

The Kingdom of God - Introduction

Session 1

Whetting the Appetite

The K.o.G. is a big deal. (If you've been around Christian Circles for many years, it's an expression that we hear bandied around all the time...)

Jesus said, '**...seek first the kingdom, and all these other things will be added to you as well.**' (Mt 6 : 33)

Jesus said, **...the kingdom (of heaven) is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it. (Matthew 13 : 45 - 46)**

Ask 10 Christians what 'The Kingdom of God' means, probably get 15 opinions...

For something that is so primary...there is a frightening lack of clarity, but potentially such a huge release of authority.

Ideologies in my Christian life...bandwagons, if you will. "Learning the Joy of Prayer... Willow Creek Seeker Sensitive Services... Kenneth Copeland... Benny Hinn... Joyce Meyers... Toronto... Bethel Reading... Hillsong... Prosperity Theology... Reformed Theology... Evangelicalism... Social Gospel... I've led Alpha Groups, Beta Groups, Freedom in Christ Groups, Christianity Explored Groups.

I've met Reinhart Bonke (in passing) ~ Carlos Ancondia ~ Rey de Rey ~ Director of Evangelical Alliance...

I've been in Charismatic ~ reformed church ~ House Fellowship ~ Baptist Church ~ Pentecostal Church. EVERYONE has ideology...

...and the only thing that has remained consistent and trustworthy over 30 years, and that makes the world make sense is an understanding of The Kingdom of God. That's why Jesus said, "**Seek First the Kingdom and all these other things will be given to you...**" (Mt 6 : 33)

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Jesus went throughout Galilee...proclaiming the gospel of the Kingdom.

(Matthew 4 : 23; Matthew 24 : 14)

For years we've been told to "preach the gospel" - which we identify with the penal substitutionary atonement for sin, by Jesus, on the Cross.

We recognise as "The imputation of Christ's righteousness,"

"a gift freely given, a spiritual transaction divinely completed..."

Luther the reformed called it the divine exchange - our unrighteousness and his righteousness switched...

...and this is certainly the beginning of the gospel...but the problem is that we stop here...

For huge swathes of Christians, salvation, the cross, and the resurrection are the finishing line which stove to get people to cross, rather than a foundation on which we then build.

...we call it 'preaching the gospel.' 'Gospel Ministry.' The only problem, Jesus didn't come preaching the gospel. Jesus came preaching **the gospel of Kingdom**. And we've been largely missing this for the majority of the last 2000 years.

Defining 'The Gospel of the Kingdom.'

1. Every kingdom needs a king. (or a monarch)

The United Kingdom has Morarch, named Elizabeth, before her George VI, and after her Charles III.

The Kingdom of God has a King, his name is Jesus.

'...on his robe and on his thigh is written, "King of Kings and Lord of Lords."' (Rev 19 : 16)

...the Lord Jesus Christ...who is the blessed and only sovereign, the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. (1 Tim 6 : 14, 15)

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2. Every king has a realm over he rules and has authority.

Geographically. Elizabeth rules over the United Kingdom of E,NI.,S & W.

Culturally. Elvis 'the King' Presley ruled over the pop world... (or some say M.J.)

Politically. Boris Johnson arguably believes he is (politically) a king.

Economically. Elon Musk is 'King' over the electric car world...

Medically. Hospital consultants are known to have 'God' complexes...

Ethnic. The Jews thought the Kingdom would be Jewish. (Galatians)

But the realm over which Jesus rules and reigns is not political, economic, geographic, or ethnic..

Before Pilate He said, '**...my kingdom is not of this world.**' (Jn 18 : 36)

Disciples asked '**...are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?**' (Acts 1 : 6) [They still didn't get it!]

It is the Rule of Jesus in action.

*Not geographic place, political persuasion or Ethnic bias,
but dynamic practice.*

*The kingdom of God comes as people voluntarily submit and choose to obey
Jesus in the moment, in real time.*

Apl : So yes, the kingdom comes when someone says 'Yes' to Jesus for the first time...BUT

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Eg : The kingdom comes when I'm sitting at my desk working...and my daughter comes in and wants to talk about a lift to see a friend...and I choose, to leave my preparation, listen patiently, and respond wisely.

When the wife is convicted of her passive aggression in the home and chooses in the moment to bite her tongue...

When a retired person volunteers their time to sit with youngsters in the local school and read with them as part of an organisation called 707.

When we do someone a favour, and no-one notices, and we resist the temptation to draw attention to it...

In those moments, a "real-time" dynamic of submission to Jesus occurs.

When I reverse my car into the neighbours...and choose to confess! **In that moment, something comes under the rule & reign of Jesus. (& r'ness, peace, power of Spirit gets kindled)**

When I choose to play laser tag with my son instead of crashing on the sofa... **In that moment, something comes under the rule & reign of Jesus. (& r'ness, peace, power of Spirit gets kindled)**

When I decided not to make excuses for my poor habit of laziness / overwork **In that moment, something comes under the rule & reign of Jesus. (& r'ness, peace, power of Spirit gets kindled)**

Apl: We need to rethink and start applauding the 'coming of the Kingdom of God' NOT ONLY when someone says the sinners prayer...

...but whenever and wherever we see growth in someone's life, and change due to the voluntary submission to the will of Jesus.

(Some 'non-evangelists' may start to feel a little more affirmed and encouraged!)

Some churches may stop being quite so boring and start saying some real stuff! (Other than, "please get some more people to come to the meeting")