

The Kingdom Of God – Part 12

Wealth and Kingdom Life (capital L)

1. Review

- a. Story – Bill Hill’s attitude in the hospital. Praying for a healing/miracle. I refuse to believe that God “sent” this disease, or any disease to teach someone something. God is good...all the time. And He only does good things.
 - i. Disease, death, and illness are from Satan. Jesus himself said so, he said, “*The thief comes only to steal, kill and destroy...but I have come that you might have life and life more abundantly.*” (Jn 8). God has in his own sovereignty; chosen to limit much of what He does upon earth in response to the prayers of His people.
 - ii. The bible says that Jesus “*came to destroy the works of the devil.*” What are those works? Death, disease, sickness, lameness, blindness, deafness...all those things that weren’t made by God and that don’t exist in heaven.
 - iii. When what we pray for doesn’t happen the way I want, we don’t need to change our theology about God. I have made a choice not to base my theology upon my experience...but rather, upon the word of God. God’s word says that God’s name is Jehovah Rapha, “God who heals” – Jesus gave you and I authority over every sickness and disease and “all the power of the enemy.” So let us contend for our Brother Bill Hill without wavering in our faith. Don’t allow the devil to talk you into settling for a watered down version of “whatever God’s will is.”
 - iv. **God’s will is that you and I pray and contend and act in faith on Bill’s behalf.** It isn’t to just give up and say, “whatever God.” God is not detached, uninvolved, or uninterested. My God loves and is involved intimately with the details of my life and the lives of people around me. He is waiting for me to pray and to bring heaven down to earth.
- b. We have spoken extensively about the miraculous nature of the kingdom of God, about how we enter it, about the keys to operating in it...yet we have not talked about how to live in it. That’s what we will be doing in the weeks ahead, looking at Jesus’ words to his disciples about His expectations for the way they would live IN the kingdom.

2. **2 Kingdoms continued:** Last week I shared with you how there are two distinct kingdoms in operation and how the kingdom that Jesus came to set up was in opposition to the kingdom of the earth. Let me make a few distinctions about the differences:

- a. **The Kingdom of God is invisible, internal, and eternal.**
 - i. It only becomes visible when those who belong to it allow God to so fill them that God’s very nature and character is expressed through their lives.
 - ii. It is internal – it works from the inside out. Unlike religion that places demands on the external conformity and actions, the Kingdom works on the heart of a person. Change the heart (affections, desires, direction, what the person loves) and you change not only their conduct, but you begin to change their world.
 - iii. Eternal – “Eternal life is this, to know You, the only God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.”
 1. This LIFE that defines you lasts forever, and it begins the moment that you place your trust, your life, in Jesus Christ.
- b. **The Kingdom of God is about Heaven manifesting itself on earth.** (through you and me).
 - i. Jesus came to earth and at that moment, literally, Heaven invaded earth.
 - ii. Everywhere he went, heaven (God’s presence) touched people.

- iii. Instead of the nature of earth ruling (sickness, disease, hunger, death) – when Jesus came into the room, into the area, He brought what existed in heaven (life, health, healing, supply) to the situation.
 - iv. I heard a great saying this week... *“Don’t just tell God how big your problem is, tell your problem how big your God is!”*
 - v. That is the nature of the Kingdom of Heaven!
3. Matthew 19:16-23 *“Now a man came up to Jesus and asked, ‘Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?’ ‘Why do you ask me about what is good?’ Jesus replied. ‘There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, obey the commandments.’ ‘Which ones?’ the man inquired. Jesus replied, ‘Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, honor your father and mother,’ and ‘love your neighbor as yourself.’ ‘All these I have kept,’ the young man said. ‘What do I still lack?’”* 21 Jesus answered, *“If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”* When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth. Then Jesus said to his disciples, *“I tell you the truth, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.”* When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished and asked, *“Who then can be saved?”* Jesus looked at them and said, *“With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible*
- a. As I read this and studied this, I was surprised to find out that Jesus talked about money more than He talked about Hell.
 - i. We preachers tend to shy away from talking about money because for so long, preachers have manipulated and twisted people’s arms to get them to “give more.”
 - ii. The truth is, *if the kingdom of God is at work in people’s hearts, people will give spontaneously and generously without being nagged or prodded.*
 - b. In our passage today, Jesus has an encounter with a young man who by his day’s standards, was wealthy.
 - i. The young man apparently has felt the void in his life that religion leaves, because he comes to Jesus and asks what he already knows the answer to...”how might I enter the Kingdom of God” (How can I have eternal life?”).
 - ii. He asks for the “one thing” needed to possess it.
 - c. Jesus quizzes him...and leads him on a journey of self-discovery.
 - i. You know, we too shouldn’t always answer people’s questions directly just because we know the answer.
 - ii. Jesus tells him to obey the commandments, and man persists, “which one?” So Jesus gives him examples of the commandments. The young man replies, “all these I have kept, what do I still lack?”
 - 1. Herein lies the answer. The young man had done all the religious “stuff” and had not found Life. (Life, capital L).
 - Obeying the commandments aren’t enough. Keeping them will make you look like a good person, but the fact is, they do not have the power to change your heart. In fact, the commandments purpose is to point out what you are missing.
 - He had tried to be good, but deep down inside, the aching hunger for meaning and Life (capital L) hadn’t been satisfied. He wanted to know how to know God.
 - 2. I suspect Jesus smiled when he heard this man’s answer, because the man was searching desperately for Life. He was SEARCHING for the meaning of life.
 - 3. In fact, Jesus confronts the sincerity of this man’s search, by giving him a choice. *“If you want to be perfect (complete), go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.” (Mt. 19:21)*

- d. You have perhaps allowed your heart to become attached to what you have, and allowed yourself to be owned by what you possess.
- 6. Or maybe the question of the disciples is haunting you right now. “Who then can be saved?”
 - a. If a person who is religious and keeps the 10 commandments can’t be saved...
 - b. If a person who has more than what he needs can’t be saved...
 - c. Who can?
- 7. *Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.*
 - a. Jesus looked, turned his gaze upon his disciples. Why? This was for them!
 - b. Man’s efforts, your efforts will not EARN you God’s love. There is nothing you can do to make God love you more or less than he does right now. Granted, you can do plenty to reject His love. But He loves you the same. He loves you so much, that even knowing what sin you were going to commit today or yesterday or tomorrow, He still sent His Son to take the penalty that sin deserved. So, won’t you come to Him today? Let him love you. Let Him pour His love into you so that your life might be turned right-side up?
 - c. *Let’s pray.*