

Talk Notes

Title: The Kingdom of God 2 – Seek it first!

Meeting: Freshwaters

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Introduction

When I last spoke I introduced the Kingdom of God, can anyone remind me what it is? Yes, **the Kingdom of God is the realm where He reigns** – in the hearts of those who follow the King and in all areas where His will is seen – whether in family, community, politics, religion, commerce, news and entertainment.

Today I am going to spend a little bit of time talking about its timing and its priority.

The timing of the Kingdom of God.

Can anyone tell me when the Kingdom of God will come?

The Kingdom of God has come, is here and is still to come.

I want to explore the timing of the Kingdom of God through some phrases Jesus used about the Kingdom.

The Kingdom of God is among (or within) you

In **Luke 17:21** Jesus said **‘You won’t be able to say, ‘Here it is!’ or ‘It’s over there!’ For the Kingdom of God is already among you.’** Some translations say ‘within you’.

So when thinking about the timing of the Kingdom of God we here have Jesus saying it’s already here – it’s amongst or within you.

Now I want to suggest that the **Kingdom of God is actually built into the very fabric of the universe** – maybe the Young People can help us. YP – what have we been looking at over recent weeks? – Yes the timeline of the Bible and in particular creation as recorded in Genesis.

What did God think about each stage of His creation? – Yes, it was good.

Now can someone remind me again – **what is the Kingdom of God?** – yes the place where God reign’s, where His will is done – and **as God spoke and it came to be His will was done – this was the Kingdom of God, in the sea’s and the sky, in the stars in the Oceans and land, in every stone, tree plant and creature – God saw it was good – it was His will – it was His reign, it was His Kingdom.**

Now **who knows what was unique about God's creation of human beings?** Yes – they were made – and are still being made in the image of God – again God's will realised in mankind – **and what did God say after creating man?** – And it was very good!

God's will – His reign is built into the very heart of our being – you could say it is our natural state.

Now we all know about the Fall and man's rebellion against God – **but that rebellion didn't destroy the image of God built into each one of us**, not did it destroy the Kingdom of God, what it did was to raise up another kingdom – the kingdom of darkness. If you think of it in terms of throne rooms and thrones. The Fall did not destroy God's throne room, or depose Him from the throne – it instead established two alternative throne rooms that we gave our loyalty to – the throne room of evil with satan on the throne and cleverly, within the same kingdom of darkness another throne room where man is enthroned, thinking himself king but actually enslaved to the devil.

So God's Kingdom is among and within us – it is built into the very fabric of creation **and it is why, when we return to the true King, our choices and decisions and life begin to resonate with creation itself to release blessing.** It makes perfect sense – **creation works best when it is under the rule and reign of the creator!**

The Kingdom of God is at hand or within grasp

In **Mark 1:15** Jesus says **“The time promised by God has come at last!” he announced. “The Kingdom of God is near! Repent of your sins and believe the Good News!”**

The phrase translated 'is near' can also be translated 'at hand' or 'within grasp'. Here Jesus emphasises that **the Kingdom of God that is already present among or within us, needs to be reached for.** It is not automatic, it is **not something we are born into, fall into or are pushed into.** Instead it is something we need to reach out for – and the way we reach for it is through repentance.

Can someone tell me what repentance is? Yes it is a turning around and heading in a new direction. In the illustration I used earlier, it is turning away from the kingdom of darkness and the thrones of man and satan – and turning towards the Kingdom of God with Jesus on the throne.

So the Kingdom is here, it is within our grasp – but then there is a third element.

The Kingdom of God to come

In Luke 22:18 Jesus said 'For I will not drink wine again until the Kingdom of God has come.' Then in Revelation 12:10 it says 'Then I heard a loud voice shouting across the heavens, "It has come at last— salvation and power and the Kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ.[a] For the accuser of our brothers and sisters[b] has been thrown down to earth—the one who accuses them before our God day and night.

So the Kingdom of God is here and has been from the very creation of the world – it is within our grasp waiting for us to repent – but then it is also still to come. The truth is, that while there are still those usurpers – the throne of man and of satan, then the Kingdom of God cannot come in its fullness and completeness. **The harmony of creation cannot be restored until the false thrones and those who occupy them are thrown down and that will come at Christ's return.** Then we will see the fulfilment of our prayer 'Your Kingdom come your will be done on earth as it is in heaven'. Then we will see Jesus who has fasted from wine since the Last Supper, celebrating with us in the marriage supper of the Lamb.

So the Kingdom of God is among and within us, to be reached out for but also still to come in its fullness.

Why should we 'Seek first the Kingdom of God'?

There are lots of reasons why we should seek first God's Kingdom – not least because He told us to! But let me give you 3 reasons that occurred to me while preparing for this morning.

1. God will supply all of our needs

Matthew 6:33 says – **'Seek the Kingdom of God[a] above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.'**

The basic message of this passage is straightforward enough – put the Kingdom of God first – make it your first priority, above food and clothes, wealth and comfort, above power and influence, above husband or wife, parents or children, friends or neighbours. This is the antidote to worry – because if the Kingdom is our priority and we seek to live righteously, then God will supply all we need (although not necessarily all we want!).

2. It was Jesus top priority

I mentioned last time that Jesus spoke more about the Kingdom of God than about any other theme, in **Luke 4:43** he put it like this **"But he replied, "I must preach the Good News of the Kingdom of God in other towns, too, because that is why I was sent."** – In the precious time between Jesus resurrection and ascension – what did Jesus do? Let's read from **Acts 1:3** **'During the forty days after he suffered and died, he appeared to the apostles from time to time, and he proved to them in many ways that he was actually alive. And he talked to them about the Kingdom of God.'**

3. It is our guarantee of greatness

In **Luke 7:28** Jesus says **"I tell you, of all who have ever lived, none is greater than John. Yet even the least person in the Kingdom of God is greater than he is!"**

In many of us, although not all – there is a yearning for greatness. In our current age it is linked to celebrity, but throughout history it has been linked to political or military might, to outstanding sportsmanship or to great bravery.

I believe that a desire for greatness has been built into us by God – it is part of His image – for God is great! However the Kingdoms view of greatness is very different from our worlds. **Kingdom greatness says the last shall be first and the first shall be last. Kingdom greatness is not to be served but to serve and to give your life** – and here in this passage we see the truth that the very least in God’s Kingdom are greater than the very greatest men and women of history – even those like John who were great in God.

So we are to seek God’s Kingdom first –because God will supply all our needs, it was Jesus top priority and it is our guarantee of greatness.

How do we prioritise the Kingdom of God?

Think about how you can prioritise God’s Kingdom – that is how can we extend the rule and reign of God in and through our lives?

Think about the following people and how their example can help inspire us to seek first God's Kingdom. Think about:-

What did they prioritise? What did they sacrifice? What was/is their reward?

*Enoch *Abraham *Moses *David *Isaiah *Jesus *Paul

What should we prioritise? What is our sacrifice? What is our reward?

Conclusion

So the Kingdom of God – the place where God reigns, is built into the very fabric of creation – it is here now and yet need to be reached out for and it is still to come in its fullness.

The Kingdom should be our greatest priority, through putting god’s Kingdom first God will supply our needs, Jesus is our model and it was His top priority – and living within the Kingdom is our guarantee of greatness.

With God’s help we can seek first His Kingdom and so see God’s rule reign in and through us grow to His glory.