

GENERAL SUBJECT
LIVING IN THE REALITY OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Message One

Living under the Direct Rule of God by the Intuition of Our Spirit according to the Sense of Life

Scripture Reading: John 3:3, 5, 15; 1 Cor. 2:11; Eph. 4:18; Rom. 8:6

- I. The kingdom of God is God Himself—Mark 1:15; Matt. 6:33; John 3:3:**
 - A. God's kingdom has God as its content; God Himself is everything as the content of His kingdom—1 Cor. 4:20; 15:28.
 - B. God is life, having the nature, ability, and shape of the divine life, which forms the realm of God's ruling—Eph. 4:18; John 3:15.
 - C. The life of God is the kingdom of God and also our entrance into the kingdom of God; we must see this basic principle—vv. 3, 5, 15.
 - D. The nature of the kingdom of God is divine because it is the kingdom of God.
 - E. In actuality, God's reigning over us is not an outward matter but a matter of the innate ability of the divine life—Rom. 8:2.
- II. The kingdom of God is the realm of the divine life for this life to move, work, rule, and govern so that life may accomplish its purpose— Matt. 6:13b; John 3:3, 5, 15-16:**
 - A. The kingdom of God is an organism constituted with God's life as the realm of life for His ruling, in which He reigns by His life and expresses Himself as the Divine Trinity in the divine life—v. 5; 15:1-8, 16, 26.
 - B. The unique way to enter into the kingdom of God is to receive God as life and gain God Himself; this is regeneration—3:5, 15; 1 John 5:11-12.
 - C. Because through regeneration we receive the divine life, the life of God, regeneration is the unique entrance into the kingdom—John 3:3, 5, 15.
- III. As those who have been born of God to enter into the kingdom of God, we need to be recovered to the direct rule of God by the intuition of our spirit—Matt. 5:3; 1 Cor. 2:11; Mark 2:8:**
 - A. In the dispensation of innocence we see the principle of God's rule; in the dispensation of conscience, the principle of self-rule; and in the dispensation of human government, the principle of man's rule:
 1. Before the fall man was ruled directly by God; he lived before God and was responsible to God—Gen. 2:16-17.
 2. From the time of Adam's expulsion from the garden of Eden to the time of Noah's departure from the ark, God established the conscience within man to represent Himself in ruling over man—Acts 24:16.
 3. After the flood, because man was subject neither to God's rule nor to self-rule, God authorized man to represent Himself in ruling over man—Gen. 9:6; Rom. 13:1.
 - B. From the point of view of government, man's fall was a fall from God's rule to self-rule and then from self-rule to man's rule.
 - C. Because man has been degraded from God's rule to human rule, God, in saving man, must recover him from human rule to divine rule so that once again man may live before God in simplicity and under His direct authority—Matt. 5:3, 8; 6:33.
 - D. In God's plan of recovery man must retrace his steps from human rule to God's rule, passing through self-rule in between.
 - E. The final goal of dealing with the conscience is not merely to restore us to self-rule but to bring us back to God's rule and to recover us to God Himself and, thus, to live in the presence of God—5:3.
 - F. There is a great difference between self-rule and God's rule:
 1. Self-rule means that we live by the feelings of our conscience, being responsible to our conscience—Acts 24:16.
 2. God's rule means that we live by the intuition of our spirit, being responsible to the intuition, that is, being responsible to God:

- a. Within our spirit there is a function to have a direct sense, to realize, discern, and perceive things; this is the intuition in our spirit— 1 Cor. 2:11; Mark 2:8:
 - (1) Intuition is a direct sense of God and a direct knowledge of God.
 - (2) The intuition in our spirit is the feeling of God, and it accepts only that which is of God, of the Spirit, and of life—Rom. 8:2.
- b. When we live by our intuition and are controlled by our intuition, we are living in the presence of God and are ruled directly by Him.

IV. When we are under God's rule, we live by the intuition of our spirit according to the sense of life—v. 6:

- A. The divine life is the highest life, with the richest, strongest, and keenest feeling (Eph. 4:18); this feeling is the sense of life.
- B. The sense of life makes us know whether we are living in the natural life or in the divine life, whether we are living in the flesh or in the Spirit— Rom. 8:6.
- C. The sense of life guides, governs, controls, and directs us—v. 4.
- D. We live in the reality of the kingdom of God by the sense of life, with the positive feelings of peace, rest, strength, satisfaction, release, liveliness, watering, brightness, and comfort—v. 6.
- E. The divine life in our spirit knows the kingdom of God—John 3:3, 5-6, 15.
- F. The kingdom of God has its reality, and this reality is the living of the divine life under the direct rule of God—Matt. 5:3, 8, 20; 6:33; 7:21.

