

Sons of the Kingdom

by Stephen Kaung

The sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding and entering into the Kingdom of God, which is heavenly, spiritual, and eternal, and requires being born again and born of the Spirit.

Duration: 1:33:43

Scripture: Matthew 5:3, Matthew 5:21

Topics: "Kingdom Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the parable of the wheat and the tares from the Gospel of Matthew. The parable tells the story of a man who sowed wheat in his field, but an enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat. When the wheat began to grow, the tares also grew alongside it. The servants were not watchful and allowed the enemy to sow the tares. The preacher emphasizes the importance of being watchful and discerning in order to prevent the enemy from infiltrating and causing harm. The sermon also highlights the need to preach the gospel of the kingdom to all nations as a witness before the end comes, referencing Matthew 24:14.

Transcript

Will you please turn to the Gospel according to Matthew, chapter 24, verse 14. The Gospel according to Matthew, chapter 24, verse 14. And these glad tidings of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole habitable earth for a witness to all the nations and then shall come the end.

May we look to the Lord in prayer. Our Heavenly Father, we do praise and thank Thee because Thou hast sent Thy Son into this world and there on the cross as His body was broken, the veil was raised. Oh, we do praise and thank Thee that we can enter into Thy very presence behind the veil with nothing hindering us but we may behold the glory of the Lord with unveiled faces that we be transformed from glory to glory according to His image by the Lord, the Spirit.

We do praise and thank Thee for this privilege and we do claim this for us, this evening. We ask that we may behold Thee and we may be transformed and we pray that Thy glory may be manifested and to Thee be all the praise and glory in Thy precious, precious name. Amen.

Amen. Our burden for this time is the gospel of the kingdom. This gospel of the kingdom was preached by our Lord Jesus Himself.

When He came out for public ministry, He said, The time is fulfilled and the kingdom has drawn nigh. Repent and believe in the gospel. This gospel of the kingdom was not only preached by our Lord Jesus but the same gospel and the only gospel was preached by the apostles.

Even when we come to the last chapter of the book of Acts, chapter 28, we find that Paul, as a prisoner in Rome, in his hired apartment, he was there preaching the gospel of the kingdom. And this gospel of the kingdom must be preached to the whole habitable earth for a witness to all the nations. And then the end will come.

So dear brothers and sisters, we do feel the urgency of the gospel of the kingdom. We do feel that it is time that God's people may come to an understanding, not only an understanding but really entering into the very gospel itself. That we may really know what is the gospel of the kingdom.

We may not only preach it but we may really live it. And as we do it, we know it will hasten the return of our Lord. Now of course, to put it in one word, what is the gospel of the kingdom? The gospel of the kingdom is the King.

In other words, we find that in our Lord Jesus, who is born to be King, in Him the kingdom, all the nature, all the character of the kingdom is embodied. If we see Him, if we know Him, if we experience Him, then we find ourselves being in His kingdom. The Lord Jesus said, My kingdom is not of this world.

If My kingdom is of this world, My people will rise up and defend Me. But My kingdom is not of this world. The kingdom of God is not of this world.

It is not earthly. It is heavenly. The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking.

It is in righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. In other words, this kingdom is not materialistic at all. It is spiritual.

The kingdom of God is not in words, as we find in 1 Corinthians chapter 4. The kingdom of God is not in words. It is in power. In other words, it is not just in talking, but it is in living.

The kingdom of God is eternal. It is not temporary. It is not something that passes away.

We do believe that one day this kingdom shall publicly appear on this earth. But that doesn't mean that the kingdom of God is not here today. Because when you come into spiritual reality, it transcends time and space.

When the Lord Jesus was on earth, in the beginning He said, Repent, for the kingdom of the heavens has drawn nigh. Dear brothers and sisters, often times we think repentance is necessary because of sins, of failures, of shortcomings. We need to repent of the things that we have done wrong.

But here you'll find when our Lord Jesus was preaching repentance, He preached it in a very different way. He said, Repent. Why repent? Because the kingdom has drawn nigh.

In other words, there is a positive reason for repentance. If we see what the kingdom of God is, if we see the reality of the kingdom of the heavens, if we really see that it is heaven rules over the earth, if we see really Christ is not only our Saviour, but He is our King, if we really see this, this kingdom of God, do you think we need to repent? We need to repent because we have not put ourselves under the kingship of our Lord Jesus. In how many ways we live our lives, we go our own ways, it may not be considered a sin, but

we need to repent because we are not under the rule and the dominion of our King.

