

WEDNESDAY 11 May 2022 "Kingdom Battles" (Matt. 6:10)

Good Wednesday morning to you my "Walking with Jesus" friends,

When you hear the word "KINGDOM", what comes to your mind? Movies you've seen or perhaps the world-famous Disney castle? Maybe, if you are alert to global nations you think of the United Arab Emirates, or Saudi Arabia, or did you know Cambodia is considered a kingdom and so is Thailand and Tibet and even Nepal? Would you agree that a "kingdom" is a place and a people over which a Monarch or a Sovereign reigns?

So, let's resume our consideration with Matthew of what he heard Jesus say one day as Jesus was talking about prayer. Jesus said: **"Our Father, in heaven, hallowed be Your name, Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."** (Matt. 6:9,10) Or maybe you memorized it as a child this way: **"Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."** *But what does it mean, my friends?* What is God's "kingdom"? Where is God's "kingdom"? Who are the citizens of "God's kingdom"? Who are the authorities in "God's kingdom"? What are the laws, the values, the customs, the entry requirements, the travel restrictions, the language, the currency of "God's kingdom"? *Are those fair questions my friends as we compare 'God's kingdom' to other 'kingdoms' of our world?*

One of the first things Jesus said as He began to speak publicly was this: **"The time has come; the kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!"** (Mark 1:14,15) All four Gospel writers tell us that many times Jesus spoke of the 'kingdom of God'. In fact, Matthew tells us Jesus began this long message we call the 'sermon on the mount' with these words: **"Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."** (Matt. 5:2) So what do you think my friends, is the "kingdom of God" and the "kingdom of heaven" the same thing? And what did Jesus mean by teaching us to pray **"Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."**?

Here's a perspective I'd like you to consider. *God is the Sovereign over all, we know that, but yes, God is THE Sovereign over His KINGDOM'. The citizens of God's "kingdom" are those people who willingly submit to God's authority in their lives and choose to live their lives according to God's values, God's priorities, God's laws. These are the people who have trusted Jesus Christ to be their Savior and choose to live with Jesus as their Lord.* The Bible is where we find those 'values', 'priorities' and 'laws' of God's 'kingdom'.

God's 'kingdom' is actually located in two places... in heaven, where the subjects of God's kingdom include all the holy and obedient angels, and all those who have been declared redeemed by God and have ended their human, earthly journey and are now in His presence.

But also, God's 'kingdom' is here on earth in those places where the living human members of God's kingdom are living every aspect of their God honoring lives at home, work, school, church etc. What do you think about that? God's kingdom in two places... heaven and earth?? Is that possible? How does it work?

But now here's something really interesting I challenge you to consider: In heaven, God's 'kingdom' reigns unstained by anything other than God's holy presence. There is no evil in heaven, no rebellion, no discord, no arguments, no conflicts, nothing but holy angels; the spirits and souls of redeemed, deceased, holy people; the Risen Lord Jesus in His glorified body; and Almighty, Holy God the Father; and the Holy Spirit. *All that takes place in God's kingdom in heaven is fully aligned with and under the holy authority of God.* Do you understand this is an accurate description of heaven in the Bible, my friends?

Here on earth, however, Adam and Eve rejected God's kingdom reign, and invited Satan into Eden, and ever since that day, *the dark kingdom of Satan reigns here... at the invitation of the human race!* That 'dark kingdom reign' is reinforced, reaffirmed, reinvited here on earth every moment of every day, all around the world, in every generation. *It happens every time someone thinks or says or does something less than holy, less than perfect, less than God honoring and does NOT repent of it.* By now, no matter where you live, it's not just a momentary lapse of good judgment or a secret sin... it's blatant rejection of God and His holiness in every aspect of society, day and night, everywhere! It's the obvious evidence of the reign of the dark kingdom across all humanity. We see it all around us in every nation, every city, every neighborhood etc. Do you agree with my assessment? Is it what you see where you live?

The apostle John wrote in 1 John 5:19 that ***"The whole world is under the control of the devil."***

So, I have a question my friends: How is it possible for Jesus' words ***"Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven..."*** to become reality here on earth, *where and when the evil kingdom reigns?* Last week we looked at Jesus' words ***"You are the salt of the earth... you are the light of the world."*** (Matt. 5:13-16) There it is! ***When a member, any member of God's kingdom, lives what Jesus describes as 'salt and light', they are bringing the values, the priorities, the laws of the 'kingdom of God' from heaven where they reign, to earth where that person is living counterculture, as a follower of Jesus Christ!***

Paul writes it this way: ***"Therefore if anyone is IN Christ, they are a new creation. The old has gone, the new has come and all this is from God who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave to us the ministry of reconciliation...we are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God is making His appeal [to the world] through us."*** (2 Cor. 5:17-20) There it is my friends!

Any member of God's kingdom, who is living a God honoring life, in full submission to Jesus Christ as their Lord, indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God, IS bringing God's kingdom to earth where they are living life as an Ambassador of Jesus Christ!

Now think of the magnitude of this my friends. Look around your city, how many **"ambassadors of Jesus Christ"** do you suppose live in your city? *If all of you are living your true 'Identity in Christ', then the Kingdom of God IS here on earth through you, and God's will is being done through you!* Jesus' prayer is being accomplished every day, every hour and minutes, in millions of places around our world as God's people, Jesus followers live their lives in full alignment with the mind, heart and will of God!! Now, when God's kingdom comes to earth in an Ambassador of Jesus Christ there is a problem, a conflict... *two opposing kingdoms are battling for authority on earth in the same place.*

Two of many books written over the past years have helped us see this kingdom battle: Kingdoms in Conflict; by Charles Colson and We Cannot Be Silent; by Albert Mohler. I urge you to read them my friends!

So this begs an important, vital question for you, your family, the neighborhood and city where you live. **Which kingdom reigns IN you and through your life where you are living?** Sadly, *when a person who has been redeemed by the blood of Jesus, and is an ambassador of Christ, chooses to live their life aligned with the evil purposes of the dark kingdom, under the influence of the devil, then of course God's kingdom is being shamed, rebuked, rejected and defeated in that place, and the dark kingdom is being given a very strong advantage in that place!*

It's a continual battle... for our hearts, our reputations and the 'kingdom reign' where you and I live, right now, today and for the rest of our earthly lives! *Which kingdom is winning the war in your home, your workplace, your school, your neighborhood, even your church?* Let's really reflect on this for a few moments, and I urge you to make some battle notes in your journal about the kingdom war going on where you live, and what Jesus is calling you to do about it! What are the tactics, the schemes, the weapons being used? Why and how are they successful... in both kingdoms! Finally... what is YOUR role in this kingdom battle?

And here's a song to help us consider the battles raging for kingdom reign where you and I live...

Today's Scripture is Matthew 6:10.