

# Your Kingdom Come

## PART 2: 'RELEASING HEAVEN ON EARTH'

In my first sermon in this teaching series I made a bold assertion which some of you may be wrestling with still today. I was presumptuous enough to tell you why you are here. I said that you and I and all those who claim to be disciples of Jesus Christ are here for the same reason. Then as the logical extension of that assertion I suggested that this reason is therefore the primary purpose of the Christian Church. You and I and all believers are part of the Church Jesus promised to build and as such we have been called, commissioned and empowered by God to do one thing primarily – and that one thing happens to be the mission of Christ and the very reason He came to earth.

**Jesus came to release heaven on earth and He has called us to join Him in that mission.**

That is why in the model prayer Jesus gave His disciples there is an important statement from which the title of this teaching series has been taken. Jesus told us to pray and declare, *"Your Kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."* (Matthew 6:10)

We need to understand that this was not some nice, flowery, philosophical prayer to inspire and soothe people in trouble. This was an apostolic commission. This is our assignment on earth - and all of heaven is backing this prayer and anticipating its fulfilment. So we should be compelled to pray and declare, *"Your Kingdom come..."* and then help make that happen. This should not be an optional task if we are a true disciple of Christ wanting to embrace the mission of Christ. This assignment is at the absolute centre of who we are. It's at the absolute centre of why God has left you and me on this planet - because God has wonderful plans for this place.

Tragically however, too much of the Church's theology and focus in my lifetime has been wrapped up in the dysfunction of this world and its ultimate end. Many Christians actually get this strange, perverted sense of encouragement when disaster happens. There is a weird sense of affirmation that comes on some people in a crisis or when a tragic event occurs because they believe 'the end is near.' The end of what? Are we disciples of Jesus Christ or not? There is no end to His Kingdom and our purpose is to advance His Kingdom on earth!

So why would anyone who claims to embrace Christ's mission be focused on anything other than His glorious kingdom and leading people to Him? Why would any disciple of Jesus want to re-arm Satan by focussing on what's wrong in our world? Because that is exactly what we are doing when we allow our minds and hearts to be captured by anything other than the mission of Christ and advancing His Kingdom.

Let me ask you: Who did God put in charge? Let me ask that again: Who did God put in charge? It's an easy answer: JESUS. So How did Jesus model dealing with storms? How did Jesus model dealing with disease? What did Jesus do to confront corruption? How did Jesus transform humanity and bring about change? Was it by focussing on people's sin? Was it by campaigning against the moral decay in society? Was it by pointing out what is wrong with the world? Was it by preaching doom and gloom to a broken people? No!

Jesus modelled something for us that is as simple as it is profound. Jesus spent His days among us doing one thing primarily: He released the reality of God's world in this world. That was His mission and that, my friends, is our divine assignment – releasing heaven on earth. That's at the core of who we are.

Everything we do every day of our lives either contributes to that outcome or it takes us and others away from that outcome - there is no middle ground. Our assignment is to release the reality of God's perfect kingdom of light and life and liberty into the brokenness, dysfunction and darkness of this kingdom. Every moment of every day we walk this earth, that is our assignment. That is the lifestyle to which God has called us. My job and your job every day is to release heaven on earth.

Now in saying that I need to address the main problem we have had in understanding this reality. For far too long I believe we have confused our destiny with our assignment. Please listen to this – truly understanding what I say next will change your life, transform this Church and bring revival to our nation! Ok, now that I have your attention, here it is:

**Our DESTINY is to dwell in heaven alone. Our ASSIGNMENT is to bring heaven to earth first.**

The Kingdom of heaven is not just a destination we go to in the future – it is actually a spiritual domain which transcends time - as distinct from the physical domain of earth which had a beginning and it will have an end. The Kingdom of heaven is the King's domain. Hence the word king-dom. It's the realm of the Kings Dominion and that King is Jesus. Yes, there will be a time when the only Kingdom we know will be the Kingdom of heaven. But until then, we live in two Kingdoms. George Eldon Ladd penned a phrase years ago in one of his books which beautifully describes the Kingdom of Heaven from our perspective now. He said it is *'the presence of the future.'* I really love that.

