

## A Kingdom Perspective

If you stood on a mountaintop and faced the same direction, day in and day out, you would always see the identical view. It's the same with spiritual matters, if you want a specific view (perspective) you'll need to be facing in a specific direction. Notice, it's the particular view or perspective you have that determines your response or reaction to things. Today's message is entitled **A Kingdom Perspective**. I am convinced that this perspective will help us to live a prosperous and victorious life in Christ Jesus. What's more, with many of you, the "view" you have been contemplating (your perspective on life) is a serious hindrance to God's plans and purposes. The principle is this, adopt a Kingdom mindset and you'll get Kingdom rewards - it's as simple as that! **Matthew 6:33** confirms this, "*Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.*"

So what is the Kingdom of God? The idea is so pervasive in Scripture that it is very difficult to be comprehensive. There is much that can be said in trying to give a definition. It must be asserted that the kingdom of God is not a place—though we usually think of kingdoms in geographic terms. It is better understood in terms of the dynamic reign of God. Scholars have identified three strands, which he called its essence: (1) the supremacy of God in the sphere of saving power; (2) the sphere of righteousness; and (3) the state of blessedness. Paul says, "*The kingdom of God is...in power*" (**1 Corinthians 4:20**).

One of the most helpful ways of defining something is by negation—demonstrating what something is not. The word of God does this in several places: We are told that the kingdom of God **is not of this world**. (**John 18:36**) Jesus clearly teaches us that his reign does not have its origin or primary definition in terms of this world. His own teaching on the kingdom was terribly misunderstood by his religious opponents precisely because they interpreted his teaching in terrestrial terms. His reign is heavenly. It has a divine origin and existence.

The kingdom of God **is not in word**, but in power (**1 Corinthians 4:20**). Paul did not merely have some fine sounding religious words—puffs of air audible to those who listen. When he came to the Corinthians, he could demonstrate to them the true spiritual power of the kingdom. The kingdom of God **is not meat and drink**—food (**Romans 14:17**)—but righteousness, and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Paul wants this understood—the passing things of this life, such as food (which by the way is to be consumed to the glory of God, **1 Corinthians 10:31**) do not make up the substance of the kingdom.

Now, let's examine the importance of a Kingdom perspective in spiritual warfare. In John 18:36, Jesus declares, "**My kingdom is not of this world.**" In **Matthew 11:12** we are told, "*From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.*" Another translation says, "*Since the days of John the Baptist, the kingdom of heaven has been advancing with force. And forceful people are taking hold of it.*"

Concerning this scripture, C. H. Spurgeon wrote; "*Do you think you are going to be carried to heaven on a feather bed? Have you got a notion in your heads that the road to paradise is all a lawn, the grass smoothly mown, still waters and green pastures ever and anon to cheer you? You have just got to clear your heads of that deceitful fancy. The way to heaven is up hill and down hill; up hill with difficulty, down hill with trials. It is through fire and through water, through flood and through flame, by the lions and by the leopards. Through the very mouths of dragons is the path to paradise. But the man who finds it so, and who desperately resolves in the*

*strength of God to tread that path—nay, who does not resolve as if he could do nothing else but resolve, but who feels driven, as if with a hurricane behind him, to go into the right road, this man is never unsuccessful, never.... Only the violent are saved, and all the violent are saved. When God makes a man violent after salvation, that man cannot perish. The gates of heaven may sooner be unhinged than that man be robbed of the prize for which he has fought.*"

Every struggle we have with the enemy (in the unseen realm) must be seen in a **Kingdom Perspective** and dealt with through a **Kingdom Mindset**. We should all be "kingdom-minded." There is not only conflict within us, the flesh versus the Holy Spirit, but also a larger battle being fought around us to hinder the advance of the Kingdom of God. Each soldier must understand his role in the commander's battle plan. For a Christian, that means knowing God's purposes and acting in accordance with them. Yes, this means being forceful or even violent! Too many of you are timid, seeking "deliverance" from the battlefield for your own relief, instead of ultimate "victory" to His glory. Jesus knew His purpose. In **Luke 4:43** He said, *"I must preach the kingdom of God... because for this purpose I have been sent."* The very purpose Jesus was sent is to proclaim the Kingdom of God. He came into this world to give us a Kingdom perspective. And as you study His word you will find that it does two things:

- (1) It gives instructions to kingdom people on how to live life with a Kingdom perspective.
- (2) It shows us how to be a true witness for His kingdom.

The Bible provides us with a clear Kingdom view, and it looks something like this:

- Jesus did nothing except what he saw the Father do.
- Jesus assumed the spirit world was real.
- What we call "miracles" were normal occurrences in His kingdom.
- There was no division between the natural and supernatural with Jesus and His ministry.
- God is for us, not against us.
- God's presence is available on a daily basis.
- Resurrection power is accessible to His children.

