

# The Kingdom of God Part 2

a sermon in the series  
*Sermon on the Mount*

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Matthew 6:33

*But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.*

In last week's message I gave you Jesus' definition of the kingdom of God as **the rule and the reign of God manifested**. Wherever God exerts His power and authority there the kingdom of God is manifested.

Presently the kingdom of God is here on this earth as a spiritual kingdom in the hearts of believers. At times God manifests His authority into the world and reminds us He rules over all. Through nature and cataclysmic events that man cannot control, God reminds us of His great power. But often we do not see His reign except in our own lives. Sometimes it happens in the manifestation of believers like this morning, where we have gathered together and can sense the presence of God. It is not a geo-political kingdom that is physically situated on this earth—yet. I pray He hastens the day when He consummates His redemptive program and establishes His kingdom in full authority ruling over all the nations on this earth. But until then, you and I are to seek God's kingdom and to seek it first and foremost above all things.

You seek the kingdom by seeking the King. This was presented last week, when I shared the four ways in which you do so. Just a brief review:

## **1. Seek the rule and reign of Christ in your own life.**

You are to bring every part of your life under the submission of Jesus Christ praying, "Extend Your kingdom in my life, Lord, so there is no part of my life that isn't under Your rule and submission." You are to be a person seeking with all of your heart to see Christ ruling in all of your heart.

## **2. Seek the rule and reign of Christ instead of this world.**

The world posits itself as an authority. Our culture demands allegiance and scorns those who will listen to the beat of a different drummer. If you seek the kingdom of God you must be opposed to the authority of this world. That doesn't mean you disobey the laws of this land; you are commanded by God, the King Himself, to submit to the civil authorities He places in your life. But when those civil authorities contradict the Word of God, you have a greater allegiance to the

King of the great kingdom.

Listen to what Paul says in Colossians 3:1, “If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.” There it is clearly—to seek the kingdom of God means you spend your time thinking about the kingdom of God, about heaven, and all that it promises. If I, as a believer, set my mind on this earth, I am not seeking the kingdom of God but another kingdom, one in opposition to His.

This is why I encourage us as a body of believers to fight against this present culture. It is not because I want us all to look a certain way and to return to the seventeenth or eighteenth century. I’m not interested in that. I like air conditioning. I don’t want to have to get up at three or four o’clock in the morning and milk cows. I like going to the grocery store to buy my milk. I’m not interested in you throwing your computers, radios, and TVs away, although I don’t think that would be a bad proposition for some of you who are ruled by them. I warn against this present evil age because it seeks to dominate you. Do you realize there is a battle waging for authority over you and what you fix your mind upon is what or whom you will give your allegiance? You must believe this!

Think about heaven, meditate on Christ and His rule in your life and you will witness a release from this world. This is what Jesus has been establishing all along—don’t treasure your treasures on earth. Don’t serve money, serve God. Why did He say there was a choice to be made between this world and God? Because you can’t serve both. He knows the world is vying, pleading for you to submit to it.

At this point I think Jesus is doing what Martin Lloyd-Jones says he believed the Master to be doing. Lloyd-Jones said Jesus was using humor or satire. Knowing the condition of men that they have to worry about something, Jesus says, *Okay, if you’ve got to worry about something, worry about this—worry about the kingdom of God. Be concerned about it and its priority in your life. Seek it, be anxious for it.*

### **3. Seek the rule and reign of Christ in this world.**

As an ambassador of the King I represent the kingdom of God. I am to advocate for my King’s business in this present world, I am to remember that I am on His business, not my own. And I am to promote His agenda in this world. Let me suggest three ways to do this.

a. *By prayer.* If we are to seek the Kingdom of God in this world as Jesus taught us to pray, “Thy kingdom come,” we are to pray for the advancement of the kingdom in the hearts of men.

b. *By the proclamation of the Gospel.* We advance the kingdom by heralding its good news to the world. What is the purpose of God saving people? Why reach the nations? It’s the advancement of God’s kingdom in the hearts of men. Every tribe that is evangelized, every nation and people

group that receives the gospel, is the advancement of the kingdom of God.

c. *Loving acts of service.* We're to love people, even at the expense of our own lives. That is the advancement of the kingdom.

