

CTRF 100321
HIS KINGDOM, OUR CULTURE

What is culture?

- *“The sum-total of the learned patterns of thought and behaviors of any given group”.*
(Pastor Pete Scazzaro)
- *The customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group; a particular society that has its own beliefs, ways of life, art, etc.*
- *The characteristic features of everyday existence shared by people in a place or time*

What is the culture of the kingdom of God and how do we live it out?

- We all experience some serious culture shock when we enter His kingdom. Much of what we’ve learned, our upbringing, family cultures, values and attitudes must be transformed so we can truly learn how to live in this Kingdom culture.
- What is a Kingdom culture? It is one in which the citizens reflect the KING. A culture which people desire to see the reality of heaven come to earth through their lives in every area, not just in church community, but in our families and homes, in how we work, in how we create, and how we give expression in our lives.
 - Before we can understand the “Kingdom Culture” God is trying to bring us into, we must first begin to understand what His kingdom is.
 - Jesus told His disciples in gospels “To you has been given the mystery of the kingdom of God.”
 - He refers to it as a mystery = *mysterion* = a hidden or secret thing, not obvious to the understanding; being outside the range of unassisted natural apprehension, can be made known only by Divine revelation, and is made known in a manner and at a time appointed by God, and to those only who are illumined by His Spirit. (Vines Dictionary)

John’s message: ***Now in those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” - Matthew 3:1-2 NASB***

1. RECOGNIZING HIS KINGDOM

Jesus’ message: ***From that time Jesus began to preach and say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” - Matthew 4:17 NASB***

- His message was invitation to come into His kingdom, but it starts with REPENTANCE – a NEW mindset, a new way of living that is consistent with the culture of His Kingdom. This way of living is entirely COUNTERCULTURE to the world we live in.
 - Isaiah 55:8,9 – His ways are higher, His thoughts are higher than ours – higher.
 - When we repent and turn to Him He gives us the mind of Christ (1 Cor 2:16)
- a. His kingdom is characterized by His Presence, by His rule and reign, and by His Power!

- i. **His Presence:** When Jesus said the kingdom of heaven is at hand, He was announcing I, THE KING, am here and it's time to shift your allegiance to Me!
 - ii. **His Rule and Reign**
 1. Speaking to Pilot during His trial before the Jews: ***Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm." - John 18:36 NASB***
 - In the New Testament, the word kingdom refers to "rule, reign and authority" rather than a specific place or realm.
 - iii. **His Power:** ***Jesus was going throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people. - Matthew 4:23***
 1. Sending out the 12: ***1 And He called the twelve together, and gave them power and authority over all the demons and to heal diseases. 2 And He sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to perform healing. - Luke 9:1-2 NASB***
 2. Sending out the 70, Jesus instructed them: ***and heal those in it who are sick, and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.'* - Luke 10:9 NASB**
 3. ***"But if I cast out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. - Luke 11:20 NASB***
 - Jesus responding to the blasphemy of the Pharisees who accused Him of casting out demons by the power of Beelzebub speaks of the power of the kingdom of God to displace demonic rule in someone's life.
 - ONE STRONGER than Satan is here, proof of His Kingdom!
- b. When it comes to describing the Kingdom of God there is an **ALREADY** and a **NOT YET**
- i. **ALREADY:** ***Now having been questioned by the Pharisees as to when the kingdom of God was coming, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed; 21 nor will they say, 'Look, here [it is!]' or, 'There [it is!]' For behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst." - Luke 17:20-21 NASB***
 1. In response to the Pharisees hostile questioning and examination Jesus provides tremendous insights into the Kingdom of God.
 - The kingdom of God can't be recognized with natural eyes – YET. It doesn't come by observation.
 - The Pharisees weren't asking from a place of faith or innocent curiosity. They were asking in a critical way – if I don't SEE it, I won't BELIEVE it.