The Lord said, Repent. For the kingdom has drawn nigh. Why? Because He the King has come.

But He hasn't got a people yet. But later on we find He told the people saying that from the time of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of the heavens is to be seized by violence and the violence seizes upon it. In other words, at that time the Lord has already gathered around Himself some of His disciples.

And with His disciples we find not only the King was there, but He had got His kingdom. But this kingdom is not to be known by observation. The kingdom is to be known in the Spirit.

What is this kingdom? If we want to know the nature of this kingdom, we need to know the King. What kind of a King He is. How He disappointed the Jews at His time.

In the beginning they welcomed Him because they thought that He was the Messiah. He might be the King. He might restore the nation of Israel.

But later on they were disappointed in Him because His kingdom was not of this world. He was a different person. A different kind of King than they expected of Him.

And He was presenting to them a kingdom that was not of their concept. And because of that they rejected Him. But dear brothers and sisters, when they crucify Him on the cross, the very cross becomes the symbol of His kingdom.

In other words, if you now want to know what the kingdom of God is, look at the cross. This is His kingdom. He told His disciples, the kings of this world will rule and overlord over His people.

But He said, this is not so to be among you. The great among you shall be the servant. And the first among you shall be your bond slave.

Because the Son of Man does not come to be ministered to, but to minister. And to give His life a ransom for all. What is the kingdom? What is the character of the kingdom? The character of the kingdom is embodied in Christ.

And this is demonstrated fully when He was crucified on the cross. He gave Himself for us. And in giving Himself for us, He overcame sin.

He overcame the world. He overcame all creation. He overcame Satan, His archenemy, and all the power of darkness.

There He demonstrated His kingly power. This is His kingdom. This evening we would like to continue on with the subject of the sons of the kingdom.

We have seen the king of His kingdom. Now we would like to see the sons of the kingdom. If you turn to Matthew chapter 13, you will find in Matthew chapter 13, there are parables.

And these parables are the parables of the mysteries of the kingdom. Maybe just a word of caution. Often times we take these parables as the parables of the church.

But if you read carefully you will find it is plainly stated that these parables are the mysteries of the kingdom. Now this time we are not going to enter into all these technical explanations. As to the difference

between the church and the kingdom.

When they are the same and when they are not the same. I don't think we will go into these things. But I just want to point out this.

You will find that in the parables of the kingdom. The first parable is the parable of the sower. The sower went out to sow the seed.

And as he sowed the seed, some seed fell into the roadside. And some seed fell into the snowy ground. Some seed fell into thorny ground.

But some seed, thank God, fell into good ground. And those that were sown on the roadside, the birds came and snatched them all. And those they were sown into the snowy ground.

They came out very quickly, but there was no root. And when the sun shone upon it, it scorched and it withered. Those seeds that were sown into the thorny ground, they took root.

They grew up, but the thorns just squeezed them, took away their nutrition. So they couldn't bear any fruit. But thank God those seeds that were sown into the good ground, these seeds began to grow patiently and produce fruit.

Thirtyfold, sixtyfold and a hundredfold. Now if our Lord Jesus had given this parable, He fully expected His disciples to understand it. The reason why He used this parable is because He did not want some people to understand it.

You know, if you read the preceding chapter, you'll find the Pharisees, how they blasphemed the Holy Spirit. And because they blasphemed the Holy Spirit, the Lord said, anyone who speaks evilly of the Son may be forgiven. But he that blasphemed the Holy Spirit, his sin shall never be forgiven.

He has committed the unpardonable sin. And from that time onward, the Lord began to speak to the people in parables that they may hear and they do not hear. But, when our Lord Jesus spoke these parables to the multitude, it was to be a kind of hidden thing to those who have blasphemed the Holy Spirit.

Because it is the Holy Spirit who convicts us of our sins. And if the Holy Spirit does not work upon us, we will never repent and we will never be convinced of the Saviour, of the preciousness, of the power of the blood. Therefore, there is no way to receive forgiveness.

But our Lord Jesus fully expected His disciples to understand, and they should. But they did not understand. So, they came to the Lord afterwards and said, Now, explain to us this parable.

