs and ultimately share with him in ruling his Kingdom.

"I" = Inheriting the Kingdom

1. The Kingdom is Available to All
2. Entering the Kingdom is Costly
3. Entering the Kingdom Requires New Birth

"M" = Majesty of the Kingdom

1. The Kingdom has been prepared since Creation
2. The Kingdom is not of this World
3. The Kingdom is infinitely Valuable

"A" = Attitudes of the Kingdom

The Kingdom belongs to...

1. **The Poor in Spirit** – Matthew 5:3; Luke 6:20

"Poor in spirit" refers to an attitude of dependence on God and detachment from earthly supports. ---Ronald Knox

2. **The Humble** – Matthew 18:1-4; Mark 10:15; Luke 18:17

Humble yourself & become like this child

3. **Those who Endure Persecution** – Matthew 5:10

Acts 14:22

"We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God,"

4. **Those who are Helpful** – Matthew 25:34-45

To feel sorry for the needy is not the mark of a Christian--to help them is. -- Vern McLellan

A good way to forget your troubles is to help others out of theirs. -- Vern McLellan

5. **Good & Faithful** – Matthew 25:21

Good = excelling in any respect, useful, upright, honorable

Faithful = dependable, reliable

6. **The Saints** – Daniel 7:26-27

Positionally, every NT believer; (cf. most of Paul's greetings in his letters); experientially, a person eminent for piety and virtue: a consecrated person.

(The New Unger's Bible Dictionary)

7. **Those with Commitment** – Luke 9:62

Don't look back; don't fall back; keep on with the Lord.

Today:

Isaiah 9:6-7

6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end.

His government and Kingdom will keep on growing. It will consume and overcome all others.

**view each point cosmically and personally

1. Currently the Kingdom is mixed with Good and Evil.

Matthew 13:24-30

24 Jesus told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. 25 But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. 26 When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared. 27 "The owner's servants came to him and said, 'Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?' 28 "'An enemy did this,' he replied." The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?' 29 "'No,' he answered, 'because while you are pulling the weeds, you may root up the wheat with them. 30 Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.'"

v. 28 enemy has sown weeds trying to corrupt God's kingdom.

v. 30 weeds and good seed will grow together until the harvest

v. 38 field = world

good seed = sons of the kingdom

weeds = sons of the evil one

1 John 5:19

19 We know that we are children of God, and that *the whole world is under the control of the evil one.*

2 Corinthians 4:4

4 *The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel*

v. 39 harvest = end of the age

v. 41 one day very soon sin and evil will be weeded out

Matthew 25:31-32

31 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. 32 All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats

v. 43 then, righteousness will shine

Matthew 13:18-22 (another parable; personal application)

18 "Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: 19 When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown along the path. 20 The one who received the seed that fell on rocky places is the man who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. 21 But since he has no root, he lasts only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he quickly falls away. 22 The one who received

the seed that fell among the thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful.

The Evil One wants to steal God's seed from you. He wants to prevent you from getting rooted and established. He wants to keep you focused on worldly concerns... He wants to keep you mixed.

2. The Kingdom started small, but will become Huge

Matthew 13:31-32

31 He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. 32 Though it is the smallest of all your seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and perch in its branches."

Cf. Mark 4:30-32; Luke 13:18-19

v. 32 smallest of all seeds, becomes largest of all garden plants, like a tree

*A plant which grew wild along roadsides and in fields, reaching a height of about 15 feet.
(from Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary)*

Randy Nelson – persistence of the mustard seed...

Matthew 17:20

I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you."

It may be small, but it has tremendous power.

Matthew 13:33

33 He told them still another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour until it worked all through the dough."

Cf. Luke 13:20-21

The Kingdom will consume all; currently, Christianity may seem insignificant and minimized, but one day very soon it will be all

On a personal level, God's kingdom is in you... cooperate with the Holy Spirit to allow the Kingdom to grow and consume you.

Ephesians 4:13

attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Galatians 2:20

20 I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.

3. The Kingdom grows Naturally

Mark 4:26-29

26 He also said, "This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. 27 Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. 28 All by itself the soil produces grain—first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. 29 As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come."

v. 27 night & day; sleeping or awake, seed still sprouts and grows

v. 28 soil produces "all by itself"

Matthew 13:23 (parable of sower)

the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown."