- It's WITHIN you – one translation is that it is AMONG you – in other words, the KING JESUS was standing there, in their midst but they couldn't see or recognize Him for Who He truly was because of their unbelief.
- It's ALSO unseen, meaning it can only be perceived and felt by those WHO by faith surrender to the King for Him to reign in their heart.
- When someone submits to the rule of God, he comes under the Kingdom of God in spirit because the Kingdom is not from here, YET
- Andrew Murray describes the Kingdom of God as *“that spiritual state in which the life of God and of heaven is made accessible to men, and they enter into its enjoyment here on earth.”*

ii. **NOT YET:**

1. Current state: This world, this realm lies under the power of the evil one (1 John 5:19), the power of corruption (Romans 8:20-21). The kingdoms of this world were “handed over” to the devil when Adam sinned (Luke 4:5,6). Everything we see is corrupted by sin as a result.
2. The coming kingdom of God described in Psalms: His Kingdom and His dominion as an everlasting kingdom; He is over all the nations of the world; He will judge the world in righteousness and execute judgment for the people with equity. David writes in Ps 145:
 - ***They shall speak of the glory of Your kingdom And talk of Your power; 12 To make known to the sons of men Your mighty acts And the glory of the majesty of Your kingdom. 13 Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, And Your dominion [endures] throughout all generations. - Psalm 145:11-13***
 - Parallel prophetic passages in Isaiah 2 and Micah 4 speak of the coming kingdom of the Lord on earth saying in that day ***“the mountain of the house of the Lord will be established as the chief of the mountains”, nations will stream to it and many people will say let us go up to the mountain of the Lord to be taught of and learn His ways. The law will go forth from Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He will judge between the nations.***
 - Daniel says in 2:44 that the ***God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will NEVER be destroyed, that will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms!*** Later in chap 7 that the saints of the Highest ONE will receive the kingdom and POSSESS the kingdom forever!

- Isaiah says, *“There will be NO END to the increase of His government or of His peace”* (9:7)
- **14** *“This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come. - Matthew 24:14 NASB*
- **REVELATION:** *Then the seventh angel sounded; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdom of the world has become [the kingdom] of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever.” - Revelation 11:15 NASB*
- Illustrating His kingdom – ROMAN rule: *When the Roman Empire was in its heyday, it was a huge kingdom that kept getting bigger. The Caesars continually sent out their armies to take new territory. When a new territory came under Roman control, the Romans would use force to try to make that new territory as much like Rome as possible. They would build Roman temples and institute the Roman religion, which involved the worship of Caesar. They would institute Roman education, arts, and culture. They built Roman baths. They would do everything they could do to make the new territory just like Rome. When a new territory came under Roman control, the Romans would use force to try to make that new territory as much like Rome as possible. They would build Roman temples and institute the Roman religion, which involved the worship of Caesar. They would institute Roman education, arts, and culture. They built Roman baths. They would do everything they could do to make the new territory just like Rome. Why? They did it so that if the Caesar ever came there, he would feel right at home because the territory was just like his own home.*
- Just as the Romans conquered new territory and transformed it to reflect their king Caesar, so it is with our lives and the kingdom of God – that the territory of our hearts be conquered and brought under His law, His dominion, and that, as a result our lives would reflect the nature, character, and CULTURE of our King! Do our lives reflect Him and His kingdom?
- **Are there areas in our lives where He doesn’t have full dominion?**

for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. - Romans 14:17 NASB

The evidence of His kingdom operating in our lives is that RIGHTEOUSNESS, PEACE AND JOY are manifest!

15 "Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it [at all.]" - Mark 10:15 NASB

2. ENTERING HIS KINGDOM

- Jesus describes the way we are to RECEIVE His kingdom – AS a child.
- A child is BORN into royal inheritance, just as the Prince of Wales is born into royal position. It is not a position earned.
- ***Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. - John 3:5 NASB***
- Speaking of us, His people in 1 Peter 2:9, He says we are a "ROYAL PRIESTHOOD"
- By His Spirit, the Lord puts in us a childlike disposition of RECEIVING His kingdom in our hearts
- Entering: This is to fully POSSESS and EXPERIENCE the benefits of His kingdom in our lives, both now and in the future when He returns.

3. SEEKING HIS KINGDOM

"But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. - Matthew 6:33 NASB

Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. - Colossians 3:1-2 NASB

Conclusion:

- ***God has granted to us His disciples to know the mysteries of His kingdom***
- ***We must recognize His kingdom – it's power, its rule/reign, His presence***
- ***We must fully surrender to His government in our lives (Isaiah 33:22), allowing every area to come under His Lordship if we are to enter in and fully experience His righteousness, joy, and peace in the Holy Spirit.***
- ***It is an "Already, not yet" kingdom – we experience it here and now through submission to His rule from heaven, but we live a life of expectation of His return to establish His visible, physical kingdom on earth.***
- ***Until then, we occupy until He comes, living lives that reflect our king, expressing His nature and His character, and advancing His kingdom.***

3 For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, - Colossians 1:13 NASB