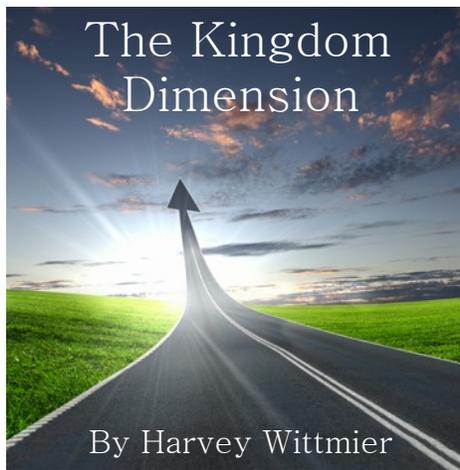


Throughout scripture the writers, inspired by the Holy Spirit, speak of a 'kingdom' ruled by the God-head of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The four gospels alone account for over 120 uses of the word 'kingdom' in describing truth, principles, relationships, and divine Godly rule. There is a 'kingdom of heaven' and a 'kingdom of God'. They infer a supernaturally inspired, supernaturally ruled dimension of mankind where the grace of God has so overwhelmed the heart of man, of people groups, and of nations that God becomes divine, benevolent ruler without a physical throne, so to speak. So overwhelmed with His grace, love and dominion that it is no longer about me, my nation, or my family. It is bigger!!!

The kingdom of God is so much more than me, myself and I! The local church often focuses on personal 'success'. I saw a billboard from a church here in Denver that said "Your success in our passion". No....the kingdom of God is our passion! My personal success in any realm of life must bow to advancing the kingdom beyond self and beyond personal success. The local church is called to build and equip people to maturity and unity and fullness of Christ, so that the kingdom becomes more about 'out there' than 'in here'. It is about more than being a moral person. It is about being a big picture person. It is about living in a kingdom that is not defined by career, age, financial wealth, or geography.

Jesus (Matt. 6:9-13) said we should pray for the Father's '*Kingdom to come, and His will to be done on earth as it is in heaven*'. Therefore we have direct instruction and motivation on how to pray and how to view God's will. It is His will to respond to and bring reality to the prayer His son gave to the church. God's desire, and therefore the church's desire, is to bring the will of heaven to earth, thus ***His kingdom comes to earth.***

Scripture is clear that we must '*enter*' the kingdom (Matt. 5:20; 18:3; Mk. 9:47; John 3:5). The supernatural aspect of the kingdom of God is within the believer in Christ (Luke 17:21). We enter the kingdom by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ as Lord, Savior and Messiah and as a returning King that will reign on the earth. But the kingdom does not stop there. It flows in principles and concepts. Jesus was continually saying 'the kingdom is like _____'. He continually tried to draw a picture that magnified the kingdom to greater understanding and dimension than what goes on inside you and me. The global church of Jesus Christ is called to advance the kingdom of God on earth by praying and being the answer



to prayer that ***His will come to earth.*** His will is that people will accept Jesus Christ as their internal heart ruler, thus coming into the supernatural Kingdom of God, while occupying earth. Each person who accepts that rule, then expands the dimensions of the Kingdom. But we don't complacently live satisfied with our personal salvation! There is more!

The kingdom knows no bounds of denomination or sect, but lives in the vibrant, passionate hearts of the people of God who know their identity in Christ as ***servants and as sons of God.*** It is like the 'remnant' mentality seen in the exiled Hebrews coming back to Jerusalem with Ezra and Nehemiah. They passionately and purposefully restored the heart of worship and the walls of Jerusalem. Their focus was on that kingdom. They wanted ***all the world*** to know Jehovah! They were single-minded, powerful, and successful from God's perspective. Such believers in Christ exist all across the earth today. Scripture says we are '*heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ*' (Rom. 8:17) in His eternal supernatural kingdom. We inherit, occupy, and share responsibility in this kingdom. It is more than simply going to heaven someday. We serve in His kingdom as sons of the most high God, ***ruling a sphere of influence*** here on earth and looking to the fullness of that rule and influence upon the return of Jesus Christ.

Our personal kingdom sphere is where we advocate, advance and assert His kingdom over our personal surroundings. We each have personal kingdom spheres (family, workplace, church, ministries, government, etc.) However, there are times when interests in our personal sphere must give way to help bring forth a bigger, divinely-inspired agenda outside our sphere, but well within God's bigger picture. For example, in our church we sacrifice financially and in numerical attendance in order to take the gospel to nations and regions beyond our local church. If we used all our church finances to only minister to us, to make us more comfortable, to get more people in the door, to put on a good production, etc. we could possibly be larger in number and offer more 'eye appeal' to the seeker or casual believer. Some may see that as not providing enough focus on 'me'. However, the scripture is very clear that we are to grow up in maturity to a place where 'they' is more important than 'me'. We impact our sphere by growing up; living on meat, not just milk. As we do so, we can impact God's bigger agenda that needs to be advanced and established beyond our local footprint to a kingdom footprint. †