Good soil = hear the word and understand it; this produces Kingdom growth all by itself, naturally

God's word is like food and water to the soul. Feed it and it grows.

Matthew 7:24-25

24 "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.

Put the word into practice and then growth is natural.

James 1:22

22 Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.

The Holy Spirit wants to work good fruit in you. Gal. 5:22-23

Philippians 2:13

13 for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.

Evangelistic angle: God's word is what leads to salvation; and, when you find a good thing, you naturally want to tell others about it.

4. The Kingdom is forcefully advancing

Matthew 11:12

12 From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it.

Luke 16:16

16 "The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John. Since that time, the good news of the kingdom of God is being preached, and everyone is forcing his way into it.

Forcefully advancing: The power of the seed – displaces the soil; large plants like trees can move concrete and absorb fences

Forcing his way into it: It is hard for anyone to enter, because of the cost – it requires determination to be a part of it.

Luke 14:27-30

anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. 28 "Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it? 29 For if he lays the foundation and is not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule him, 30 saying, 'This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.'

Forceful attitude is needed in spiritual realm: As believers and participators in his Kingdom, we come into a conflict that requires us to do spiritual battle...

Ephesians 6:12

our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and *against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms*.

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. 4 The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. 5 *We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God*, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

Philippians 3:13-14

...But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and *straining toward what is ahead*, 14 *I press on* toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

24 Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? *Run in such a way as to get the prize*. 25 Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. 26 Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. 27 No, *I beat my body and make it my slave* so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

Three military recruiters showed up to address high school seniors. Each recruiter--representing the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps--was to have fifteen minutes.

The Army and Navy recruiters got carried away, so when it came time for the Marine to speak, he had just two minutes. He walked up and stood utterly silent for a full sixty seconds, half of his time.

Then he said this: "I doubt whether there are two or three of you in this room who could even cut it in the Marine Corps. But I want to see those two or three immediately in the dining hall when we are dismissed." He turned smartly and sat down.

When he arrived in the dining hall, those students interested in the Marines were a mob.

The recruiter knew that commitment comes from appealing to the heroic dimension in every heart.

--W. Frank Harrington

Conclusion:

God's Kingdom is like a seed:

Weeds grow with it, but he will very soon removed the weeds
It starts small, but will grow phenomenally
It grows naturally when in the right environment
It is forcefully advancing in spit of resistance

"Onward Christian Soldiers"

Evidence of the Kingdom

Review:

"Kingdom" is a primary subject of Jesus and the NT. God had a purpose and a plan for mankind from the very beginning. His plan was for man to become his royal heirs and ultimately share with him in ruling his Kingdom.

"I" = Inheriting the Kingdom

Those who are born again will inherit the kingdom of God.

"M" = Majesty of the Kingdom

It is a majestic, out of this world, phenomenal kingdom.

"A" = Attitudes of the Kingdom

Kingdom attitudes revolve around humility, Christ likeness, and persistent commitment.

"G" = Growth of the Kingdom

Isaiah 9:7

Of the increase of his government & peace there will be no end.

1. **Currently the Kingdom is mixed with Good and Evil.**

God's Kingdom is like a seed:

Weeds grow with it, but he will very soon remove the weeds.

2. **The Kingdom started small, but will become Huge**

Like a tiny mustard seed that becomes a large plant. Like a bit of yeast that works through all the dough. The Kingdom will consume all; currently, Christianity may seem insignificant and minimized, but one day very soon it will be all. On a personal level, God's kingdom is in you... cooperate with the Holy Spirit to allow the Kingdom to grow and consume you.

3. **The Kingdom grows Naturally**

It grows naturally when in the right environment. When you hear the word, understand it, and put it into practice, it produces

Kingdom growth all by itself, naturally. God's word is like food and water to the soul. Feed it and it grows.

4. **The Kingdom is forcefully advancing**

It is growing and gaining in spite of resistance.

It requires determination to be a part of it.

As believers and participators in his Kingdom, we come into a conflict that requires us to do spiritual battle.

Today: "E" = Evidence of the Kingdom

Video: Are you Ready?