There is most definitely a future aspect of the Kingdom of heaven and a day will come when we are part of that kingdom alone, unencumbered by this bag of bones and this broken world. That is our destiny - eternal life in the eternal Kingdom to which God has called us in Christ - and don't we long for that day? Just look at the number of hymns and worship songs that have been written which focus our hearts on that future, glorious reality of dwelling only in the kingdom of heaven.

Sadly however far less attention has been given to the present reality of the kingdom of heaven. 'The presence of the future' is a perfect description of where we live right now. It also explains why Jesus came to earth and what He did when He got here. He brought the future into the present. He removed the veil between heaven and earth and that is still His mission. Jesus came into a kingdom where Satan had wreaked havoc for thousands of years. He gave up the glory of heaven and stepped into the womb of a frightened teenage girl and become one with humanity.

Why? Well there are lots of reasons and some pretty important theology to understand in answering that fully, but for now, I will give you just one of the reasons Jesus became human. He came to show us what a fully alive human being, in touch with the kingdom of heaven, can do in this midst of this broken, fallen world. He came to release the power and reality of the kingdom of heaven into the kingdom of this world.

Then before He left this world, Jesus stood before all humanity as a man and made a statement that we really need to understand. We read it in Matthew 28 where Jesus said, *"All authority has been given to me ..."* So this is Jesus, the Son of God, Who became the Son of man. He laid aside all that He had in heaven – which was actually everything that exists – because He owned it all. He gave all that up to become a man. But then through His perfect life, His atoning death and His glorious resurrection, Jesus re-inherited everything as a man, so that you and I, as fellow-humans in Him, could share in that inheritance.

So now this man, Jesus, stands among us after His triumphant resurrection, having defeated of the power of death, and He says to all humanity, *"I got the keys to heaven back. All that you lost in the garden - I got it back! Now, let's get back to 'Plan A' shall we? Because, all authority has been given to me, in heaven and on earth."*

Now it's really important for us to understand that Jesus did not make that declaration as God. Jesus is God incarnate in His essence but He made that statement as a man. We know that because He said, *"All authority has been **given** to me."* There's no one higher than God who can give God anything. So when Jesus made that statement, He was speaking as a man - as our elder brother.

So let me ask you another question. If Jesus can say, as a man, as our elder brother, as the Son of Man, *"All authority has been given to me ..."* how much authority does that leave Satan? Zero. Zip. Zilch. Hello? Did you get that? Jesus has been given ALL divine authority in heaven and on earth and that means Satan has none!

Now the Devil certainly has the power and ability to inflict all manner of evil in this world but for that to be effective against the Church, Satan needs to get his authority somewhere other than God because God has given **all** His authority to Jesus. So where do you think Satan gets his authority from now? He gets his authority from us when we come into agreement with him. That's exactly what happened in the garden of Eden, am I right? We came into agreement with Satan when we believed his lie and when you believe the lie, you empower the liar.

The more that happens - the more we see the kingdom of this world falling apart and if you focus on what's wrong in the world - it only gets worse! If you focus on the darkness - the darkness only grows. We already know that the only way to dispel darkness is to turn up the light. So our calling in Christ, Who is the Light of the world, is to switch on that light every opportunity we get - which, in this context means we release on earth the power of the kingdom of heaven and the presence of the King! That's our assignment. It's not complicated. Jesus didn't make it complicated. He said, *"As the Father sent me, I send you. The assignment I have is the assignment I give to you. Now go and release heaven on earth."*

There is always bad stuff happening. Our world is broken. But don't focus on the bad stuff; don't focus on the problem - focus on the solution. The solution is Jesus, the King and the more His kingdom comes, the more God's will is done! We humans tend to embody what we focus on the most. We become like those we hang out with. We imitate those we admire and aspire to be like. So focus on the Kingdom of heaven; hang around with Jesus more than anyone else and aspire to live in Him, through Him and for Him. That is what will change your life and the world around you.

There are people who live like they are trapped in the book of Job rather than set free in the Gospels and the book of Acts. Job's story tells us how bad this world can be when Satan excels at his mission and we are still waiting for a saviour. But I am not a disciple of Job. I am a disciple of Jesus. I live this side of the cross. The saviour came! Job was the question - Jesus is the answer. If you study the life of job and it doesn't take you to Jesus, then you never got the question and you will most certainly miss the answer. In fact if you study any of the Old Testament and it doesn't lead you to Jesus, you have missed the whole point of the Bible. It's all about Jesus and His coming Kingdom.

