

Kingdom of God – Part 7: “Containers of Glory”

1. When we talk about the Kingdom of God, we are really talking about the implementation of God’s plan for mankind. Every time we talk about the Kingdom of God, we cannot help but to go back to the original plan – in the Garden of Eden, and examine God’s original intent for mankind.
 - a. Genesis 1:26-28 *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." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. 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."*
 - i. First thing, notice that God was in charge. He created man, and when he had finished, the bible says, v31 *"God saw all that he had made, and it was very good."*
 1. The earth was perfect, without flaw, without death or disease. Very good. I can see God smile.
 - ii. This was the picture of the Kingdom or rule of God upon the earth.
 1. Notice that **God delegated authority to man to “rule” over the earth**. This was God’s original design.
 - a. This is why we pray. God, although sovereign, has chosen to not act upon the earth except in response to the prayers of His people. This is why it is important for us to pray for people, leaders, situations and crisis. (I’ve explained this in a previous sermon – and may explain it again sometime).
 - iii. God’s intention was that mankind would be his representatives upon the earth.
 1. He had made mankind in His own image.
 2. Dutch Sheets, a well known teacher has illustrated it this way, ([show extracted clip from the video](#)).
 3. **Creation, when it looked upon man, saw the shadow of God.**
 - a. This was God’s intention.
 - b. This was God’s purpose in creation.
 - c. **God made man to reflect His glory** (that is, to reflect who He is) **and to represent Him upon the earth and in the affairs of men!**
2. My key passage today is from Ephesians 3:16-20 *“I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height – to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us”*
 - a. Most of us when we read “that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith...” we think “in your hearts” means in our affections, like we say to a loved one, “I carry you around in my heart.”
 - i. But that is not the meaning here. In my heart is speaking about our “soul” the very core of our spiritual life. The mind, will and emotions are encompassed by the word heart in the bible. It is the seat of our character and personality, and is the part of us that will live forever.
 - ii. The word “dwell” means to “make one’s home.” That is our objective. That is God’s objective. To make His home in our very soul. To set up housekeeping, to arrange as the RESIDENT who dwells and lives there.
 1. *What do you do when you move into a home? You clean it up, fix it up and make it your own. You decorate it according to your tastes and pleasure. You remodel it so it suits your needs. So also does God.*
 - b. In verse 19 it says, *“; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.”*

- i. This is also the end goal of God's redemptive work. That each of us be filled with all of the fullness of God. The word for fill/fullness means to fill to overflowing. To be completely and 100% full.
 1. Why does God want to fill us up? Because that is our created purpose. To be containers of His Presence, containers of His glory and dispensers of His love.
 - ii. We have all of God but God doesn't always have all of us. We hold parts of ourselves back from Him...why do we do that?
 - 1.
 - 2.
3. These passages bring home the fact that **God saved us & forgave us so we could be rightly related to Himself for the PURPOSE of making us/returning us to our original purpose of being containers of God.**
- a. Literally, we were designed to be "Containers of God's glory."
 - i. Only by being containers can we accurately reflect the glory of God.
 - ii. You might recall when Moses spent a long time with God on the mountain, he came down from Mt. Sinai with his face glowing. The original language says that the skin on his face was translucent, and that the light was coming from inside of him, like a flashlight shining out through the skin in his face. That is what a container of glory looks like!
 - b. It might sound a bit irreverent, but our role is to be superhero suits for God.
 - i. God is disguised behind our earthliness looking for opportunities to reach out and touch someone and display His hidden glory.
 1. Why does a superhero wear a disguise? To blend in with people so he can interact with them.
 - ii. John 15:4-5 "*Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine; you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.*"
 - iii. **God created man with infinite capacity, but limited ability.**
 1. We were made to "contain God" – He is infinite...and we are able to contain Him. Our ability...like Jesus said, "without Me you can do NOTHING."
 2. God made man like a glove.
 - a. Everything a hand can do, a glove can do, so long as the glove is fitted closely upon the hand and has the flexibility to move with the hand.
 - b. God created man to contain Himself in the same way that a thin, flexible, fitted glove is made to contain a hand.
 - c. When the hand moves, the glove moves.
 - d. When the hand grips something, the glove grips the same thing.
 - e. It is the purpose of the glove to be filled with the hand.
 3. When the hand is working in the glove, whatever the hand might be doing, the glove is fulfilling its created purpose in every way. The glove is filled with joy.
 - a. Everyone knows that it is not the glove doing the work, but the hand in the glove.
 - b. However, you do not actually see the hand. All you see is the glove.
 - c. The glove does not take glory to itself, but the glove is always pointing to the hand inside it as people look at it doing those wonderful things.
 - d. Yet the hand shares its glory fully with the glove. As everyone admires the hand that did this great work, they also admire the glove through whom the hand worked.
 4. God created man to be filled with all the fullness of God. It is not the hand of God that fills me, but all of God. Can you begin to comprehend this?
 - c. In truth, you and I are much more than a glove.

