

## Living the Supernatural Life – Part Nine “The Kerygma of the Kingdom”

1. Imagine that the pharmaceutical companies finally came up with a pill that made you feel completely and totally loved. Not only that but it would make you significantly more loving, joyful, and put your soul at peace.
  - a. How much would you be willing to pay for that pill? You would probably sell all you have and seek it like a pearl of great price, wouldn't you?
  - b. Yet that is what God established upon earth in something Jesus calls “The Kingdom of God.”
  - c. Matthew 13:44-46 *"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field. "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it."*
  
2. What is the kingdom of God?
  - a. **The Kingdom of God is everywhere where God is acknowledged as king.**
    - i. The "kingdom of heaven" (or "kingdom of God") is wherever the REIGN or DOMINION of God (who is in heaven) is manifested.
    - ii. It is why we pray, *“Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is heaven.”*
  - b. What does it look like when God is in charge?
    - i. Faith, hope, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.
    - ii. Wherever God is in charge it looks a lot like heaven!
    - iii. Does anyone here want a life like that?
  - c. In one sense, the kingdom of God has always existed, but imperfectly upon earth.
    - i. When Jesus came to earth, the Kingdom of God was truly established upon the earth, as the authority of the devil was broken over the earth. His followers were assured of the new citizenship and purpose in this kingdom.
    - ii. The reign of God was established in people's hearts.
    - iii. And yet, there is a future tense to it as well.
      1. The 20<sup>th</sup> century is being described as the century of cynicism toward God. More millions of human beings were killed than in any other century, more Christians were martyred for their faith, man's inhumanity to man in death camps, wars, genocide and atrocities have made this the century of death. And through atheism, which was at the root of all this unprecedented suffering, God was declared dead.
      2. It was out of the 20<sup>th</sup> century cynicism that much of the church lost its belief in a present and powerful Kingdom of God. The church began to preach and hope only in a future tense Kingdom and erased the message of the present Kingdom from their preaching.
      3. But there is hope...God will not be stifled and His message will not be snuffed out. Circumstances must not change our theology. The message of Jesus is still the message of the church...THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS HERE!
  
3. I did a search online for the “kingdom of heaven” and found many people equated the kingdom of God to “going to heaven.” 9 out of 10 sermons dealing with the Kingdom of Heaven or God dealt with “how to get to heaven” rather than God's kingdom coming to earth and the implications of that.
  - a. But as I hope you know by now, that going to heaven is simply one of the great benefits of the Kingdom of God, but it is not the central one.
  - b. We find that our evangelism efforts focus around the answer to the question, “what is the minimum requirement to get into heaven?”

- i. The problem is that even if you have answered that question with theological accuracy, you may still be far from the kingdom.
    - ii. You have to ask the right questions to get the right answers.
    - iii. The church is still asking questions from the 19<sup>th</sup> century that no one is asking in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
  - c. I want to quote a verse is John 10:10. Can you tell me what is wrong with this verse?
    - i. *"I have come so that you can know you will go to heaven when you die."* (Jn 10:10)
    - ii. Do you remember John 10:10?
      - 1. *The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.* John 10:10 (NIV)
      - 2. The devil is still stealing the life from God's people by perverting the gospel and changing how we hear the central message of Jesus.
      - 3. **The "kerygma", the offer, the central message of Jesus was LIFE.**
        - a. The kerygma of the early church was LIFE.
        - b. The message was, *"we offer you life! Abundant life! Life you can't get anywhere else! A life of love, and joy and peace! It is great! You will love this life! It is life under a new King whose reign will never end."*
        - c. You can't keep a church with a message like that from growing!
        - d. People will be knocking down its doors to hear that kind of good news!
    - iii. The offer of the early church was an offer to find life. This was Jesus offer--"I have come that you might have life!"
      - 1. My job must be to stand before you every week and offer you life--life abundant and free. It must be to show you how to grab a hold of the supernatural life offered in Christ and how to live it and how to give it away!
      - 2. Teachers, that is your job: to show your group week by week how they can lay hold of that life. Jesus spent three years with his disciples talking about the kingdom and you sense they still didn't get it. It will take a while for you. You won't be able to say it just once. Say it over and over and over again.
      - 3. Christian, this is your job: to tell whoever will listen to you--Jesus offers you an incredible life! Come get that life! Come to Jesus!
  - d. Let me say one thing. **There is no LIFE in Christ until you have died to your old life.** You must be co-crucified with Christ, your old nature, your former ways must die and you become a brand new creation.
    - i. The kingdom of God is not about fixing up your old life, but rather about a brand new life. That brand new life is infinite in possibility, supernatural in power and exciting in the hope we have.
    - ii. God isn't going to just give your life a cosmetic fix...you've probably already tried that...fad diet, fad clothes, fad food, all of the appeals of the world with its false promises to make you happy, successful and pretty.
    - iii. God will give you a brand new life. He says, "behold, all things become new." It is why Jesus emphasized a "new birth" to enter the Kingdom of God. It is a spiritual rebirth, and you come into a relationship with God that is life changing and earth shattering!
4. Are you living the supernatural, Kingdom centered God has offered?
- a. Are you becoming a little more loving, a little more joyful, a little more at peace, a little less angry, a little less worried, a little more kind?
  - b. Is your piece of this earth a little bit more like heaven because of the presence of Jesus inside of you? Can people see God because of your life?
  - c. You might be tempted to say, *"I was saved when I was ten. I walked the isle. I prayed the prayer. I did the deed."* Folks, if that is the limit to your experience of God, then you got a lot more of religion than you got of God.