But many Christians feed themselves on what God hasn't done yet. And whenever I do that, whenever I've done that throughout my life, when I dwell on what hasn't happened, I create the perfect environment for Satan to sow his seeds of doubt, disappointment and discouragement. The only solution to that is to focus on what God has done and has promised to do as His Kingdom comes!

Unless that is our focus then we will develop a concept of God that is based on disappointment, not revelation. All of the questions we have about God are answered already in Jesus. Jesus Christ is perfect theology. Anything you cannot find in Christ should be discarded immediately.

God has revealed His nature, His heart and His plan to us in the person of Jesus. You and I are called to represent Christ as He really is. So when God made it possible for the Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead to live inside of you and me, it made powerlessness inexcusable and unacceptable. That's right, this side of the cross of Christ, powerlessness is inexcusable and unacceptable.

The Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead is in you and me and He wants to flow through us and change the world. He is not in us as a lake; He is in us as a river and rivers flow. Rivers move and bring life as they go. That is what happened when you were born again – God released a river of life within you and some days we just have to believe in our own conversion and trust God to do what He planned to do in us and through us.

As I listen to people's prayers and sometimes even my own prayers, I realise that we keep praying for stuff we've already got. We keep praying for things that God has already given us. We wonder why we get bored with prayer – it's because we labour over things that we already possess. We feel like God is not answering those prayers when in fact He has already answered them and we have just failed to walk in the power and reality of those answers!

I believe the Lord is releasing a spirit of wisdom and revelation in His people where we will actually rise to become who He says we already are. Friends, I can't afford to have a thought in my head about me that's not in God's head about me. It's so important that we fill our minds with those things that the Holy Spirit can say 'amen' to and that's what Paul meant in the opening verses of the third chapter of Colossians when he said: *"Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things."*

Your mind is a very valuable thing. Jesus Himself died to protect your mind. It's important to Him. But the mind is only useful when it comes under the influence of the Spirit of God. Jesus wants to teach us how to think - He wants to teach us a divine, Kingdom perspective. The Lord desires to build a revival culture that creates the atmosphere where anything can happen at any time and our job is not to get people into a building; our job is to get the Kingdom of heaven out onto the streets.

You have a divine assignment which was birthed in you the moment you were born again into God's kingdom. With that assignment comes an appetite for the impossible. It's who you are and you should not be satisfied until you see God's power at work in you and around you. We all have goals, dreams and aspirations. We all have accomplishments in life - things take place in our life that are very encouraging and affirming to us.

But the stuff that really sticks the longest, the stuff that never loses its life is whenever we've seen an impossibility bend its knee to the name of Jesus. That stuff doesn't die. It's why in Psalm 145 it says *"the works of the Lord will praise Him."* The works of the Lord are like living entities that declare God's greatness whenever they are repeated.

As I wrap this up for today, I want to read to you one of the most amazing statements in Scripture. It is found in John's gospel. Jesus is speaking and He says this:

**John 5:19** *"Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does."*

This is Jesus the man speaking here again and He effectively says, *"I can't heal the sick; I can't raise the dead; I can't multiply food; I can't release the Kingdom of Heaven on earth on my own. I can't do any of the stuff that I am known for. I am incapable. I can only participate in what I see the Father doing."*

So what's going on here? Jesus was so emptied of divine capacity, He was eternally God, but He chose to live with the restrictions of a man. Why? So he could set a model for us to follow as an example. If Jesus performed all of His miracles as God, then I would still be impressed, but not compelled to follow because that's God at work and I am not God. So I would just stand back and go, *'Wow, that's amazing! Do some more, God - that's awesome!'*

But when I realise that Jesus set aside His divinity and chose to display what life looks like for any human being who is empowered by the Spirit of God, then He models something that I *can* follow. What He models is actually the normal Christian life. Technically Jesus could not be called a Christian Himself, but He most certainly modelled what all Christians should look like and how they should live as they follow Him. He showed what is possible for every believer who steps out in faith, empowered by the Spirit and embraces His mission on earth – which is to bring heaven to earth.

I need to leave it there for now but there are some really juicy chunks of spiritual meat in this sermon and I want to strongly encourage you to read it or listen to it again and again until God reveals them all to you and gives you an appetite for more. And there is much more, trust me!

*Kingdom of God, come. Will of God, be done. Amen!*