1. Signs of the Kingdom coming soon.

There is more prophetic evidence about Jesus' coming than any other prophetic event in the Bible. Over 100 chapters in the Bible have the End Times as their main theme. ---Mike Bickle

There are about 500 prophecies in the OT that relate to the Second Coming of Christ. In the NT, one out of every 25 verses is concerned with the return of Jesus. ---Dr. David Reagan

The Bible plainly says that Christ will come again:

Matthew 24:44

44 So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.

John 14:2-3

2 In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.

Revelation 22:12

12 "Behold, I am coming soon!

We can know when it is near:

Matthew 24:32-33

32 "Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. 33 Even so, when you see all these things, you know that it is near, right at the door.

Key question: What will be sign of your coming and of the end of the age? (Matthew 24:3; Mark 13:4; Luke 21:7)

1. False Christs
2. War
3. Ethnic conflict (nation against nation)
4. Famine
5. Earthquakes
6. Persecution of believers
7. False prophets
8. Gospel preached throughout the world
9. Signs in the heavens (sun & moon darken; stars fall)
10. Unequaled times of trouble
11. Pestilence (epidemic disease)
12. Great fear

What are the key signs today?

• Signs of Nature

Earthquakes, famines, disease

"There have always been natural calamities, so what else is new?"

Matthew 24:8

8 All these are the beginning of birth pains.

They will increase in frequency and intensity as the time draws near for his return.

• Signs of Society

Increase in lawlessness and immorality.

Matthew 24:12

12 Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold

2 Timothy 3:1-5

3:1 But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days.

2 People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, 4 treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God- 5 having a form of godliness but denying its power

• Spiritual Signs

False Christs and false prophets; people turning from God

1 Timothy 4:1

4:1 The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.

2 Timothy 4:3-5

3 For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. 4 They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.

--Cults: Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, many spiritualist groups, Satanism, New Age (all in the last 150 years)

Spread of the Gospel

Matthew 24:14

this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

- Bible translated into all major languages
- Billy Graham, Reinhard Bonnke

Understanding of prophecy

Daniel 12:8-10

8 I heard, but I did not understand. So I asked, "My lord, what will the outcome of all this be?" 9 He replied, "Go your way, Daniel, because the words are closed up and sealed until the time of the end. 10 Many will be purified, made spotless and refined, but the wicked will continue to be wicked. None of the wicked will understand, but those who are wise will understand.

• Signs of Technological Advances

Daniel 12:4 talks about increased travel and knowledge

(Refer to my chart on inventions through history)

Revelation 11:9 (live television?)

9 For three and a half days men from every people, tribe, language and nation will gaze on their bodies and refuse them burial.

Revelation 8:7 (nuclear weapons?)

7 The first angel sounded his trumpet, and there came hail and fire mixed with blood, and it was hurled down upon the earth. A third of the earth was burned up, a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up.

• Signs of Politics

Wars and rumors of wars

- 600 million dead in 5000 years: ½ in the 20th century
- terrorism
- Middle East is almost always at war

Revelation 9:16 (China?)

16 The number of the mounted troops was two hundred million. I heard their number.

- Only 200 million total on earth at time of the prophecy

Zechariah 12:3 (concern over Jerusalem)

in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it.

- Arab-Israeli conflicts
- land for peace deals?

Zechariah 14:2

2 I will gather all the nations to Jerusalem to fight against it;

• Signs of Israel

Israel became a nation in 1948 after nearly 2000 years

Ezekiel 11:17 (Cf. Eze. 36:24)

'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will gather you from the nations and bring you back from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you back the land of Israel again.'

Jerusalem back in Israeli possession in 1967

Luke 21:24

Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

These were fulfilled less than 60 years ago!

Amos 9:14-15

14 I will bring back my exiled people Israel; they will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them. They will plant vineyards and drink their wine; they will make gardens and eat their fruit. 15 I will plant Israel in their own land, never again to be uprooted from the land I have given them," says the LORD your God.

- **His Return is Real**

Lord will come down from heaven with a loud command and the voice of the archangel and the trumpet call of God.

In a flash, in the twinkling of an eye we will be changed. And we will be with the Lord forever.

