

TALE OF TWO KINGDOMS

“THY KINGDOM COME – THY WILL BE DONE”

RIVER OF LIFE COMMUNITY CHURCH

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THE LORD'S PRAYER – PART 10

➤ Charles Dickens Classic – “Tale of Two Cities”

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way—in short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only.”

➤ The words of Dicken's classic could frame the world we live in

➤ Instead of two cities – We live between two Kingdoms

- Indeed, it is the best of times as we press into God's will and see His remnant church arise and preach the Gospel to all nations (ethnos)
- It is the worst of times as people and nations throw off the truth of God and turn to paganism and pleasure

➤ As we talk about the Lord's Prayer – "Thy Kingdom Come"

- We are people of a Kingdom that already exists – but cannot be fully seen
- We are seeking & working for the full realization of God's Kingdom here on earth
- This is a spiritual war! **Ephesians 6:10** Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. **11** Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. **12** For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. **13** Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. - NIV

“Christianity agrees with Dualism that this universe is at war. But it does not think this is a war between independent powers. It thinks it is a civil war, a rebellion, and that we are living in a part of the universe occupied by the rebel.

Enemy-occupied territory—that is what this world is. Christianity is the story of how the rightful king has landed, you might say landed in disguise, and is calling us all to take part in a great campaign of sabotage.”

- C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*

“One of the greatest injustices we do to our young people is to ask them to be conservative.

Christianity is not conservative, but revolutionary.”

Francis Shaffer, *How Shall We Then Live?*

Since we live in two Kingdoms Simultaneously – “What Kind of People ought we to be?”

- We live in the intersection of these two Kingdoms – The Kingdoms of this age and the Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ
- We find ourselves asking how do we cope?
 - We need to ask the question found in **2 Peter 3:11** “**Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be?” - NIV**
 - Peter refers to us as sojourners/ strangers in 1 Peter
 - Paul refers to us as ambassadors

Understanding Kingdom of God Priority

- Jesus followers in Jesus' day had some key expectations and questions about the Kingdom of God! They struggled with understanding!
- **Acts 1:4** On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. **5** For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.” **6** Then they gathered around him and asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” - NIV
- Many in Israel expected the Messiah to come immediately to His throne in Jerusalem
 - Yes, that moment will come when Christ returns for His Church, The transformation of believers is accomplished in a “twinkling of an eye”
 - Then He will set up His throne in Jerusalem, destroy evil, judge the nations and restore the earth!
 - But – The Kingdom of God was not to be confused with the Kingdom of Israel

Understanding Kingdom of God Priority

- Jesus redirects His followers to His true KINGDOM purpose!
- **7** He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. **8** But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” - NIV
- Matthew 28 – Great Commission
 - The Jewish followers of Jesus had a hard time grasping that all nations were included!
 - There was confusion over the Kingdom of God and Kingdom of Israel
 - There is a similar confusion among USA Christians today
 - Question: Do we restore USA or bring the Kingdom of God to the nations

The Trajectory of the USA and the Kingdom of God

- The Prophet Daniel is the first to reveal by God's anointing a picture of successive world governments culminating in a one-world dictatorship led by the Antichrist animated by Satan himself
 - Each nation and world leader has its moment in history
 - The USA has had a profound influence on the world stage – Christians and Christian influence have been tremendous
 - The USA has been a powerful force for good – But the USA and God's Kingdom are distinct
 - Summary of Romans 1 – Three exchanges of a culture rejecting truth is USA now
 - The truth of God for a lie
 - The True and Living God for idols
 - The proper use of our bodies and persons for wanton pleasure wherever we can find it

Will God restore the USA?

➤ Two questions:

1. Can God restore America?

2. What is our responsibility to America?

- Israel in captivity speaks to us in this season
- What were Daniel, Esther, Ezekiel, Nehemiah doing in their day?
- They took brave stands for the Lord

➤ Jeremiah 29 – Do you know the context? God's people in midst of captivity!

- **4** This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: **5** "Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. **6** Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease.

Will God restore the USA?

➤ Jeremiah 29 Continued:

- **7** Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.”
 - **8** Yes, this is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: “Do not let the prophets and diviners among you deceive you. Do not listen to the dreams you encourage them to have.
 - **9** They are prophesying lies to you in my name. I have not sent them,” declares the LORD. **10** This is what the LORD says: “When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my good promise to bring you back to this place.
 - **11** For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.
- Israel in captivity did more to reveal the Living God to the nations than when they were a mediocre nation!

➤ Key strategies for overcoming for 2023

1. Protect your boundaries

- Don't withdraw from the world
- 2023 – A time to establish godly boundaries!
- Necessary Endings by Henry Cloud – Discern between wise, foolish, & evil
 - Deal with foolish people by boundaries and consequences
 - A year of toxic relationships ending
- Two boundaries that we need to establish in our lives
 - God's boundary for time in our lives
 - God's boundaries for relationships

2. Seek peace in God and not your surroundings

- **2 Peter 3:14** So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him. - NIV
- We will often not find peace in the circumstances around us
- But, we can find Him and His peace in any circumstance

➤ Key strategies for overcoming for 2023

3. Pursue a life of worship and be joyful!

- Worship, praise & Thanksgiving center us in God's Kingdom. On earth as it is in Heaven – Constant praise and worship before God's throne
- When we praise and worship Him – We bring God's Kingdom to the moment and place that we are
- Bill Johnson/ Bethel – **“If God inhabits praise then who then inhabits complaining?”** If we enter His gates with Thanksgiving, what domain do we enter when we come with complaining?

4. Seek God's Mercy in this time of judgment

- When we judge others, take on a critical spirit, allow the enemy to place negative things about others in our heart – we shut down God's grace in our lives
- In fact – we open a doorway to the demonic because we are doing the work of Satan – The slanderer and accuser
- The measure we use to judge others will be used against us!
- We need to cry out for mercy – even for our enemies in this time of God's judgment!

Final words that God has given me for this year

- The Lord will arise to shake the earth in for 2023
 - Don't confuse God's mercy and patience with thinking that He is unconcerned or permissive
 - The season of great revealing has been to grant people awareness of sin, brokenness, and to expose the wickedness entrenched in our world
 - That season of revealing evil is not over!
 - The righteous will see the hand of God at work!
 - Those in deep deception will not understand
 - The dark will get darker and the light brighter!

- Nothing can be fixed without returning to God!
 - God has given many over - to their false man-made gods, to their own false wisdom- foolishness, and to our lustful passions and their consequences
 - Everything that can be shaken will be shaken!
 - Are you standing on the rock - God's solid truth that never changes

Final words that God has given me for this year

- God will be with His people through shaking, but we will see and feel the effects. How will our faith set us apart from those around us that have no hope
 - For those who have lived with an entitlement faith
 - Their false faith system will crumble, some will come to believe in God's true faith.
 - Many will turn on the Lord because He did not give them what they wanted.
- For the true remnant- Be ready to love and care for the "quake survivors".
 - Many will come in abject brokenness looking for answers, hope, truth, and healing
 - That is why The Lord have been raising a spiritual army to do "Jesus Ministry"
 - **John 14:12** Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. **13** And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. **14** You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it. - **NIV**