Message Two

Living the Kingdom Life for the Growth of the Seed of the Kingdom in the Human Heart for God's Building

Scripture Reading: Luke 17:20-21; Mark 4:3, 26-29; Dan. 2:34-35, 44; Rev. 1:9; 11:15, 18;
1 Thes. 3:13; Prov. 4:23; Matt. 13:3-9, 19-23

- I. The kingdom of God, the reign of God, is the totality of Christ being life to us with all His activities:**
 - A. A kingdom is the totality of a certain life; the plant life is the plant kingdom, the animal life is the animal kingdom, and the human life is the human kingdom; in the same way the divine life (God's life—Christ Himself—John 14:6a; 3:5-6) is the divine kingdom, God's kingdom.
 - B. The kingdom in its reality is the Lord Jesus as the Spirit—2 Cor. 3:17; Matt. 12:28.
 - C. Just as the plant kingdom is a realm of the plant species, and the animal kingdom is a realm of the animal species, so the kingdom of God is a realm of the divine species:
 1. God became flesh to enter into the human species, and man becomes God in life and nature, but not in His divine Godhead, to enter into the divine species.
 2. In order to enter into the divine realm, the realm of the divine species, we need to be born of God to have the divine nature and the divine life—John 3:3-8; 2 Pet. 1:4.
 3. By regeneration we have become God-men in the divine species, that is, in the kingdom of God.
- II. The kingdom of God is Christ Himself as the seed of life sown into His believers, God's chosen people, and developing into a realm over which God can rule as His kingdom in His divine life—Luke 17:20-21; John 14:6a; Mark 4:3, 26:**
 - A. The entrance into the kingdom is regeneration (John 3:5-6), and the development of the kingdom is the believers' growth in the divine life (2 Pet. 1:3-11).
 - B. The kingdom is the church life today, in which the faithful believers live (Rom. 14:17), and it will develop into the coming kingdom as a reward to be inherited (Gal. 5:21; Eph. 5:5) by the overcoming saints in the millennium (Rev. 20:4, 6).
 - C. Eventually, the kingdom will consummate in the New Jerusalem as the eternal kingdom of God, an eternal realm of the eternal blessing of God's eternal life, which all God's redeemed will enjoy in the new heaven and new earth for eternity—21:1-4; 22:1-5, 14.
- III. "He said, So is the kingdom of God: as if a man cast seed on the earth"—Mark 4:26:**
 - A. This seed is the seed of the divine life (1 John 3:9; 1 Pet. 1:23) sown into the believers, indicating that the kingdom of God, which is the issue and goal of the Lord's gospel, and the church in this age (Rom. 14:17) are a matter of life, the life of God, which sprouts, grows, bears fruit, and produces a harvest (1 Cor. 3:6-9; Rev. 14:4, 15-16).
 - B. The Triune God in humanity (Col. 2:9) is the seed, "the gene," of the kingdom of God to be sown into God's chosen people that He might grow in them, live in them, and be expressed from within them to develop into God's ruling realm (Mark 4:26-29; 1 Cor. 3:9):
 1. The intrinsic element of the entire teaching of the New Testament is that the Triune God has been incarnated in order to be sown into His chosen people and develop within them into a kingdom.
 2. God's goal is the full development of the kingdom of God:
 - a. In the Gospels we have the sowing of the seed, the gene, of the kingdom—Mark 4:3, 14; Matt. 9:35.
 - b. In the Acts we have the propagation and spreading of this sowing by thousands of sowers who had received the seed, the gene, of the kingdom—6:7; 12:24; 19:20.
 - c. In the Epistles we see the growing of the seed, the gene, of the kingdom—1 Cor. 3:6, 9b; 2 Pet. 1:3, 11.
 - d. The harvest of this seed is found in the book of Revelation with the reaping of the firstfruits and the harvest—14:4, 15-16; Mark 4:29; Matt. 13:39.

- e. The millennial kingdom will be the uttermost development of the seed, the gene, of the kingdom with the Son as the King and all the overcomers as His co-kings, the "kingdom-gene people"—Rev. 20:6.
 - f. The New Jerusalem, God's eternal kingdom, is the fullest development of the kingdom seed, the gene, sown by Jesus the Nazarene in the four Gospels—Rev. 21:2; 22:1, 3, 5b.
- C. As the stone cut out without hands, Christ will come as the smiting stone with His over-coming bride to smash and crush the entire human government of mankind, and the corporate Christ (Christ with His overcomers) will become a great mountain (a great kingdom—the eternal kingdom of God) to fill the whole earth forever and ever—Dan. 2:34-35, 44; 4:26; Rev. 19:11, 14:
- 1. In Mark 4:26 Christ was sown as a seed to be the kingdom of God, but He grows in His increase to become a stone, the increased kingdom of God; He will increase further and further until He becomes a great mountain, the eternal kingdom of God for His increase in administration—Rev. 11:15.
 - 2. The stone refers to Christ as the centrality, and the mountain refers to Him as the universality.

