

The Kingdom Of God

Seek First

God's Kingdom.

A Teaching Outline

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Speak to the sons of Israel

Exodus 19:6

And you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel.'

Why did God choose Israel as his nation? God knew that no nation on earth was good enough to deserve to be called his people, his "special treasure." He chose Israel, not because of anything they had done, but in his love and mercy he chose Israel in spite of the wrong the nation had done and would do. Why did he want to have a special nation on earth?

To represent his way of life, to teach his Word, and to be an agent of salvation to the world. "All the nations of the earth" would be blessed through Abraham's descendants (Genesis 18:18). Gentiles and kings would come to the Lord through Israel, predicted Isaiah (Isaiah 60:3).

Through the nation of Israel, the Messiah, God's chosen Son, would be born. God chose one nation and put it through a rigorous training program, so that one day it could be a channel for his blessings to the whole world.

In Genesis 15 and 17, God made a covenant with Abraham, promising to make his descendants into a great nation. Now that promise was being realized as God restated his agreement with the Israelite nation, the descendants of Abraham. God promised to bless and care for them.

The people promised to obey him. The covenant was thus sealed. But the good intentions of the people quickly wore off. Have you made a commitment to God? How are you holding up your end of the bargain?

The good seed are the sons of the Kingdom.

Matthew 13:38

And the field is the world; and as for the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom; and the tares are the sons of the evil one;

At the end of the world, angels will separate the evil from the good. There are true and false believers in churches today, but we should be cautious in our judgments because only Christ is qualified to make the final separation. If you start judging, you may damage some of the good "plants." It's more important to judge our own response to God than to analyze others' responses.

He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father.

Revelation 1:6

And He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father--to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Many hesitate to witness about their faith in Christ because they don't feel the change in their lives has been spectacular enough. But you qualify as a witness for Jesus because of what he has done for you, not because of what you have done for him. Christ demonstrated his great love by setting us free from our sins through his death on the cross ("freed us from our sins by shedding his blood for us"), guaranteeing us a place in his Kingdom, and making us priests to administer God's love to others. The fact that the all-powerful God has offered eternal life to you is nothing short of spectacular.

Disciples of the kingdom of heaven

Matthew 13:52

And Jesus said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has become a disciple of the kingdom of heaven is like a head of a household, who brings out of his treasure things new and old."

Anyone who understands God's real purpose in the law as revealed in the Old Testament has a real treasure. The Old Testament points the way to Jesus, the Messiah. Jesus always upheld its authority and relevance. But there is a double benefit for those who understand Jesus' teaching about the Kingdom of Heaven. This was a new treasure that Jesus was revealing.

Both the old and new teaching give practical guidelines for faith and for living in the world. The teachers of religious law, however, were trapped in the old and blind to the new.

They were looking for a future kingdom *preceded* by judgment. Jesus, however, taught that the Kingdom was *now*, and the judgment was future. The religious leaders were looking for a physical and temporal kingdom (via military rebellion and physical rule), but they were blind to the spiritual significance of the Kingdom that Christ brought.

Those who eat and drink at God's table will assist in Judging.

Luke 22:30

That you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Satan wanted to crush Simon Peter and the other disciples like grains of wheat. He hoped to find only chaff and blow it away. But Jesus assured Peter that his faith, although it would falter, would not be destroyed. It would be renewed, and Peter would become a powerful leader.

Life everlasting is given to those who put God first.

Luke 18:29-30

And He said to them, "Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God,

Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting.

Peter and the other disciples had paid a high price—leaving their homes and jobs—to follow Jesus. But Jesus reminded Peter that following him has its benefits as well as its sacrifices. Any believer who has had to give up something to follow Christ will be repaid in this life as well as in the next.

For example, if you must give up a secure job, you will find that God offers a secure relationship with himself now and forever. If you must give up your family's approval, you will gain the love of the family of God.

The disciples had begun to pay the price of following Jesus, and he said they would be rewarded. Don't dwell on what you have given up; think about what you have gained and give thanks for it. You can never out give God.

The sovereignty and dominion of the kingdom will be given to the saints.

Daniel 7:27

'Then the sovereignty, the dominion and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One; His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him.'

God has promised to give his Kingdom to his holy people.

The kingdom of the priest of God will reign upon the earth.

Revelation 5:10

"You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth."

The song of God's people praises Christ's work. He (1) was killed, (2) ransomed them with his blood, (3) gathered them into a Kingdom, (4) made them priests, and (5) appointed them to reign on the earth. Jesus has already died and paid the penalty for sin.

He is now gathering us into his Kingdom and making us priests. In the future we will reign with him. Worship God and praise him for what he has done, what he is doing, and what he will do for all who trust in him.

When we realize the glorious future that awaits us, we will find the strength to face our present difficulties.

The kingdom of heaven is given to the poor in spirit.

Matthew 5:3

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

Those who do not seek the world's power and wealth will receive the kingdom of God.

With Jesus' announcement that the Kingdom was near (4:17), people were naturally asking, "How do I qualify to be in God's Kingdom?" Jesus said that God's Kingdom is organized differently from worldly kingdoms.

In the Kingdom of Heaven, wealth and power and authority are unimportant. Kingdom people seek different blessings and benefits, and they have different attitudes. Are your attitudes a carbon copy of the world's selfishness, pride, and lust for power, or do they reflect the humility and self-sacrifice of Jesus, your king?

Even the poor will receive the kingdom of God.

Luke 6:20

And turning His gaze toward His disciples, He began to say, "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.