- **The End will come Suddenly**

Like a thief in the night; in a flash. While people are talking about "Peace and safety," destruction will come suddenly.

It will be like labor pains. You know the time is near, but it comes on suddenly.

- **We must be Ready**

Be alert; Watch for his return. Live a holy life that will always be prepared.

2. Signs of the Kingdom Now.

Matthew 12:28

if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

Cf. Luke 11:20

Mark 9:1

9:1 And he said to them, "I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God come with power."

1 Corinthians 4:20

the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power.

Promises regarding power:

James 5:14-16

¹⁴ Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵ And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. ¹⁶ Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

Here, there are a couple of promises. If a sick person asks the elders of the Church to pray for him and anoint him with oil, the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well. Powerful, effective prayers that heal the sick are clearly promised to us.

John 14:12-14...

¹² I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. ¹³ And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring

glory to the Father. ¹⁴ You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

This text promises that believers will do what Jesus did. In fact, Jesus says that a believer will do even greater things since He is going to the Father. Again, this promise is not limited to certain believers of high rank or calling, but to "anyone who has faith." In addition, there is the promise of doing whatever we ask in His name. These are powerful promises.

In light of the promise of doing what Jesus did, let's take a look at some of the powerful things Jesus accomplished...

Matthew 4:23-24

²³ Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. ²⁴ News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed, and he healed them.

Matthew 8:14-16

¹⁴ When Jesus came into Peter's house, he saw Peter's mother-in-law lying in bed with a fever. ¹⁵ He touched her hand and the fever left her, and she got up and began to wait on him. ¹⁶ When evening came, many who were demon-possessed were brought to him, and he drove out the spirits with a word and healed all the sick.

Matthew 9:27-30

²⁷ As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed him, calling out, "Have mercy on us, Son of David!" ²⁸ When he had gone indoors, the blind men came to him, and he asked them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" "Yes, Lord," they replied. ²⁹ Then he touched their eyes and said,

"According to your faith will it be done to you"; ³⁰ and their sight was restored.

Matthew 9:35

³⁵ Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness.

Matthew 12:15

Many followed him, and he healed all their sick

Matthew 14:14

¹⁴ When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

These are just a portion of the powerful things Jesus did according to the Scripture. Just in these few passages from the Gospel of Matthew we see that Jesus healed people with disease, sickness, pain, fever, demon-possession, seizures, paralysis, and blindness. And notice that more than once the Scripture says he healed all the sick and every disease. Jesus was able to do many powerful things and was consistently successful in demonstrating the power of God.

We also know healing occurs today by the testimony of people from our own congregation. These are posted on our website. I'll let them speak for themselves:

I injured my arthritic right shoulder joint on Friday afternoon by lifting too much weight in watermelon and squash. It was painful to drive the car home and when I moved my arm a certain way the pain made me cry out it was so bad. Of course, I asked the Lord to take care of it for me. The next day I told Stan I thought it would recover (by faith) but it still hurt a lot when I moved it. I even left some clean dishes on the counter because lifting them into the cupboard would have been too painful. During the worship time at the end of Celebration on Sunday, October 2, 2005 I realized the

shoulder joint hadn't hurt since I'd been there. I began moving it in all the ways that would have been painful before but nothing bothered it at all. When I got home I put those dishes away with no pain. How I praise God for healing me sovereignly.

---Doris Simmons, October 2005

On July 7, 2005, Jorden burned his knee on a lawnmower. We cleaned it and did not really think much more of it. On the Saturday after, Jorden got sick. He was saying his side hurt and he was complaining that he was tired. He took a nap, and when I went to wake him, he was extremely hot to touch. We took his temperature, and it was 105°F. We rushed him to the hospital. They did a blood test and a CAT scan and came to find out that he had a blood poisoning in the lymph nodes in the burn on his leg... later, the doctor told us there was an abnormality in the CAT scan that looked like lymphoma which could be a form of cancer...

On September 14, 2005, we went back to the hospital for another CAT scan. The next day we got a call to meet with the doctor again, and we were told that there was still an abnormal node in his abdomen. The doctor in Boone was really concerned that this could be cancer and made an appointment for us to take Jorden to an oncologist at Blank Children's Hospital in Des Moines on Monday. (Then, we involved a lot of people in praying for Jorden.)