IV. According to the Bible, growth equals building; this takes place by the growth of the divine seed of life, the seed of the kingdom within us—1 John 3:9; Col. 2:19; Eph. 4:15-16; Mark 4:26; Luke 17:20-21:

- A. Ephesians 3:17 reveals that the Triune God has come into us to do a building work with Himself as the element and also with something from us as the material; this is illustrated by the parable of the sower in Matthew 13; the Lord sows Himself as the seed of life into men's hearts, the soil, that He might grow and live in them and be expressed from within them—v. 3:
- 1. The wayside signifies the heart that is hardened by worldly traffic and cannot open to understand, to comprehend, the word of the kingdom; the birds signify the evil one, Satan, who comes and snatches away the word of the kingdom sown in the hardened heart—vv. 4, 19.
 - 2. The rocky places that do not have much earth signify the heart that is shallow in receiving the word of the kingdom; deep within such a heart are rocks—hidden sins, personal desires, self-seeking, and self-pity—which hinder the seed from taking root in the depths of the heart—vv. 5, 20-21:
 - a. The sun with its scorching heat signifies affliction or persecution (vv. 6, 21); the scorching heat of the sun causes the seed that is not rooted to wither.
 - b. The heat of the sun is for the growth and ripening of the crop, which take place once the seed has been deeply rooted; but because of the seed's lack of root, the sun's heat, which should cause growth and ripening, becomes a deathblow to the seed.
 - 3. The thorns signify the anxiety of the age and the deceitfulness of riches, which utterly choke the word, preventing it from growing in the heart and causing it to become unfruitful—v. 7, 22; Luke 12:15-21.
 - 4. The good earth signifies the good heart that is not hardened by worldly traffic, that is without hidden sins, and that is without the anxiety of the age and the deceitfulness of riches; such a heart gives every inch of its ground to receive the word that the word may grow, bear fruit, and produce even a hundredfold—Matt. 13:8, 23.
- B. The seed is sown into the soil to grow with the nutrients of the soil; as a result, the produce is a composition of elements from both the seed and the soil—v. 23.
- C. We have within us certain nutrients created by God as a preparation for His coming into us to grow in us; God has created the human spirit with the human nutrients along with the human heart as the soil for the divine seed—cf. 1 Pet. 3:4.
- D. The rate at which we grow in life depends not on the divine seed but on how many nutrients we afford this seed; the more nutrients we supply, the faster the seed will grow and the more it will flourish—Psa. 78:8; Matt. 5:3, 8:
- 1. If we remain in our soul, in our natural man, there will not be any nutrients for the growth of the divine seed, but if we are strengthened with power into our inner man and if we pay attention to our spirit and exercise our spirit, the nutrients will be supplied and Christ will make His home in our hearts—Eph. 3:16-17; Rom. 8:6; 1 Tim. 4:7; cf. Jude 19.
 - 2. If we are going to have the Lord as the seed of life grow within us to be our full enjoyment, we have to open to the Lord absolutely and cooperate with Him to deal thoroughly with our heart.

- E. On the one hand, God strengthens us with Himself as the element, and on the other hand, we afford the nutrients; through these two, God in Christ carries out His intrinsic building—the building of His home—in our entire being—Eph. 3:16-19.

V. The heart is the conglomerate of man's inward parts, man's chief representative, his acting agent:

- A. Our heart is a composition of all the parts of our soul—the mind, the emotion, and the will (Matt. 9:4; Heb. 4:12; Acts 11:23; John 14:1; 16:22)—plus one part of our spirit—the conscience (Heb. 10:22; 1 John 3:20).
- B. Our heart and its condition before God are organically, intrinsically, and inseparably related to the condition of our spirit, soul, and body:
 - 1. The exercise of the spirit works only when our heart is active; if man's heart is indifferent, the spirit is imprisoned within and is unable to show forth its capability—Matt. 5:3, 8; Psa. 78:8; Eph. 3:16-17.
 - 2. The soul is the person himself, but the heart is the person in action; the heart is the acting agent, the acting commissioner, of our entire being.
 - 3. The activities and movements of our physical body depend on our physical heart; in like manner, our daily living, the way we act and behave, depends on what kind of psychological heart we have.
- C. The heart is the entrance and exit of life, the "switch" of life; if the heart is not right, life in the spirit is hindered, and the law of life cannot work freely and without obstruction to reach every part of our being; though life has great power, this great power is controlled by our small heart—Prov. 4:23; Matt. 12:33-37; cf. Ezek. 36:26-27.

VI. In order to live a holy life for the church life, the kingdom life, we need the Lord to establish our heart blameless in holiness—1 Thes. 3:13:

- A. God is the unchanging One, but according to our natural birth our heart is changeable, both in our relationship with others and with the Lord—cf. 2 Tim. 4:9-11.
- B. There is no one who, according to his natural, human life, is steadfast in his heart; because our heart changes so easily, it is not at all trustworthy—Jer. 17:9-10; 13:23.
- C. Our heart is blamable because it is changeable; an unchanging heart is a blameless heart—Psa. 57:7; 108:1; 112:7.
- D. In God's salvation the renewing of the heart is once for all; however, in our experience our heart is renewed continually because it is changeable—Ezek. 36:26; 2 Cor. 4:16.
- E. Because our heart is changeable, it needs to be renewed continually by the sanctifying Spirit so that our heart can be established, built up, in the state of being holy, the state of being separated unto God, occupied by God, possessed by God, and saturated with God—Titus 3:5; Rom. 6:19, 22.