And the Lord Jesus said, Now, if you don't understand this parable, you will not be able to understand all the other parables, because this parable is the foundation one. So, the Lord began to explain to them. Now, of course, the sower is none other but the Lord Himself.

Because He was the one who was sowing the seed. And what is the seed? He said, the seed is the Word of the Kingdom. In other words, the seed is the Gospel of the Kingdom.

Our Lord Jesus was spreading, was scattering the seed. He was preaching the Word of the Kingdom. He was preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom.

Now, when the Word of the Kingdom was given, then you will find those who heard, they had four different kinds of heart condition. The field, the seed that fell into the ground, the four different kinds of grounds actually represent four different kinds of hearts. Some hearts were like the roadside, due to heavy traffic of the world.

It was so hardened, that when they heard the Word of the Kingdom, they just couldn't take it in. It remained on the surface, and sure enough, the birds, represent the evil forces, would come and snatch the seed away. In other words, they heard, but they did not hear.

And there wasn't anything remained in their lives, as if they had never heard. Those with stony ground, they heard it. Emotionally, they were stirred, but they were stoned underneath the shallow soil.

In other words, their sins had not been confessed. It was just an emotional stirring. They seemed to accept the Word, and yet there was no repentance, there was no dealing.

They seemed to come up with something, but when there was tribulation, when there was persecution, they immediately left it behind. Those seeds that fell into the thorny ground, the Word of the Kingdom entering into their heart, they accepted it, and it began to take root. But unfortunately, the anxiety and the cares of this world, squeezed the seed.

So the Word was there. It came up with some stems, but it could never produce fruit. And how many among God's people who have heard the Word of the Kingdom are in this category? But thank God there were those whose ground was tilled, was softened, was worked upon, was ready, and when the Word of the Kingdom, the Gospel of the Kingdom was preached to them, they gladly accepted it, and the Bible said, they patiently bear fruit.

It takes time. But thank God there will be thirtyfold, sixtyfold, and a hundredfold. That was the beginning.

So the beginning is, the Word of the Gospel of the Kingdom is preached. And then, because the Gospel of the Kingdom is preached, some received the Word. And the Word began to grow in them.

And the Lord began to speak the second parable. Now you know all these parables are in successions. One comes after the other.

So in the second parable of the Lord Jesus, He talked about the parable of the wheat, and the dono of the tares. A man, a sower, he went and sowed the seed, the wheat, to the field. But, when the night came, the enemy came in, and he sowed the dono, the wheat, into the same field.

After a while, when the wheat began to grow, the wheat also began to grow. And the servants, who slept through the night, they were not watchful, therefore they allowed the enemy to sow the seed of the wheat. They didn't know that there was such wheat there, so they came to the master and said, Now, how did it happen? We haven't sowed the seed, we haven't seen the seed sowed, and yet these weeds were there.

Well, the master knows. He said, the enemy did it. The enemy did it.

And, the wheat, and the weed, they grew together, until the day of harvest. Now I'm not going into explaining these parables, because this is not our purpose tonight. Now, in the second parable of the kingdom.

Now, who is the sower? Of course, he explained it again. He said, the sower is the son of man. Our Lord Jesus is the sower.

But notice, what is the field? The field, in the second parable, is not human hearts. The field is the world. The world is the field.

Then, what about the seed? You'll find that, the son of man, he sowed the seed, in the world. But the seed here, he explained, it is not the word of the kingdom, they are the sons of the kingdom. In other words, those who have received the word of the kingdom, allow the word of the kingdom to work in their lives.

So that, the word, in a sense, becomes flesh. They become sons of the kingdom. And the Lord sowed them in the world, for a purpose.

Dear brothers and sisters, I often think, wherever you are, you are not in your place by accident. Wherever you are, it is the Lord who sows you there. He sows you there as the sons of the kingdom.

He sows some of the persons of the sons of the kingdom in Richmond. Of course, in Richmond, England too. And He sows some of the sons of the kingdom, maybe in New York, or in Delmarva, or in other places.

Here you'll find He sows the sons of the kingdom in the world. He scattered them all over the world. Strategically, He put them there.

And these sons of the kingdom are to preach the gospel of the kingdom as a witness to the world. Now, of course, the preaching there is more than just say it, because the kingdom of God is not in words, but in power. And these sons of the kingdom are being sown in the world.

Strategically, they occupy different parts of the world. Now, this world today is the enemy territory. But in the enemy territory, it seems as if the Lord has sent His paratroopers.

