

Talk Notes

Title: The Kingdom of God 3 – Entering the Kingdom!

Meeting: Freshwaters

Date: 12/3/17

Introduction

So this is my 3rd talk about the Kingdom of God. The first was addressing what the Kingdom of God is – can someone remind us? 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.

My second talk emphasised the timing of the Kingdom – can someone remind me about that – **It has come and indeed was built into the very fabric of creation, it is here but needs to be reached for but it is still to come in it's completeness**

Today I am going to focus upon entering the Kingdom and becoming a citizen of the Kingdom.

Differences between entering the Kingdom and becoming a citizen of the Kingdom.

Matthew 7:21 [True Disciples] “Not everyone who calls out to me, ‘Lord! Lord!’ will enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Only those who actually do the will of my Father in heaven will enter’

The Kingdom of God, we have established, is the place God reigns – those things that are **in accordance with His will** could be said to be **‘within the Kingdom’**, whereas those things that are **contrary to God’s will**, that have not submitted to His reign, are **‘outside of the Kingdom’** (i.e. sin). In most cases when Jesus talks about ‘entering the Kingdom of God’ we could substitute ‘entering into the will of God’ or ‘submitting to the reign of God’. The behaviours He describes are those which are compatible or incompatible with the Kingdom of God – we will look more at these in future talks.

What we often do, however, is to assume that when Jesus talks about ‘entering the Kingdom’ He is talking about salvation. The problem is that nearly all of the references to entering the Kingdom or to being prevented from entering the Kingdom are to do with behaviour – to do with what we do – rather than what we believe or receive.

I have found it helpful to think of those who have received salvation as **citizens of the Kingdom of God.**

It is possible to 'enter the Kingdom of God' as it exists in our world at the moment, without having received salvation or become citizens. In relation to those things which are done in accordance with God's will, they have entered, but in relation to other areas of life they have not.

By the same token those who have received salvation (or become citizens) but then do things that are outside of God's will, in respect of those things they are living outside of the Kingdom.

This ability to 'cross the borders' of the Kingdom in this way is because at the moment the Kingdom of God co-exists with the kingdoms of the world, in **John 18:36 Jesus said "My Kingdom is not an earthly kingdom. If it were, my followers would fight to keep me from being handed over to the Jewish leaders. But my Kingdom is not of this world."**

However this will not always be the case. **Rev 11:15** says **"Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices shouting in heaven: "The world has now become the Kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign forever and ever."** So one day, the Kingdom of God will be the only one that exists, it will **not** then be possible to move between Kingdoms, you will need by then to have become a full citizen of the Kingdom of God.

Becoming a Citizen (Salvation)

In the UK we have a number of ways of becoming a citizen – but the best way is to be born a citizen. The **only way** to become a citizen of the Kingdom of God is to be born – or re-born a citizen through repentance and faith in Jesus.

It was this that Jesus was talking about when He was speaking to Nicodemus in **John 3**, let's take a look. **John 3:1-21**

This passage is different from many of Jesus passages about the Kingdom of God, because it is not talking about behaviour but about re-birth through the Spirit of God by faith in the Son of God.

People can enter the Kingdom by doing those things which are compatible with the Kingdom – **but for the Kingdom to truly enter them and for them to become part of, or citizens of, the Kingdom** – then something more than the effort of man is needed – it is (as **verse 5** makes clear) a work of the Spirit of God in bringing re-birth – and we receive it through our faith in Jesus as **verses 16-17** make clear – let me read them to you again **'16 "For this is how God loved the world: He gave[g] his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. 17 God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him.**

Eternal life is possible only because we have become citizens of a Kingdom that is eternal, while all other kingdoms will pass away.

The reason that citizenship or re-birth is only possible through faith in Jesus is that **sin is a barrier to citizenship**. It is like an endorsement on our passport which prevents us from becoming citizens. The endorsement says **'This person is a rebel, they have lived a life incompatible with the Kingdom of God, their sentence is death'**.

As Jesus hung on the cross – He took upon Himself our sentence of death and He offered us a way, not just to have the endorsement removed, but to **receive a brand new passport** as citizens of the Kingdom. The way we receive this is through faith in Jesus – and in our baptism we declare our old life which is incompatible with the Kingdom has been crucified with Christ – and I have now risen with Christ a new creation by his Spirit, born into citizenship of the Kingdom (see **Gal 2:20**).

Now as citizens of the Kingdom we are called to live lives which are compatible with the Kingdom of God, this is what we will be exploring through the words of Jesus over the coming months.

Conclusion

So we can enter the Kingdom of God as it exists today as we do the things that are in accordance with God's will – but for the Kingdom to really enter us so that we can become Citizens of the Kingdom, then we need to be born again – receiving through our faith in Jesus a new passport and as citizens of the Kingdom we have access not just to the Kingdom that is now – but also to the Kingdom that is to come in all its fullness that will remain for all eternity.