- d. That is not the question. This is the question: is life getting a little more loving, a little more joyful, a little more peaceful? Are you getting less worried and less angry and more passionate about life. That is how life is when you are living in the kingdom. That is what happens to us when God reigns and rules in our hearts and minds and lives. We live for the King of the kingdom.
5. As citizens of the Kingdom of heaven we no longer live natural lives, but instead we live what might be best described as supernatural lives.
    - a. I recently mentioned that you and I can no longer say, “we are only human.”
    - b. When we were born again, we became a new race of supernatural beings called Christians (or little Christs).
    - c. Paul in 1 Corinthians. 3:3 rebukes his readers for “acting like mere men.” *“Are you not acting like mere men?”*
      - i. We are supernatural sons and daughters of God, filled with His Spirit and anointed to rule and reign with the love and power of God in our world.
  6. Jesus used a word to describe the collective group of people who became Kingdom citizens that most of us have forgotten what it means. It is the word “ekklesia” which we translate church.
    - a. 21<sup>st</sup> century Christians see the word “church” to refer to a building. But that isn’t biblical.
    - b. To the Greek mind, it meant a *“group of people set apart to govern an area.”*
    - c. To the Romans, ekklesia was a group of people who were SENT into a conquered region to ALTER the culture until it became like Rome. Romans infiltrated the government, schools, language, and social structures until the people talked, thought and acted like Romans.
    - d. Jesus has sent you and I into the conquered regions of this world to bring His Kingdom, its power, values, ideals, principles, and its benefits of love, health, joy, peace, etc. into the world that we touch.
    - e. And to usher the people we touch in our world into God’s kingdom. **Your world is defined by the arena of the world that we touch regularly.**
      - i. Your housekeeper, your nurse, your employer, your coworkers, your banker, your waitress...all should be profoundly affected by the authority of the Kingdom working through you!
    - f. But Satan wants to keep the church tucked away in a building, in a private area of your life, away from where we do what we were made to do!
    - g. Satan’s plan for stopping the spread of the Kingdom of God is to keep us tucked away, hidden, to keep the church from being the church.
      - i. He wants to leave God without a government, a people to rule on earth.
      - ii. That way, even though he has no authority, Satan can still run things as if he does.
      - iii. If he can change the CENTRAL message we proclaim (from LIFE to ‘getting to heaven’) we become irrelevant
  7. But our God will not be stymied! Jesus did not come to earth to die and watch the church wilt away into an ineffective group of people sitting idly awaiting His return. He came to make the church victorious, for the King to reign in your heart! Don’t you want that? The supernatural savior, lover of your heart and soul to live and reign and pour His life through you? What are you waiting for? The Kingdom of God is Here...now, in power and glory!
    - a. I pray that I may put no limits on the possibilities of the kingdom of God, or God’s love or power to change my world. I pray that the kingdom of God and the will of the Father who is in heaven might be manifested upon earth, the very world that I live and influence every day.