#### **4. Seek the rule and reign of Christ in the new world to come.**

My hope is not in this world. Even though the kingdom of God might advance across this globe and every people group has heard and believed, the world is still going to get worse, that's what the Savior said. The Bible tells us over and over there is coming a disastrous battle between good and evil, heaven and hell, which will come together on the battle ground called earth. When that day comes Jesus will come as the triumphant King and He will establish His kingdom on this earth forever and ever.

I have one more thing to say in review. I showed that the unmistakable evidence of Christ's rule and reign is the power of the King manifested. It's not just people professing to be saved, or agreeing with the Bible, it's the power of God being manifested. The Apostle Paul said in I Corinthians 4:20, "For the kingdom of God is not in word but in power." So wherever the power of the King is exerted, the kingdom of God is in rule. I can also deduce that where the kingdom of God is not being manifested, God is not in authority there. A pseudo authority has taken control.

If Jesus is not manifesting His power in this place and in your lives, not just when we gather together but individually, then His authority is not in us. It's not enough that we gather together here and have church services. It's not enough that we agree confessionally upon the doctrines that we hold dear. We need the power of the living, resurrected Savior to be dispensed upon us all, for there is no church if the power of the Spirit is not manifested. I know this power is manifested in namely two ways:

First, the power of God is manifested when the power of new life is given. Wherever the power of God is, people are transformed. That's why we ought to pray for the transforming power of Jesus Christ to change people. There is nothing that bothers me more or causes me more self-examination than sinners not coming under the conviction of sins. Believe you me; it's happened a lot of recent weeks. *Lord, why is it that when I preach not much conviction is witnessed, I don't see much trembling of the sinner or disturbance of his or her heart, I don't see agitation, I see apathy at best. Surely, this must mean Your power is not present in my preaching.* That's a hard confession to make, but I'm determined to make it and see God do something about it. I'm seeking the power of the living God, I'm not here to preach cute, poetic, or eloquent sermons, I don't care about that, I'm here to do business for the king and I need the King's power to do so. When the King's power is released lives will be transformed. Sinners will live the Christian life because they will be born again, born from above.

The second way you can know the power of God is manifested is Christians are able to overcome their sins and live holy lives unto the Lord. How successful have you been of late in overcoming

your own temptations in this world? Have you found yourself more defeated than victorious, just basically going with the flow? You haven't done anything terribly bad but you haven't been terribly good either; holiness is absent. If that is the case, I don't know that the King is ruling you. When the King is ruling in your life you will find power to live victorious, overcoming your sins and temptations in this world.

I want to direct your attention now to the remainder of verse 33 and discuss what it means to hunger after God's righteousness, and what the meaning is of "*All these things shall be added unto you.*"

## **I. Hunger for God's Righteousness.**

What does Jesus mean to seek the righteousness of God? The same thing He's meant throughout this entire sermon. He hasn't changed how He uses this word *righteousness*. He started in verse 6 saying, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they shall be filled." It is a craving, a deep desire to be holy. This is not about being in right standing with God, which is justification. We often see in Paul's epistles that the word *righteousness* is synonymous for *justification*, but that's not how Jesus is using the word here. This sermon is to those who have already been declared righteous, this is for the disciples who have followed Jesus, and if you are a Christian you are a disciple and God sees you as righteous.

In Matthew 5:10 we again see this word *righteousness*, "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." In order to be persecuted for righteousness' sake you must already be declared righteous. It must mean there is something about you so contrary to this world that it doesn't like you. What is that thing for which you will be persecuted? It's righteousness. It means not simply right-standing with God but right living. Living holy.

Matthew 5:20, "For I say unto you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven." Here Jesus doesn't mean conversion He means the final consummation. Some translations of Matthew 6:1 where it says "Don't do your good deeds in front of men, to be seen by them" translate the verse this way: "Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of people." That's what Jesus is saying in the first half of that chapter—don't do your praying in front of people, don't give your alms in front of people, and don't fast to be seen. Instead pray, give and fast unto the Lord. This is how you are to practice righteousness.

Seek to live right, seek to live holy before the Lord. Did He not say in Matthew 5:16, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven"? Did He not say that you are the salt of the earth and the light of the world? You are to seek to be as righteous as God has claimed you to be. You are to live your life in conformity to God's proclamation.

