

## MORE THAN HEAVEN MORE THAN CHURCH HANDOUT

Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven. (Matthew 6:10 NKJV)

But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.  
(Matthew 6:33 NKJV)

### THE GOSPELS

The first four books of the New Testament (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) tell us about the life and teachings of Jesus. Each gospel also describes his death and resurrection. We call these books “gospels” because they contain the good news about Jesus. That’s what “gospel” means: good news. But what, exactly, is this good news? It’s communicated in this phrase: “the Kingdom of God is near.”

John the Baptist preached this message (Matthew 3:1-2) and Jesus began his ministry with this message as well:

14 Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, 15 and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.” (Mark 1:14-15)

In fact, this is one way Jesus characterized his mission:

“43 but He said to them, “I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent.” (Luke 4:43)

So here we see, early in each of these gospels, that the good news is the proclamation that God’s kingdom has come near to people. Other translations use phrases like “the kingdom of God is at hand.” Or, “the kingdom of God is breaking in.” Jesus was announcing that the Father’s reign was coming close—it was previously far away and now was coming near!

The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood. (John 1:14 The MSG)

So: let’s try to understand what this kingdom is all about: we take the Lordship of Christ seriously God’s will is done God’s way, among God’s people. Early in his ministry, Jesus preached the Sermon on the Mount. We find this great sermon in Matthew’s gospel, chapters 5, 6, and 7. It’s a message targeted to his disciples (see 5:1).

And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. 2 Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying: (Matthew 5:1-2 NKJV)

Notice how prominently Jesus mentions the Kingdom of God: he talks about the kingdom eight times in his sermon!

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:3 NKJV)

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.  
(Matthew 5:10 NKJV)

**19** Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. **20** For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:19-20 NKJV)

For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen. (Matthew 6:14 NKJV)

**21** “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven (Matthew 7:21 NKJV)

Let’s look at the two central examples from the Sermon on the Mount. As part of the Lord’s Prayer Jesus taught us to pray,

“Let your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” (Matthew 6:10)

Jesus instructed his disciples to pray for the coming of God’s kingdom, and then He explained what it would look like: God’s will being done “on earth as it is in heaven.” This is so important!

In Matthew 6:33, Jesus tells us we should not worry about what we will eat or drink, nor should we worry about what we will wear, but we should seek first God’s kingdom and his righteousness, and everything else we will take care of itself:

“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” (Matthew 6:33)

In the four Gospels, Jesus uses the words “salvation” or “saved” 23 times. Yet Jesus mentions God’s kingdom nearly 120 times! This does not mean that being born-again is unimportant, no!

In John chapter 3 Jesus tells Nicodemus that we cannot enter the kingdom of God unless we are born again. So the new birth in Christ is our entryway into God’s kingdom.

Remember: His kingdom has no borders and no boundaries. It’s not political or social— it’s about God’s will being done God’s way, among God’s people.

The result is righteousness, peace, and joy (Romans 14:17).

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

The gospel is so much bigger! The gospel presents the good news that we can live heavenly lives here and now.

Living Kingdom lives requires that we be born again.

First of all, we should not confuse the kingdom of God with heaven. God’s kingdom includes heaven, of course, but God’s kingdom is so much larger. **Remember:** the Kingdom of God is anywhere that God’s will is being done God’s way.

Second, the kingdom of God is not the same thing as the church. It’s true that the Bible describes the church as “the bride of Christ.” And the church has a very special place in God’s heart. But sadly there

are many churches where God's will is not done God's way.

Perhaps the best way to understand the kingdom of God is the passage given to us by the Apostle Paul in Romans 14:17 it says,

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

Wherever people relate rightly to God, wherever there is the peace of God, and wherever there is the joy of our salvation, that's where the kingdom of God is.

God's kingdom is not owned by any one culture or any one denomination.

God's kingdom exists wherever Jesus, the king, has dominion in the hearts and minds and lives of his followers. It means that the kingdom of God can sneak in anywhere and can operate in any environment.