VII. In order to be those "who are being sanctified" in living a holy life for the church life, the kingdom life, we must cooperate with the inner operating of the One "who sanctifies" by dealing with our heart—Heb. 2:10-11; Psa. 139:23-24:

- A. God wants our heart to be soft:
 - 1. When God deals with our heart, He takes away the heart of stone out of our flesh and gives us a heart of flesh, a soft heart—Ezek. 36:26.
 - 2. To be soft means that our heart is submissive and yielding toward the Lord, not stiff-necked and rebellious—cf. Exo. 32:9.
 - 3. A soft heart is a heart that is not hardened by worldly traffic—Matt. 13:4.
 - 4. God softens our heart by using His love to move us; if love cannot move us, He uses His hand through the environment to discipline us until our heart is softened—2 Cor. 5:14; 4:16-18; Heb. 12:6-7; cf. Jer. 48:11.
- B. God wants our heart to be pure:
 - 1. A pure heart is a heart that loves God and wants God; besides God, it has no other love, inclination, or desire—Psa. 73:25; cf. Jer. 32:39.
 - 2. Our heart should be single for God so that we are fearful of nothing except offending Him and losing His presence—Psa. 86:11; Isa. 11:1-2.

3. Our goal and our aim should be God Himself, and we should not have any other motive—Matt. 5:8.
 4. We must pursue Christ "with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart"—2 Tim. 2:22; 1 Tim. 1:5; Psa. 73:1.
- C. God wants our heart to be loving:
1. A loving heart is a heart in which the emotion loves God, wants God, thirsts after God, and yearns for God, having a personal, affectionate, private, and spiritual relationship with the Lord—42:1-2; S. S. 1:1-4.
 2. We must turn our heart back to the Lord again and again and have it continually renewed so that we may have a new and fresh love toward the Lord—2 Cor. 3:16; Hymns, #546 and #547.
 3. All spiritual experiences start with love in the heart; if we do not love the Lord, it is impossible to receive any kind of spiritual experience—cf. Eph. 6:24.
 4. Our love for the Lord qualifies, perfects, and equips us to speak for the Lord with His authority; if we love the Lord to the uttermost, we will be filled and overflowing with Him—John 21:15-17; Matt. 26:6-13; 28:18-20.
- D. God wants our heart to be at peace:
1. A heart at peace is a heart in which the conscience is without offense, condemnation, or reproach—Acts 24:16; 1 John 3:19-21; Heb. 10:22.
 2. If we confess our sins in the light of God's presence, we receive His forgiveness and His cleansing so that we may enjoy uninterrupted fellowship with God with a good conscience—1 John 1:7, 9; 1 Tim. 1:5.
 3. The result of practicing fellowship with God in prayer is that we enjoy the peace of God, which is actually God as peace mounting guard over our hearts and thoughts in Christ, keeping us calm and tranquil—Phil. 4:6-7.
 4. We need to let the peace of Christ arbitrate in our hearts by forgiving one another to put on the one new man—Col. 3:13-15.

Message Three

A Life of Righteousness, Peace, and Joy in the Holy Spirit

Scripture Reading: Rom. 14:17; Matt. 5:6, 9, 20; 6:33; Psa. 89:14; Col. 3:15; Acts 13:52

I. The kingdom of God is righteousness—Rom. 14:17:

- A. Righteousness denotes that which is right and proper; those who live in the kingdom of God should be right and proper toward others, toward things, and toward themselves—Matt. 5:6; 6:33.
- B. Our experience of Christ rests upon the foundation of God's righteousness, especially upon His being righteous in the blood of Jesus—1 John 1:7, 9.
- C. The most righteous persons are those who live Christ; the Christ who lives within us will make us right in every way—Phil. 1:21a; Gal. 2:20.
- D. According to the New Testament, righteousness has four main aspects:
 1. Righteousness is being right with persons, things, and matters according to God's righteous and strict requirements—Matt. 5:20.
 2. Righteousness is the outward expression of the Christ who lives in us as the life-giving Spirit—2 Cor. 3:9, 18; 1 Cor. 15:45b:
 - a. The Spirit is the essence of God living, moving, and acting within us, and righteousness is the essence of God manifested outwardly as God's image to express Him—Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10.
 - b. The divine essence that has been inscribed into us will have a particular expression, and this expression is righteousness—2 Cor. 3:3, 9; Matt. 5:20.
 - c. Righteousness signifies the expression of God's image—Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10.
 3. Righteousness is a matter of God's kingdom—Matt. 6:33:
 - a. God's throne is established with righteousness as the foundation—Psa. 89:14; 97:2.
 - b. Righteousness issues from God for His administration and thus is related to God's rule and government—Isa. 32:1.
 - c. Righteousness first issues in the image of God and then establishes the kingdom of God—Rom. 8:4, 29; 14:17.
 4. Righteousness is a matter of being right with God in our being—1 Cor. 15:34; 2 Cor. 5:21:
 - a. To be right with God in our being is to have an inner being that is transparent and crystal clear—an inner being in the mind and will of God—Rev. 21:11, 18b, 21b; 22:1.
 - b. To be righteous in this way is to become the righteousness of God in Christ—2 Cor. 5:21.