Every believer in the sight of God is precious and spotless. You've been washed in the blood of the Lamb, there is not a stain on you, not even a wrinkle, because you're dressed in His righteousness.

*Clothed in His righteousness alone;  
faultless to stand before the throne.*

We are always in that state and position, we are always seen by God as holy. It's remarkable that God's grace would be so good to take people who have sinned and soiled themselves and not see it in them, to act as if it isn't there. But it is there, at least on our conscience. So we must work out our salvation, (that is what God has already done) and do so with fear and trembling. I need to live holy as God has pronounced me to be.

How are you to do this? I would say four things come to mind from the Bible. You demonstrate a hunger for righteousness when you:

### **1. Fight Against Your Own Sins.**

I'm thankful that the Lord said, "hunger for righteousness." Stop and think about it. We are not always so holy in our thoughts or behavior. I'm glad He said that instead of "those who are holy in their lives, seek Him." If it were stated that way, then I have a problem—I'm not that holy yet, at least not all of the time. But to use the word hunger implies that I am not there, I still want more. To be hungry for food means you're not satisfied, you're without food at the present moment and you need it. I still sin, but to crave righteousness means I recognize my sin and want something else, something other than sin to fill my soul. Therefore, I have to set myself against my enemy, which is my own sin. I have to fight against it on every hand; I have to bring the King's authority to bear against my sin. I have to turn from it, repent, and hate it. I will do this if I am motivated by a gnawing in my heart for holiness.

At the prayer meeting Friday night we talked about repentance and asked God to help us repent. I explained that we do not mean by that, "Lord I will not turn from my sin until You make me to feel repentance." That is contrary to the Word of God; I am to set myself about the business of repentance. I am to turn from my sin. Why do you think Jesus said in this very sermon, "If your right eye offends you, pluck it out. If your right hand offends you cut it off"? It's not because He's for self mutilation, He's stating a metaphor to show you are to be vicious and violent against your sins and everything that promote sin in your life. If you can't get a handle on the TV, pluck it out. If you can't get a handle on the computer, cut off your internet service. Jesus is absolutely serious about our holiness. He's not playing around here. The kingdom of God is visible when people begin to fight against their sin.

### **2. Fight Against Temptation.**

It's not a sin to be tempted, but you will be tempted. You are to fight against temptation by making no provision for the flesh. Don't put yourself in the place of temptation; avoid temptation as much

as possible. If you know you've got certain tendencies to certain sins, run from them. Go in the opposite direction, don't put yourself in the place where you're going to be tempted—fight! It's plain insanity to go where you know you're going to be tempted, to participate in relationships you know are going to tempt you. Stop the devil before he even approaches. Fight!

### **3. Fight Against Worldliness.**

I spoke much already about this, so I don't need to make any more comments but to say this—you cannot have an appetite for the world and for righteousness. The two are mutually exclusive. You must come to a decision that this world is a mirage presented to you by your enemy. And in this mirage are all sorts of good things, wonderful things, that are not necessarily sinful are presented to you for your consideration. These things will be offered not to tempt you to purposefully rebel but to preoccupy your mind so you will set your mind on things below, not on things above. You've got to fight this. Are you content with the things you have right now? How many of you have said this week "You know, it'd be nice if we had \_\_\_\_\_"? And every time you get what you think would be nice to have, it's not 24 hours until you're saying, "You know, it'd be nice if we had \_\_\_\_\_." It's a mirage; the things of earth will not give you what you think they will. Fight against the enticements of the world, for the more you are preoccupied with grasping these things, the less preoccupied you are with the kingdom of God. But the opposite must also be true—if you seek the kingdom of God, the many things you worry about will drop off completely off the radar. You won't be worried or anxious about them because you're not pursuing them, you are thinking about something much better.

### **4. Walk in the Light.**

I think there is more to this verse than I have seen before and I pray for more understanding of I John 1:7, "But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin." What does this mean? Well, I can tell you this much, it means to walk in harmony with Jesus, to walk in step with Him where He is the focus every minute of your day. You're looking to Him, longing to be intimate with Him.

Last Monday Karen and I went to Nashville to visit Kent and Linda. We had such a wonderful time because of the ride down there and back. Five hours of conversation; we talked all the way there and back. It was wonderful and the fruits of that have lasted all week long. That's how you walk with someone, that's relationship. That's what it means to walk in the light and fellowship with God; you're walking in intimacy with Him. That has serious consequences. Powerful consequences. The power of Christ is unleashed in your life so you can walk holy before Him and the world will not influence you. That is how you crave holiness.