The above characteristics are by no means exhaustive. Throughout the New Testament you'll see glimpses of the Kingdom and reference to the **Kingdom mindset**. In **Philippians 1:21** the apostle Paul makes this incredible statement, *"For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain."* Literally, *"Christ means everything to me in this life, and when I die I'll have even more."* How was Paul able to obtain this type of eternal perspective? And how was he able to maintain a Kingdom outlook?

First, Paul was able to see God's hand in his problems. He was in jail but he still shared Christ with the prison guards. His Kingdom view was not hindered by the bars and walls that surrounded him. Whether those times were trying circumstances (**Philippians 1:12-14**) or people problems (**Philippians 1:15-18**), Paul always kept his eye upon Jesus - the Author and finisher of his faith. What a Kingdom mindset Paul had!

**Verse 18** – *"What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice."* Paul says, we must decide to rejoice. In this verse I see a resolve in Paul's mind to **rejoice** no matter what the problem.

Rejoicing is not an emotion; it's a decision. It does not mean that I must jump up and down and wave my hands in the air. It means that I will decide my reaction to the problem, and therefore, I decide to **rejoice**. We do not control much in this life but we can control our attitudes. **Rejoicing** when you are going through difficulties is proof that you have a Kingdom mindset.

Walking in the **Kingdom mindset** goes hand in hand with acquiring the kingdom mindset. You cannot separate knowing the Kingdom mindset from walking in the Kingdom mindset. The Bible repeatedly states that the way into the Kingdom is wholehearted pursuit of Jesus. The Kingdom is revealed through the King - Jesus. And the Kingdom reveals Jesus - the King. We learn the Kingdom mindset by obeying Him. God equipped us for this pursuit by creating us with passion and longings. He created us with desires that cannot be denied and that compel us to seek His will, spending much of our time and resources in the pursuit of purpose and fulfillment. *"Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."*

The enemy's greatest strategy against us is to trick us into pursuing other things besides the Kingdom; We are deceived into believing that we must pursue happiness and joy for ourselves. Ironically, we can never find fulfillment while pursuing fulfillment, only by pursuing Jesus Christ. I've heard it said that there is a God-shaped throne in our hearts and nothing else will fit in it. The simple truth is that our greatest fulfillment is only found in Jesus and what His Kingdom has to offer. Our lives would be so much less complicated if we accepted this Kingdom mindset! Satan lies to us and convinces us to seek purpose in things other than the Kingdom or to find fulfillment in something other than the love of Jesus. And if we fall into this trap we become dissatisfied with life.

The way to acquire and walk in a **Kingdom mindset**, and therefore, maintain a **Kingdom perspective**, is to fill ourselves with the knowledge about Jesus and His Kingdom and then to put it into practice in our daily lives. This is much easier said than done. But it is possible if we try. Through the Holy Spirit, God makes available to us every resource we need to walk in the Kingdom mindset and to have victory in every battle. We must remember that every battle begins and ends in our mind. We must train ourselves to be constantly aware of the battle we fight with our flesh and with the enemy. When we fill our minds with knowledge of who Jesus is and how His Kingdom operates, then we can know and walk in the Kingdom mindset and maintain a Kingdom perspective.

The only place to find that knowledge is in the Bible. God's word should always be our main source of learning what the Kingdom is like and how we can know and walk in the Kingdom mindset. But we cannot achieve this if we never read the Bible! The Bible was written so that anyone with the ability to read could understand what God's will is for His people. Besides reading the Word, the only other way we can know God and walk in a Kingdom mindset is through prayer.

Prayer is direct communication with God. Every human being has the ability to communicate with God. The only thing that can stop us from praying is our own disbelief. If we believe that He always hears us, we will pray daily - resting in the secure knowledge that He is willing to act on our behalf. The reason people don't pray is because they do not believe it is worth their time. Reading the Bible and praying are the two ways to acquire and walk in a Kingdom mindset (and maintain a Kingdom view). Diligent prayer and Bible reading will lead to a desire to perform other activities of the Kingdom such as worshipping and doing good deeds for others - while expecting nothing in

return.

As we read and pray, the reality of the kingdom is made known to us and we are transformed (in our thinking) into a **Kingdom mindset** more and more each day – by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in us.

As we do this regularly, our Kingdom perspective will grow and we will see the supernatural power of God activated more frequently. We will see greater return for our good works. We will see people saved as we share the gospel with them. We will see them healed as we lay hands on them, and we will see them freed from the bondage of sin as we pray for their deliverance. God will use us as vessels to accomplish His will with increased favour and success. However, what He can accomplish through us depends solely on our willingness to walk in His Kingdom mindset and to be used as righteous vessels to accomplish His will. The greater our attitude of surrender, our longing to be filled and led the Spirit, and our willingness to be used, the greater the amount of God's power that will be unleashed in and through us.

The Kingdom is full of power! But if you do not see it, it has no impact on your life. Your 'perspective' is vitally important to your success and well-being. So make up your mind right now that you want to nurture a Kingdom perspective. A perspective that is motivated and energised by a Kingdom mindset!