II. The kingdom of God is peace—Rom. 14:17:

- A. Our Father is the God of peace, having a peaceful life with a peaceful nature—15:33; 16:20; Matt. 5:9; Heb. 12:14; James 3:18; 2 Thes. 3:16a.
- B. The peace that is in Christ, the peace that is Christ, the peace that was made by Christ, and the peace announced by Christ as the gospel are the peace of the Body and in the Body—Eph. 2:14-15, 17; 6:23; Gal. 6:16; Col. 1:20; 3:15:
 1. To live in the Body and to keep the oneness of the Body are to live in the peace of the Body; in and for the Body of Christ, we must keep the oneness of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace—Eph. 4:3.
 2. As far as it depends on us, we should live in peace with everyone—Rom. 12:18; Heb. 12:14.
- C. For the Body life we need to let the peace of Christ arbitrate all things in our hearts—Col. 3:15:
 1. The arbitrating peace of Christ is Christ working within us to exercise His rule over us and to make the final decision—Isa. 9:6-7.
 2. For the peace of Christ to arbitrate in our hearts, it must be enthroned as a ruler and decider in everything—Heb. 7:2.
 3. In the Body life the peace of God guards our hearts and our thoughts in Christ Jesus—Phil. 4:7, 9.
 4. In the Body life our hearts should be in a peaceful condition toward the members, for we were called to the peace of Christ in one Body—Col. 3:15.

III. The kingdom of God is joy in the Holy Spirit—Rom. 14:17:

- A. God wants us to enjoy Him and live for His purpose—Neh. 8:10; Eph. 3:11.
- B. Living the kingdom life in the church requires that we live joyfully to God in the Holy Spirit—1 Pet. 1:8; Matt. 5:11-12; Acts 5:41; 13:52; Phil. 2:17-18:
 - 1. Not being joyful indicates that we are defeated, that something is wrong with us, and that we have cast off the divine restraint; as a result, our spirit is weighed down, and we cannot rejoice—4:4; 1 Thes. 5:16.
 - 2. If we live a life of righteousness and peace, we will live joyfully to God in the Holy Spirit—Rom. 14:17.
- C. The Triune God is a God of joy, and the apostles are fellow workers with the saints for their joy—15:13; John 15:11; 17:13; Acts 13:52; Gal. 5:22; 2 Cor. 1:24; Phil. 1:25; 2:17-18.
- D. We may experience the joy of the Lord's word being in our heart—Jer. 15:16.
- E. A sweet thought revealed in the Word of God is that in Christ God has given Himself to us as grace to be our enjoyment—John 1:14, 16-17; 2 Cor. 13:14:
 - 1. In the first reference in the Bible to God's relationship with man, God presents Himself to man as food; this shows that God wants us to enjoy Him— Gen. 2:7, 9; Psa. 16:11; Jer. 15:16.
 - 2. God's desire is to give Himself to us to be our enjoyment—Neh. 8:10.
 - 3. The secret to the Christian life is not how much we work for Him but how much we absorb Him and enjoy Him—John 15:4-5; Col. 2:6-7.
 - 4. If we look away unto Jesus and see that there is a joy set before us, we will be able to run with endurance the race which is set before us—Heb. 12:1-2.
 - 5. We may "exult with joy that is unspeakable and full of glory"—1 Pet. 1:8.

Message Four

Living the Kingdom Life by Taking Care of Others according to the Spirit and by Realizing God's Forgiveness

Scripture Reading: Matt. 7:1-12; 18:1-35

- I. Matthew 7:1-12 is concerning the principles of the kingdom people in dealing with others and reveals that the heavenly ruling over the kingdom people requires that they take care of others according to the spirit—cf. Judg. 9:8-9:**
- A. The kingdom people, living in a humble spirit under the heavenly ruling of the kingdom, always judge themselves, not others—Matt. 7:1:
 - 1. If we judge others with righteousness, we will be judged with righteousness by the Lord (v. 2); if we judge others with mercy, we will be judged with mercy by the Lord; mercy triumphs over judgment—James 2:13.
 - 2. For us to deal with others, we must reject ourselves and consider them, sympathize with them, and be merciful toward them; the splinter in our brother's eye must remind us of the beam in our own eye—Matt. 7:3.
 - 3. As long as the beam remains in our eye, our vision is blurred, and we cannot see clearly—vv. 4-5.
 - B. We should not give that which is holy to the dogs or cast our pearls before the hogs, lest they trample them with their feet and turn and tear us—v. 6:
 - 1. That which is holy must refer to the objective truth, which belongs to God; your pearls must refer to the subjective experiences, which are ours.
 - 2. Dogs do not have hoofs, nor do they chew the cud; hogs have divided hoofs but do not chew the cud; thus, both are unclean—Lev. 11:27, 7; cf. Acts 10:1-15, 28.
 - 3. According to the revelation in 2 Peter 2:12, 19-22, and Philippians 3:2, dogs and hogs in Matthew 7:6 refer to people who are religious but not clean.
 - 4. When we talk to others about the truth or about our precious experience of Christ, we must perceive and determine whether or not they have the capacity to receive what we intend to share.
 - C. As we are contacting people and dealing with them, we must ask, seek, and knock for the proper way to contact them—Matt. 7:7-8; 1 Tim. 5:1-2:
 - 1. To ask is to pray in a common way, to seek is to supplicate in a specific way, and to knock is to demand in the most intimate and most earnest way.
 - 2. The best way for the kingdom people to contact others is according to the kingdom and according to the Spirit—Matt. 7:9-12; cf. Luke 11:13.
 - 3. We need to pray ourselves into God that we may receive the riches embodied in His Spirit to feed ourselves and all those under our care—vv. 1-13.
 - 4. We must learn to do everything through the cross and by the Spirit to minister Christ into others for His Body—cf. 2 Chron. 1:10.
- II. To live the kingdom life, the God-man life, the church life, we must be humble and not despise any believer but love our brother and forgive our brother—Matt. 18:1-35; 5:48; 7:13-14; Rom. 14:17:**
- A. To live the kingdom life, we must humble ourselves and become like little children— Matt. 18:2-4.
 - B. To live the kingdom life, we should not stumble others or set up any stumbling block— vv. 5-9; cf. 11:6.
 - C. To live the kingdom life, we should not despise even a little believer—18:10-14.
 - D. To live the kingdom life, we should forgive our brother without limit—vv. 21-35:
 - 1. We must forgive the offending brother even seventy times seven—vv. 21-22.
 - 2. We must forgive others as the Lord has forgiven us:
 - a. Our debt to the Lord is impossible to pay off—vv. 23-26.
 - b. The Lord forgave our debts in our defeated Christian life for the restoration of our fellowship with Him—v. 27.
 - c. Another's debt to us is very small compared with our debt to the Lord—v. 28.