Lastly, I want to direct your attention to the last half of this verse.

## **II. Obtain the Greater and Also Get the Lesser**

*“And all these things shall be added unto you.”*

Here is the idea that Jesus is presenting when He says, “and all these things shall be added unto you.” First, He is saying that the other things are thrown in for free.

I remember as a boy when there were real shoe stores with real shoe salesman. You went in and they fitted your feet. They measured length, width, and fitted the shoe to you perfectly. And when you made your decision and purchased the shoes, they would often throw in a free pair of shoelaces or some free shoe polish with a complimentary shoe horn. You got the greater, and then you would also get the lesser.

Jesus is saying, “Obtain the greater and the lesser comes in for free.” That’s the idea here. In fact, it was a common saying among the Jews, “Seek that to which other things are necessarily connected.” Seek the greater and the things that are necessarily connected with it have to come along.

A story is told of a king who made an offer to one of his soldiers he loved tremendously, “Ask what thou wilt and I will give it unto thee.” The friend thought for a minute, *If I ask for a commission to be a general I will get that, but if I ask for something even greater I may get more.* So he said to him, “I would like your daughter’s hand in marriage.” And the king granted the request. Not only did he get more than a general’s position, he became a son-in-law to the king and all the dignities that came with being a prince of the king.

Seek the greater and you’ll obtain the lesser. If you get the kingdom of God, you receive the benefits of the same. When the Apostle Peter obligated the Master to pay the temple tax Jesus said to Peter, “From whom do the kings of the earth take customs or taxes, from their sons or from strangers?”

“From strangers.”

Jesus said to him, “Then the sons are free” (Matthew 17:25-26).

He was the King’s Son and therefore all of the dignities of the kingdom were His. Seek first the kingdom, which means the King, and come into the kingdom and all of the dignities and dignitaries of being a prince of the king will become yours. Don’t worry about material things; they are thrown in for free. They are part of the deal.

Am I preaching a health, wealth, and prosperity message? Of course not, but I think fear of such has made us go too far the other way. I have noted that in church history when a group of people come to Christ that group statistically improved their financial status. For example, the doctrine of the Puritans created such a great work ethic that all of their people improved in their financial situation. They didn’t spend all of their hard-earned money on the foolishness of this world and therefore were able to accumulate and save. It works.

Most of us in this room would be financially more stable and better off if we would adopt what Jesus says here—seek the kingdom of God first and His righteousness. You wouldn't spend your money on things that have no lasting value or that only give you a few minutes of pleasure before leaving you to wonder about what else would be nice to have. Jesus says don't worry about the basic necessities of life because what you need to be spiritually and physically sound He will provide. It is true that some people get poorer when they come to Christ, and there are some men who put themselves at risk and jeopardy; they are willing to lose all, even their life. Some are persecuted and have their properties confiscated, they are ill-treated and misused by society who hates them, but the word of Jesus still holds true in that condition—everything needed to be spiritually and physically sound will be provided to you until He's ready to call you home. Seek the greater, obtain it and receive the lesser.

Early church fathers actually believed our text did not end as it does in our Bibles. Many of them believe Jesus went on to say "Ask great things and little things shall be added unto you. Ask heavenly things and earthly things shall be added unto you." If God would give us the kingdom and His Son, will He not give us the smaller things? Will He not give us all the dignities of the kingdom, being princes? This is very much in keeping with what the Holy Spirit said through the Apostle Paul, "He who did not spare His own Son but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not with Him freely give us all things?" (Romans 8:32).

Stop worrying about this present world; your betting on a losing proposition, it's going to be destroyed. You can amass much wealth but what happens in Washington D.C. can erode that wealth before you can do anything about it. "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal." Our Lord taught this earth is a bad investment, therefore obtain the greater and you'll get the lesser. You'll not lose. That's what Christ extends to every man, woman, and child here today. You can obtain the kingdom and become a prince. God extends an invitation written in the blood of Jesus Christ—whosoever comes can become the King's son or daughter. Would you come and obtain the greater and receive also the lesser? Amen.