On September 19, 2005, we met with the oncologist in Des Moines ... He told us that they thought it was a shadow from the Barium that Jorden drank... They did one more test just to check from another view and could not find anything. He is very healthy and there is nothing wrong with him. Praise the Lord!

---Melissa Elsberry, September 2005

Ryan is our first miracle baby! Neither David nor I are able to have children on our own, let alone as a couple... We believe God blessed us with this baby. There is no other way to explain it! Yes, there are cases that people have had

children after such a procedure. The difference between us and them is that both of us have major infertility problems. David & I were prayed over at our church for a healing to be able to conceive on our own ...

---Michelle Wanat, July, 2005

Arlen's eye... already has loss of vision in one eye. Recently, doctors said the infection had activated in the other eye. He was told he'd be blind within 5 years. After prayer, he went for another opinion... "There's nothing wrong with your eye!"

Others have testified to miraculous provision. And others have heard from God in dreams and visions.

Plus, a number of people have given their lives over to Christ in the past year. Others have rededicated themselves to Christ.

These are only a few recent examples. If we were to include every healing and miracle in the history of our church I'm sure the stories would be quite lengthy.

I'm encouraged by these testimonies, yet I expect even more.

Matthew 6:9-10

Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. 10
Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. KJV

**Signs abound for his soon coming Kingdom.
We should expect signs for his current Kingdom.**

Seeking the Kingdom

One day a mother was explaining to her young son that you should never tell a lie. She told him that God saw everything and heard everything. "Even though your father and I may not know if you are telling a lie, God will always know," she explained. The young son replied, "But will He tell?"

Review:

"Kingdom" is a primary subject of Jesus and the NT. God had a purpose and a plan for mankind from the very beginning. His plan was for man to become his royal heirs and ultimately share with him in ruling his Kingdom.

"I" = Inheriting the Kingdom

Those who are born again will inherit the kingdom of God.

"M" = Majesty of the Kingdom

It is a majestic, out of this world, phenomenal kingdom.

"A" = Attitudes of the Kingdom

Kingdom attitudes revolve around humility, Christ likeness, and persistent commitment.

"G" = Growth of the Kingdom

God's kingdom is growing and will forcefully advance to become the only kingdom.

"E" = Evidence of the Kingdom

Signs abound telling us Jesus is coming soon. His Return is real; the End will come suddenly; we must be ready.

His Kingdom is already here to a degree and we can recognize it by the power it demonstrates.

Testimonies?

Today: "S" = Seeking His Kingdom

1. Pray for his Kingdom

God has chosen to work through us. We are his delegated authority on planet earth, and prayer is the vehicle that gives occasion for his invasion.

--- Bill Johnson, On Earth as it is in Heaven

We are obliged to pray if we are citizens of God's Kingdom.... The gospel cannot live, fight, or conquer without prayer.

--EM Bounds

Matthew 6:9-10

9 "This, then, is how you should pray: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, 10 ***your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.***

He's our Father; he's the best kind of Father. His decisions are perfect; his love is abounding; his provision is beyond imagination.

Your Kingdom – it's his; he will always be the Supreme King.

We pray for God's rule and reign to prevail. When God is in charge things are at their best.

Come = to come from there to here; to make an appearance;

Revelation 22:20

20 He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

I cannot say thy kingdom come if I am unwilling to give up my own sovereignty and accept the righteous reign of God.

Before we can pray, "Thy Kingdom come," we must be willing to pray, "My kingdom go."

Alan Redpath

Your will be done – his will is perfect; ours is flawed.

Luke 22:42

... not my will, but yours be done."

Wherever God rules over the human heart as King, there is the kingdom of God established.

Paul W. Harrison

On earth as it is in heaven – Heaven is where God rules completely; his rule is a perfect rule; we desire for his authority to be fully here on earth also.

I need to stop talking about prayer - and pray.

Bertha Munro

2. Prioritize his Kingdom

Matthew 6:25-34

25 "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? 26 Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? 27 Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? 28 "And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. 29 Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. 30 If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? 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. **33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.** 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Do not worry – keep an eternal perspective; when we see things from God's angle, even troubling things take on new meaning. God is the perfect Father; he always has our best interests in mind, even when it doesn't seem like it to us.