- d. If we do not forgive the brother who sins against us, it will grieve the other brothers, and they may bring this matter to the Lord—vv. 28-31.
- e. If we do not forgive a brother from our heart today, we will not be allowed to enter into the kingdom in the coming age—vv. 32-35; cf. Mark 11:25-26.

III. We must see and realize that in the kingdom of God there are five kinds of forgiveness:

- A. There is eternal forgiveness—this relates to the matter of life:
 - 1. The forgiveness that comes with our salvation is eternal forgiveness.
 - 2. Once we are forgiven, we are forgiven forever; we receive eternal life forever, and we are justified forever—Luke 24:47; Rom. 4:7-8; Psa. 103:12.
 - 3. The moment we believe into the Lord Jesus, we are forgiven of all our sins; the Lord removes all our sins, and we are left with no trace of sin before God—Acts 10:43; Heb. 8:12.
- B. There is instrumental forgiveness—this relates to the church:
 - 1. In sending the Holy Spirit to His church, the Lord charged the church to be His representative on the earth; forgiveness is now granted through the church—John 20:22-23.
 - 2. Instrumental forgiveness is God's proclamation of forgiveness through man; if a person is newly saved but does not know the meaning of forgiveness, it is good for a representative of the church to stand up and say to him, "You have accepted the Lord today— you can thank Him because He has forgiven you of your sins!"
- C. There is restorative forgiveness—this relates to fellowship:
 - 1. When we sin in our daily life, our conscience condemns us, and our fellowship with God is interrupted—Acts 24:16; 1 Tim. 1:5; 2 Tim. 1:3, 9.
 - 2. Our Father-son relationship with God in life can never be changed, but sin can damage our fellowship with God; we have to confess our sins and offenses to God before we can secure our forgiveness in fellowship—1 John 1:7, 9; 2:1-2.
 - 3. If we have offended our brothers, we must confess to them as well—Matt. 5:23-24.
 - 4. We have to maintain ourselves in constant fellowship with God; when we come to God, we have to acknowledge our sinful acts honestly and ask Him for forgiveness; if we do this, our fellowship with God will be restored, and our hearts will be filled with the joy of salvation—Psa. 51:12; Prov. 15:13a; 17:22a; 15:15b.
 - 5. The secret of the Christian life is maintaining ourselves in constant fellowship with God; if we fail, we must ask God for forgiveness, and we must recover the sweet fellowship we had with God—1 John 1:9.
- D. There is governmental forgiveness—this relates to discipline:
 - 1. This kind of forgiveness involves God's arrangement, sovereignty, discipline, and hand; God's government is His way of doing things; it is His administration.
 - 2. God's governmental forgiveness is related to the way God manages, rules over, and deals with us—Gal. 6:7.
 - 3. When we sin against God, He will forgive us, and our fellowship with Him can be restored, but He may change His way with us.
 - 4. David confessed his sins and admitted his guilt in order to be forgiven by God (2 Sam. 12:13; Psa. 51), but God would cause the son born to Uriah's wife to die and the sword not to depart from David's house (2 Sam. 12:7-15).
 - 5. When we are under God's governmental discipline, the only thing we can do is learn to humble ourselves under His mighty hand (1 Pet. 5:5-7); the more we reject God's governmental hand, the more problems we will encounter.
 - 6. After Moses struck the rock in Meribah (Num. 20:10-12, 24; 27:14), he fell under God's governmental hand:
 - a. In being angry when God was not angry, Moses did not represent God rightly in His holy nature, and in striking the rock twice, he did not keep God's word in His economy; thus, Moses offended both God's holy nature and His divine economy.