- i. **We are the temple of the living God.** I, as an individual believer, am the temple of God. I, as a member of the corporate body of Christ; we together are the temple of God. Both I as an individual and we as a body are the temple of God.
- d. I'd like to bring that into a modern day picture. God is saying that He has made us to be a superhero suit. I contain the Creator and Savior of the universe. **He expresses Himself through me.**
 - i. But if He is not filling me, then I sit there useless on the shelf. I can only do that which He does through me. Without Him I can do nothing.
 - ii. God is invisible. Without a suit on, a temple, God cannot be seen at all.
 - 1. And in one sense, that is a limitation to God.
 - 2. God wants to be seen, and touched, and to touch people.
 - 3. But without His "people" suit on, no one even knows He is there.
 - 4. Without His temple, His dwelling place, a lost world doesn't know He is there.
- e. I am God's superhero suit.
 - i. **I want to comprehend the height, the depth, the width, and the length to which God is able to work inside of me.**
 - ii. **I contain all the fullness of God.** Say these two statements with me?
- f. I am filled with all the fullness of God, and I am a member of a glorious and precious body that reveals God the way He wants to be seen without limitation of any kind.
 - i. Man is created different from all other created things. Animals are complete in themselves. Everything they need, to do and be what they are created for, is inside them. Angels are complete in themselves. Everything they need, to do and be what they are created for, is inside them. The same is true of rocks and plants and planets, every facet of God's creation is created complete in itself, able to do and be what it was made for. **Everything except man!**
 - ii. Man was created with incredible capacity.
 - 1. Filled with God, man can do anything God desires.
 - 2. I like to say that **Jesus did miracles not only to show what God can or cannot do, but to show what one man rightly related to God can do!**
 - 3. He said, "*if you have seen me you have seen the Father.*" In other words when Jesus walked around, people saw God. Jesus was perfectly related to God and God worked through him in absolute harmony.
 - 4. You and I, because of what Jesus did upon the cross, are PERFECTLY RELATED to God. You cannot add anything to what He did.
 - a. If you and I are perfectly related to God, then all that Jesus did should be reproduced through you and me!
 - b. When you walk around, do they say, "Was that God? No, that's just His shadow."
 - iii. In the movie, The Incredibles, you can see the construction of the superhero suits the characters wear. If the hero needs to run ultra-fast, the suit can flex at that speed. If the hero needs to burn, the suit can sustain those high temperatures. If the hero needs to stretch great distances, the suit can stretch with her and yet keep its appropriate shape. If the hero needs to go invisible, the suit can go invisible with her.
 - 1. In all things the hero needs to do to accomplish his purposes, the suit is right there, bending, flexing, and moving with the hero in all things the hero is doing.
 - 2. **But, if the suit does not contain the hero, then it is worthless** in practice.
 - a. Great potential, but worthless in practice, lying there on the floor in a crumpled pile.
 - b. Great capacity, yes, but utterly unable to do anything in and of itself.
 - c. This is the nature of man.

- g. Filled with God, man has all the ability and power of God. But empty of God, man is unable to accomplish anything of value. Great capacity, but no ability. (John 15) *He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.*”
- i. But the superhero suit is an inanimate object. And as such does not mind being folded up and put away. Not so with man.
 - ii. Man was not made ever to be folded up and put away. **Man was created to contain God all the time and forever.** Man is not inanimate. I am a person, created in Gods’ image to be filled with His person. I am custom made to fit God.
 - iii. **When God says that I am made in His image, it means I am custom made to fit God.**
 1. And as a person, when I am not being filled with all the fullness of God, when I am not stretching where God stretches, touching whom God touches, defeating what God strikes down, healing what God is healing, then I am frustrated.
 2. I am bored. I am empty. I want God It is why I was created!
 - iv. Every human being in the bottom of his heart knows they were created for more than what they presently experience.
 1. A glove is made to be filled with a hand.
 2. An empty human is a problem.
 3. A human empty of God is a big problem.
 - v. I am speaking of man. **But you are not discarded. You are not unwanted. You have been found, you have been washed, you have been fully repaired.**
 1. You may feel this way...but God has a purpose for you, a destiny and a purpose, because He created you so He can fill you.
 - a. If you have never surrendered your life to Jesus Christ, then you are empty. Your life isn’t filled with miracles and awe and wonder.
 - vi. If you have surrendered to Jesus Christ and received his free gift of forgiveness and eternal life in the Kingdom of God...then you, as you are right now, are filled with God.
 1. What you need to learn is the depth, the height, the length to which God can move through you. So that you are not just filled with God, **but so that you can move out from all of His fullness.**
 - vii. Not so with man and God. There is an organic spiritual bond between man and God. Paul says in 1 Corinthians, *“He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit with Him.”*
 - viii. We could even say that man is created to be God’s skin. **To so flex with God’s movements that all creation can look at man and see God.**
 1. All creation can be touched by man and feel God.
 2. I, as a human, with all the inability of a human, am made exactly the way God intended me to be.
 3. God created you weak but with infinite capacity.
 - a. Therefore the great desire to fill that infinite sized hole is answered only when I am filled with God.
 - b. Don’t ever squelch your desire.
 - c. Your aching deepest desire is to be filled with God. All human desire, even that which turns itself to the wrong directions is merely a misdirected desire to fill that empty spot in your heart. That desire is there because it is really a desire to be filled with God.