He just put them here and there, here and there. And they are there to take that place for the Lord. To testify before the world that there is a King.

And this King is God's King. To testify to the world that they submit themselves to this King. To testify to the world by their life and by their word that they are the kingdom of this world.

Dear brothers and sisters, when the spiritual power of this kingdom comes to a point, then you'll find the kingdom of this world shall become the kingdom of God and of His Christ. This is the strategy of God. We are the sons of the kingdom planted in this world as a witness and a testimony to the nations.

And then the end shall come. How do we become the sons of the kingdom? Or to put it in another way, how do we enter into the kingdom of God? Now this kingdom is different from the kingdom of this world. The way you enter into any kingdom of this world is by being born into that kingdom.

Now of course today in modern times you can be naturalized. But to the kingdom of God there is no naturalization. You have to be born into the kingdom of God.

Now that is the reason why when Nicodemus came to the Lord that evening. Now if you read the gospel according to John, you know it's unfortunate because the Bible is divided into chapters and verses. It's convenient but sometimes it's very unfortunate.

In the original manuscript there is no such division. Now if you read say the end of chapter 2, you'll find that many people believe in the Lord because they have seen His signs and wonders. Now these people they came to the Lord they flock to the Lord they believe in the Lord because they have seen signs and wonders.

But the Bible said our Lord Jesus did not commit Himself to them because He knows what was in them. He did not need anyone to tell Him what is the condition of our heart. He knew it so He did not commit Himself to them because these people just came to Him by seeing these signs and wonders.

They believe mentally but they did not really believe Him. So our Lord Jesus wouldn't commit Himself to them. Then beginning with chapter 3 He said but there was a man.

So in one sense you'll find Nicodemus was different from the multitude. The multitude came to the Lord superficially. It is almost like the sea fell upon the stony ground.

But there was one man Nicodemus. He was different. He really sought the kingdom of God.

He meant business. He was a good man. He was a moral man.

He was a rabbi, a teacher. And if you read carefully you'll find the Bible said he was THE rabbi. He was the rabbi of rabbis.

He was looked up to by everybody. He was supposed a person who knew God a person who knew all about God. People came to him for advice, for counsel, for instruction.

And yet he was humble enough honest enough to know that he did not really know. He knew academically. But he knew that he hadn't got it.

Maybe because of the crowd he would not come to the Lord Jesus in the daytime. It was not convenient. But thank God he came in the night.

And as he came to the Lord you'll find the way he said to the Lord how he respected the Lord. He did not understand him and yet he respected him. He said you are a rabbi from heaven.

I'm a rabbi on earth but you are a rabbi from heaven because you say something that I I did not understand. I couldn't say it. I realized there was something in you that I did not get.

You know our Lord Jesus knew his heart. Our Lord Jesus knew that he wanted to enter into the kingdom of God. That was what he wanted.

He wanted to enter into the kingdom of God. He was not satisfied just by knowing the law and the prophets. He was not satisfied by just knowing the theology of it.

He wanted to really enter into the kingdom of God. So the Lord Jesus immediately said to him verily verily I say to you unless a man be born again he shall not see the kingdom of God. No wonder you had not seen the kingdom of God.

You heard about it but you had not seen it. If you want to see the kingdom of God you must be born again. And the Lord said unless you are born of water and of spirit you shall not enter into the kingdom of God.

Dear brothers and sisters how do we enter into the kingdom of God? We enter into the kingdom of God by being born into it. You cannot instruct a person into the kingdom of God. You cannot educate a person into the kingdom of God.

You cannot put a person in a certain kind of environment and say now he is in the kingdom of God. To really enter into the kingdom of God you must be born again. Must be born of the spirit.

And then you find in 1 Peter chapter 1 1 Peter chapter 1 verse 23 Being born again not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible by the living and abiding Word of God. How are we born into the kingdom of God? We are born by the spirit but it is also by the living and abiding Word of God. Not by silver or gold or any corruptible thing but by the incorruptible seed.

Even the living and abiding Word of God. One day you know when our Lord Jesus was on earth in His public ministry He was very busy. Why? Because people just flocked to Him.

Many people wanted to hear Him and more people wanted to have their sicknesses healed or the demons cast out. So our Lord Jesus was very busy. But then some mothers brought their children to the Lord.