- b. Because of this, even though he was intimate with God and may be considered a companion of God (Exo. 33:11), Moses lost the right to enter into the good land.
 - c. In all that we say and do concerning God's people, our attitude must be according to God's holy nature, and our actions must be according to His divine economy; this is to sanctify Him.
7. Learn to be generous to others and learn always to forgive; if you criticize others lightly, condemn others easily, keep complaining about the conduct of others, and continue to count the ill treatment you receive from them, this will bring you under God's governmental hand; if you are severe toward others, God will also be severe toward you—Matt. 6:15; 18:23-35:
- a. We have to learn to fear God, to revere God, to respect God, to honor God, to be in awe of God—Psa. 2:11-12; 86:11; 2 Cor. 5:10-11; Isa. 11:2.
 - b. When others are in trouble, that is the time for us to help them, not the time for us to criticize them—cf. Gen. 14:14-16.
 - c. There are many brothers who have fallen miserably today for one reason only— they have criticized others too severely in the past; many of their weaknesses today are the very weaknesses that they criticized in the past.
 - d. We must be generous toward others if we want to avoid God's governmental hand; may we learn to love and forbear one another—Eph. 4:32.
- E. There is kingdom forgiveness—this relates to administration:
- 1. If we treat people too harshly or have an unforgiving spirit in this age, we will be disciplined in the kingdom age—Luke 6:38; Matt. 18:33-35.
 - 2. If we treat others in a mean way and criticize others mercilessly, God will deal with us in the same way in the future—7:1-2.
 - 3. May the Lord grant us the grace to be those who show mercy to others, who do not deal with others in meanness, sharpness, or severity, so that we can obtain mercy from God in that day—5:7; cf. 2 Tim. 1:16, 18.

Message Five

Seeking First the Kingdom of God and His Righteousness

Scripture Reading: Matt. 6:19-34; 5:20; Psa. 89:14; Phil. 3:9; 2 Cor. 3:8-9; 5:21

- I. The Father's kingdom is the reality of the kingdom of the heavens today, the reality of the church life today, and will be the manifestation of the kingdom of the heavens in the coming age—Matt. 5:3; 13:43:**
- A. "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on the earth... But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven"—6:19a, 20a:
 - 1. The basic attitude of every believer should be to not love money—Heb. 13:5; 1 Tim. 6:10; 2 Tim. 3:2.
 - 2. If we lay up for ourselves treasures on earth, we will always be serving mammon and not God—Matt. 6:19a, 24.
 - 3. The governing principle is that to lay up treasures on earth is against God's economy and expresses a kind of unbelief in His mercy and care—vv. 32b-33.
 - B. "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also"—v. 21:
 - 1. Our heart always follows its treasure.
 - 2. No matter what we may say, our heart will always be where our treasure is.
 - C. "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon"—v. 24:
 - 1. Our heart must be single in order to serve God; we cannot serve God and mammon (riches) at the same time—Luke 16:13.
 - 2. The unrighteousness of mammon is related to its nature (vv. 9, 11); as something invented by Satan, the nature of mammon before God is completely incompatible with every aspect of God, so in God's eyes its nature is unrighteous.
 - 3. The controversy of the universe is whether man will worship God or mammon— Matt. 4:9-10; 6:24.
 - 4. Deliverance from mammon is the first and foremost condition for one to serve God—vv. 21, 24; Luke 16:13; Heb. 13:5.
 - D. "Do not be anxious for your life... For all these things the Gentiles are anxiously seeking... Do not be anxious for tomorrow"—Matt. 6:25a, 32a, 34a:
 - 1. Our human life is a life of anxiety and is constituted with anxiety—v. 32a.
 - 2. There is no anxiety in the divine life and the divine nature; God's life is a life of enjoyment, rest, comfort, and satisfaction—Phil. 4:6-7; 1 Pet. 5:7.
 - 3. As we are fulfilling our human duty to work to sustain our living, we should not do anything for the sake of our anxiety, because we have a divine life that knows no anxiety—Luke 12:25.
 - 4. The kingdom people should never live in tomorrow but always in today—Matt. 6:34.
 - 5. Concerning our living, we have the heavenly Father Himself to take care of us; as He takes care of our material needs, He dispenses His element into us, and we experience the divine dispensing through the Father's care for our physical necessities—vv. 32-33; John 16:27a; Eph. 1:3.
- II. The Father's righteousness is the righteousness expressed by the keeping of the new law of the kingdom (Matt. 5:20); this righteousness is Christ, who is lived out by the kingdom people:**
- A. Righteousness is to be right with persons, things, and matters before God according to His righteous and strict requirements—v. 20.
 - B. There are two aspects of Christ being righteousness to the believers:
 - 1. Christ is the believers' righteousness for them to be justified before God objectively at the time of their repenting unto God and believing into Christ—Rom. 3:24-26; Acts 13:39; Gal. 3:24b, 27.
 - 2. Christ is the believers' righteousness lived out of them as the manifestation of God, who is righteousness in Christ given to the believers for them to be justified by God subjectively—Rom. 4:25; 1 Pet. 2:24a; James 2:24; Matt. 5:20; Rev. 19:8.
 - 3. These two aspects are typified by the best robe and the fattened calf in Luke 15:22-23:

- a. The best robe typifies Christ as God's righteousness given to the believers to cover them outwardly as their objective righteousness before God.
 - b. The fattened calf typifies Christ as God's righteousness given to the believers as their life supply for them to live out God in Christ as their subjective righteousness.
- C. Righteousness signifies the expression of God's image, the expression of the Christ who lives in us as the Spirit—2 Cor. 3:8-9; Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10:
 - 1. Righteousness is God expressed—Phil. 3:9; Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10.
 - 2. Christ as the life-giving Spirit dwells within us to be our life and our life supply; if we live Him out, our living will be genuine righteousness; this righteousness is the living image, the living expression, of God—2 Cor. 3:8-9, 17-18.
- D. Righteousness is related to the kingdom of God—Rom. 14:17; Psa. 89:14:
 - 1. Righteousness first issues in the image of God and then establishes the kingdom of God—Rom. 3:22, 25; 8:10, 29; 14:17.
 - 2. Righteousness is related to God's government, administration, and rule; God's throne is established with righteousness as the foundation—Psa. 89:14.
 - 3. The expression of God as righteousness, the image of God, brings in the kingdom, where everything is regulated, orderly, and headed up.
- E. Righteousness is a matter of being right with God in our being—2 Cor. 5:21:
 - 1. Anyone who is spiritually asleep is not right with God—1 Cor. 15:34.
 - 2. To be right with God in our being is to have an inner being that is transparent and crystal clear—an inner being in the mind and will of God.
 - 3. To be righteous in this way is to become the righteousness of God in Christ—2 Cor. 5:21.
 - 4. This is a righteous person, a person who expresses God, for his righteousness is the image of God, God expressed—Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10.

Message Six

Preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom and Discipling the Nations

Scripture Reading: Matt. 24:14; 28:19-20a; Gen. 9:26-27; Rev. 21:2-3

- I. "This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole inhabited earth for a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come"—Matt. 24:14:**
- A. The gospel of the kingdom, which includes the gospel of grace, brings people not only into God's salvation but also into the kingdom of the heavens—Acts 20:24; Rev. 1:9:
 - 1. The gospel of grace emphasizes forgiveness of sins, God's redemption, and eternal life—Luke 24:47; John 3:15-16.
 - 2. The gospel of the kingdom emphasizes the heavenly ruling of God and the authority of the Lord—Matt. 28:18.
 - B. The gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole earth for a testimony to all the nations before the end, the consummation, of this age:
 - 1. The preaching of the gospel of the kingdom, signified by the white horse in the first seal in Revelation 6:1-2, will be a sign of the consummation of this age.
 - 2. The gospel of the kingdom is a testimony to all the nations (Gentiles); this testimony must spread to the whole earth before the end of this age, the time of the great tribulation—Matt. 24:6.
 - C. The gospel is for the kingdom, and the gospel is proclaimed so that rebellious sinners might be saved, qualified, and equipped to enter into the kingdom—4:17; Mark 1:14-15; Acts 8:12.
 - D. Repentance is mainly for us to enter into the kingdom of God; unless we repent—that is, have a change of concept—we cannot enter into the kingdom—Matt. 3:2; 4:17; Mark 1:15.
 - E. Through regeneration we receive the divine life and are transferred into the kingdom of the Son of God's love—John 3:3, 5, 15; Col. 1:13.
 - F. We should seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and not be anxious concerning our material needs—Matt. 6:19-34.
 - G. We need to be today's Jonah, bearing the unique sign of the crucified, buried, and resurrected life that has become the reigning life—12:38-41; Rom. 5:17.
 - H. We should follow the Lamb wherever He may go to preach the gospel of the kingdom to the whole inhabited earth for the propagation and development of the seed of the kingdom to consummate this age—Rev. 14:4; Mark 4:26.
 - I. "I believe that the churches in the Lord's recovery will bear the burden to bring this gospel to all the inhabited earth. The gospel of grace has been preached in every continent, but not the gospel of the kingdom. The gospel of grace is the lower gospel, but the gospel of the kingdom is the higher gospel. This higher gospel will be brought to every continent through the churches in the Lord's recovery" (Life-study of Matthew, p. 719).
- II. "Go therefore and disciple all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you"—Matt. 28:19-20a:**
- A. In Matthew the goal of the gospel of the kingdom is to bring people into God to make them citizens of the kingdom of the heavens—v. 19; Rom. 14:17.
 - B. Through His death Christ entered into His resurrection to carry out His ministry in the stage of inclusion through His Body to accomplish God's eternal economy—Matt. 28:18; Rom. 12:4-5; 1 Cor. 12:12; Eph. 4:16; 3:9-11.
 - C. Because all authority was given to Him, the heavenly King sent His disciples with His authority to disciple the nations, causing them to become the kingdom people for the establishing of His kingdom—Matt. 28:18-19.
 - D. The Lord charged us to baptize the believers "into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit"; to baptize people into the name of the Triune God is to immerse them into all that the Triune God is and to bring them into spiritual and mystical union with Him—v. 19.

- E. For the discipling of all the nations, the Lord Jesus charged us to teach the believers to observe all that He has commanded us—v. 20a.
- F. The Lord commissioned the disciples to save and gather all God's chosen people from Jerusalem through Judea and Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth—all the world, all the nations—Acts 1:8.