These verses are called the *Beatitudes*, from the Latin word meaning "blessing." They describe what it means to be Christ's follower, give standards of conduct, and contrast Kingdom values with worldly values, showing what Christ's followers can expect from the world and what God will give them. In addition, they contrast fake piety with true humility.

They also show how Old Testament expectations are fulfilled in God's Kingdom.

Those who love God are rich in faith.

James 2:5

Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?

When James speaks about the poor, he is talking about those who have no money and also about those whose simple values are despised by much of our affluent society. Perhaps the "poor" people prefer serving to managing, human relationships to financial security, peace to power.

This does not mean that the poor will automatically go to heaven and the rich to hell. Poor people, however, are usually more aware of their powerlessness.

Thus, it is often easier for them to acknowledge their need for salvation. One of the greatest barriers to salvation for the rich is pride. For the poor, bitterness can often bar the way to acceptance of salvation.

**Those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness
will receive God's kingdom.**

Matthew 5:10

"Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

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Do not hinder those coming to Christ.

Matthew 19:14

But Jesus said, "Let the children alone, and do not hinder them from coming to me; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."

The disciples must have forgotten what Jesus had said about children (18:4-6). Jesus wanted little children to come to him because he loves them and because they have a guileless trust in God.

All people need childlike faith in God. The receptiveness of little children was a great contrast to the stubbornness of the religious leaders, who let their education and sophistication stand in the way of the simple faith needed to believe in Jesus.

Permit the children to come to God.

Mark 10:14

But when Jesus saw this, He was indignant and said to them, "Permit the children to come to me; do not hinder them; for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.

To feel secure, all children need is a loving look and gentle touch from someone who cares. They believe us because they trust us. Jesus said that people should trust in him with this kind of childlike faith. We do not have to understand all the mysteries of the universe; it should be enough to know that God loves us and provides forgiveness for our sin.

God has prepared his kingdom from the foundation of the world.

Matthew 25:34

"Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

This parable describes acts of mercy we all can do every day. These acts do not depend on wealth, ability, or intelligence; they are simple acts freely given and freely received. We have no excuse to neglect those who have deep needs, and we cannot hand over this responsibility to the church or government. Jesus demands our personal involvement in caring for others' needs (Isaiah 58:7).

It is God's pleasure to give his children the kingdom.

Luke 12:32

"Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom.

The disciples knew they could never get the upper hand in a religious dispute with the well-educated Jewish leaders. Nevertheless, they would not be left unprepared. Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would give them the appropriate words in their time of need.

The disciples' testimony might not make them look impressive, but it would still point out God's work in the world through Jesus' life. We need to pray for opportunities to witness for Christ, and then trust him to help us with our words.

This promise of the Spirit's help, however, does not compensate for lack of preparation. Remember that these disciples had three years of personal instruction and practical application. We need to study God's Word. Then God will bring his truths to mind when we most need them, helping us present them in the most effective way.

The kingdom God gave to Christ, he gives to his believers.

Luke 22:29

And just as My Father has granted me a kingdom, I grant you.

The world's system of leadership is very different from leadership in God's Kingdom. Worldly leaders are often selfish and arrogant as they claw their way to the top. (Some kings in the ancient world gave themselves the title "Benefactor," friend of the people). But among Christians, the leader is to be the one who *serves* best. There are different styles of leadership—some lead through public speaking, some through administering, some through relationships—but every Christian leader needs a servant's heart. Ask the people you lead how you can serve them better.

Believers are transferred from the domain of darkness to God's Kingdom.

Colossians 1:13

For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son.

The Colossians feared the unseen forces of darkness, but Paul says that true believers have been transferred from darkness to light, from slavery to freedom,

from guilt to forgiveness, and from the power of Satan to the power of God. We have been rescued from a rebel kingdom to serve the rightful King. Our conduct should reflect our new allegiance.

The entrance to God’s kingdom will be supplied to you.

2 Peter 1:11

For in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.

If you are the Lord's—and your hard work backs up your claim to be chosen by God—you will be able to resist the lure of false teaching or glamorous sin. What does your life say about your faith?

The Lord will bring you safely to his kingdom.

2 Timothy 4:18

The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed, and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom; to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Paul was affirming his belief in eternal life after death. Paul knew the end was near, and he was ready for it. Paul was confident in God's power even as he faced death. Anyone facing a life-and-death struggle can be comforted knowing that God will bring each believer safely through death to his heavenly Kingdom.

Those who walk worthy are called into God’s kingdom.

1 Thessalonians 2:12

So that you would walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

By his words and example, Paul encouraged the Thessalonians to live in a way God would consider worthy. Is there anything about your daily life that would embarrass God? What do people think of God from watching you?



Prayer to salvation.

Lord God in heaven, I come to you in the name of Jesus.

I acknowledge to you that I am a sinner, and

I am sorry for my sins and the life that I have lived;

I need your forgiveness.

I believe that your only begotten Son Jesus Christ shed His precious blood on the cross at Calvary and died for my sins, and I am now willing to turn from my sin.

Your Holy Word declares in Romans 10:9 that if we confess the Lord our God and believe in our hearts that God raised Jesus from the dead, we shall be saved.

Right now I confess Jesus as the Lord of my soul. With my heart, I believe that God raised Jesus from the dead.

This very moment I accept Jesus Christ as my own personal Savior and according to His Word, right now I am saved. Amen

References:

Holy Bible: King James Translation

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Additional comments and charts are taken from: *Life Application Study Bible*. Illinois: Tyndale House 2007. Print