They wanted the Lord to bless them and the disciples when they saw these mothers bringing their children to the Lord oh they told these mothers our Lord had no time for these children He was just too busy. Go away. Do not disturb.

And yet our Lord Jesus said Suffer little children to come to me. For of such is the kingdom of God. Unless you become like these little children you cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

And then you remember at another occasion the disciples they were arguing among themselves who is the greatest in the kingdom of God. Oh everyone wants to be the greatest in the kingdom of God. So our Lord Jesus demonstrated to them he took a little child sat in the midst of them and said unless you be converted and become like this little child you cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

So brothers and sisters it is very clear that the kingdom of God being different from the kingdoms of this world the only way to enter into the kingdom of God is to become like little children. That is to say to be born again. There are many scriptures that tells us who cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

For instance 1 Corinthians chapter 6 1 Corinthians chapter 6 verse 9 Do ye not know that unrighteous persons shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not err neither fornicators nor idolaters nor adulterers nor those who make women of themselves nor who abuse themselves with men nor thieves nor covetous nor drinkers nor abusive persons nor the rapacious shall inherit the kingdom of God? But these things were some of you but he hath been washed but he hath been sanctified but he hath been justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God. In 1 Corinthians chapter 15 verse 50 we find another verse here even though he speaks of resurrection and yet the principle is there. 1 Corinthians chapter 15 verse 50 But this I say brethren that flesh and blood cannot inherit God's kingdom nor does corruption inherit incorruptibility.

Who can enter? Who can inherit the kingdom of God? The unrighteous cannot inherit. Dear brothers and sisters is there anyone who is righteous? There is none who is righteous. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom.

In other words with man it is impossible but with God all things are possible. You remember that young rich ruler? Oh how he wanted to enter into the kingdom of God? How he wanted to inherit eternal life? And he came to the Lord and he ran to him and knelt down among the multitude and said Master what shall I do that I might inherit eternal life? But he turned away sadly. And when he turned away the Lord Jesus said how difficult how hard it is for a rich person to enter into the kingdom of God.

Now the Lord said how hard how difficult it is for a rich person to enter into the kingdom of God. It is easier for a camel to enter into the neil's head than a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. Dear brothers and sisters in order to enter into the kingdom of God we have to lay aside everything and be converted by little children.

If anyone should depend upon himself how he is rich maybe he thinks he is rich in virtue. The way to enter into the kingdom of God is to stick naked by the Holy Spirit and acknowledge ourselves as nothing but a sinner and we ask for mercy and we trust in the Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit will use the living word to give birth to us. This is the way that we enter into the kingdom of God.

We become children of the kingdom. But dear brothers and sisters the question here is not how to enter into the kingdom of God. I trust that those who are here this evening you have already been stood naked by the Holy Spirit you have already repented you have already believed in the Lord Jesus as your Saviour you have already been born again by the water and the spirit by the incorruptible sea the word of God.

But the question with us is this do we enter into the kingdom and then live in the kingdom on different principles. In other words we enter into the kingdom by being converted as little children. We enter into the kingdom by being born again.

In other words it is purely by grace not by merits not by works but by the grace of God in Jesus Christ. That is the way we enter into the kingdom of God. But after we enter into the kingdom of God the question is do we live in that kingdom.

I am not speaking of anything positional. This is not what we want to talk about. I am speaking of our condition.

We are children of the kingdom by birth but do we live as sons of the kingdom. Do we live in the reality of the kingdom of God. We may be born again positionally we are in the kingdom of God but so far as our daily experience is concerned are we under the rule of the king.

Do we manifest ourselves as the true sons of the kingdom. I believe the same principle governs our entering in and our abiding in the kingdom. We must not only enter into the kingdom but we must abide in the kingdom.

To use an example we are just using that metaphor figure speech. Well actually it is not a figure speech it is a reality. The Lord in John chapter 15 said I am the vine you are the branches.

I am the vine you are the branches. I in you and you in me. And of course this is true.

He is the vine we are the branches. He in us and we in him. This is true this is a reality.

But then the Lord continues to say abiding in me and I abide in you. If you do not abide in me you can do nothing. If you do not abide in me you cannot bear fruit.

If you do not bear fruit then you will be cut off and cast away and be burned. Now dear brothers and sisters of course the Lord is not talking about eternal salvation or talking about eternal perdition. The Lord is not talking about his matter of eternal life or eternal death.