Seek – aim for; strive after; desire it; to try to obtain.

First – make it your priority.

The kingdom of God should be our number one priority. We should be concerned about the things of God before we are concerned about other issues. In the order of the day – Talk with God first thing. In giving – Give to God your first fruits. In making decisions – What is God's will?

Righteousness – virtue; integrity; purity.

Are these of the highest priority for you? Do you sincerely desire to be a righteous person? Are you diligently working at maintaining purity, integrity and virtue?

The natural tendency is to take care of ourselves first. Once we achieve and acquire all that we want, then we'll give our time and efforts to things that concern God. Once we pay all the bills and buy all that we want, then we'll give God what's left. Once we satisfy all our own cravings, then we'll surrender completely to God. This is not God's way. He says if we put him first, then the other things we are concerned about will also be given to us.

John 6:27

27 Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you.

Matthew 6:19-21

19 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

It's worth it:

Luke 18:29-30

29 "I tell you the truth," Jesus said to them, "no one who has left home or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God 30 will fail to receive many times as much in this age and, in the age to come, eternal life."

3. Practice Kingdom living. How can we make His Kingdom our priority?

From "Driven by Eternity," by John Bevere

These things are all promised rewards in the Kingdom:

Do good deeds

Jeremiah 32:19

...you reward everyone according to his conduct and as his deeds deserve.

Be Godly

Psalms 18:20

20 The LORD has dealt with me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands he has rewarded me.

Check your motives

Revelation 2:23

I am he who searches hearts and minds, and I will repay each of you according to your deeds.

Check your attitudes

1 Corinthians 9:17

If I preach voluntarily, I have a reward; if not voluntarily, I am simply discharging the trust committed to me.

Be faithful

Matthew 25:21

'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'

Be humble

Luke 14:11

everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

Guard your words

Matthew 12:36-37

I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. 37 For

by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned."

Encourage others

Proverbs 28:10

10 He who leads the upright along an evil path will fall into his own trap, but the blameless will receive a good inheritance.

Endure persecution

Acts 14:22

"We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God,"

Love your enemies

Luke 6:35

35 But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked.

Bless others

Luke 14:13-14

13 But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, 14 and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

Hebrews 6:10

10 God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them.

Give generously

Luke 6:38

Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

Honor God's servants

Matthew 10:40-42

40 "He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives the one who sent me. 41 Anyone who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and anyone who receives a righteous man because he is a righteous man will receive a righteous man's reward.

Pray

Matthew 6:6

6 But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Be a good employee

Colossians 3:23-24

23 Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, 24 since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.

Ephesians 6:7-8

7 Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, 8 because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free.

4. Picture the Promises of the Kingdom

Revelation 2:7

To him who overcomes, I will give **the right to eat from the tree of life**, which is in the paradise of God.

Revelation 2:11

He who overcomes will **not be hurt at all by the second death**.

Revelation 2:26

26 To him who overcomes and does my will to the end, I will give **authority over the nations**-

Revelation 3:5

5 He who overcomes will, like them, **be dressed in white**. I will **never blot out his name from the book of life**, but will **acknowledge his name before my Father** and his angels.

Revelation 3:12

12 Him who overcomes I will **make a pillar in the temple of my God**. Never again will he leave it. I will **write on him the name of my God** and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on him my new name.

Revelation 3:21

21 To him who overcomes, I will give the **right to sit with me on my throne**, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne.

Revelation 21:3-4

"**Now the dwelling of God is with men**, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 4 He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be **no more death or mourning or crying or pain**, for the old order of things has passed away."

Revelation 21:7

7 He who overcomes will **inherit all this**, and I will be his God and **he will be my son**.

Revelation 21:27

Nothing impure will ever enter it,

Philippians 3:20-21

our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will **transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body**.

1 Corinthians 15:42-44

The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised **imperishable**; 43 it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in **glory**; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in **power**; 44 it is sown a natural body, it is raised a **spiritual** body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.

1 Corinthians 15:50-52

50 I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. 51 Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but **we will all be changed**- 52 in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.

Pray for his Kingdom

Prioritize his Kingdom

Practice Kingdom living

Picture the Promises of his Kingdom