The Lord is talking about our daily life with him. He is the vine we are the branch. He in us and we in him that is our position and this position will never change.

No matter what happens this position remains true forever. But so far as our daily life is concerned our experience is concerned our communion fellowship is concerned you find that some branches may not bear fruit. Why? Because these branches awkwardly were connected to the tree and yet something was wrong.

There was a branch a blockage. The sap of the vine could not get into that branch or that branch refuses resist the supply of the life of the vine and the result was no fruit. Withered cut off cast away no use no use to the master.

It does not speak of eternal life or eternal death. It refers to the kingdom. Brothers and sisters positionally we are born into the kingdom of God.

But experientially are we living in the reality of the kingdom? Do we manifest ourselves as the true sons of the kingdom? Another parable and this parable is found in Matthew chapter 22. And the Lord said it is the parable of the kingdom. And what is the parable? It is the parable of a wedding.

Matthew chapter 22. The kingdom of the heavens has become like a king who made a wedding feast for his son. Here you'll find the Lord said the kingdom is like a king having a wedding feast for his son the crown prince.

And he has sent out managers and sent out messengers invited people to come and attend the wedding feast. Now of course we will not go into the details because it would take too much time. But anyway you'll find that how people who were invited how they refused to come and they gave all kinds of excuses.

Actually these were not real excuses. People even resisted those messengers ill-treated them and killed them. But many from the highway and the byways came in and filled the hall.

Then the strange thing was the king entered into this hall where the wedding feast was prepared. And he looked around and he found one person did not have a wedding garment. So he said why don't you have the wedding garment? Bind him up.

Cast him out. Now isn't that strange? Well the reason is in the old days we are told that when their king prepare a feast usually the host will prepare the garments. They will have all these garments ready.

And when the guests come in they will put on the garments before they sit down to enjoy the feast. But evidently this man came in and he felt that his garment was good enough. Was even better.

So he refused to put out the garment, the wedding garment that the king had prepared for his guests. And when the king noticed that there was no wedding garment he was not fit to attend a wedding feast. So he was bound and cast out.

Now this is the parable of the kingdom. In other words, you may be in the kingdom. You may be bound into the kingdom of God.

But you may not be able to attend the wedding feast because you do not have that wedding garment on you. Well, connect this with Revelation chapter 19 and you'll find the wedding feast of the Lamb has come. And the bride has made herself ready.

And it was given to her a bright shiny linen. And what is the bright shiny linen? It says, the righteousnesses of the saints. That's the wedding garment.

Brothers and sisters, what it means is simply this. We, many are called, but few are chosen. Many are called, but after we are called is the fact that we do not depend upon the grace of God.

We come in by grace. But after we come in by grace, we begin to think that now we are saved. We can do something.

We begin to depend upon our works. We think that we are good enough now. We are strong enough now.

So we try to accumulate merits of our own. Thinking that by that we can enter into the wedding feast. But dear brothers and sisters, how wrong you are.

That garment is the righteousnesses of the saints. What is the righteousnesses of the saints? It is the Holy Spirit who patiently work upon those who have Christ in them. Christ is our righteousness.

We have Christ in us. And the life of Christ is righteous. So the Holy Spirit works patiently upon our lives, trying stitch by stitch to incorporate Christ, to develop Christ, I may use that word, to organize Christ, to let Christ be formed in us.

As we allow the Holy Spirit to form Christ in us, then it becomes the bright shining meaning, the righteousnesses of the saints. That is the wedding garment the king prepared for the wedding feast. So dear brothers and sisters, it is still grace, but it is grace upon grace.

Anyway, to enter into the kingdom positionally is by new birth. That is one thing. But to live in the kingdom of God, to abide in God's kingdom, to be in the reality of the kingdom, or to put it in another way, to be spiritually the real kingdom of God to Christ, something more is needed.

That is the reason why you find, after our Lord Jesus began to preach the gospel of the kingdom, and some have responded to him. As a matter of fact, if you read the gospel according to Matthew, you'll find it came in quick succession, as if there was no time in between. Why? Because in chapter 4 verse 17 said, From that time began Jesus to preach and to say, Repent, for the kingdom of the heavens hath drawn nigh.

The Lord began to preach the gospel of the kingdom. But after he preached the gospel of the kingdom, immediately, in verse 18, he said, And walking by the sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon competitor and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishers. And he said to them, Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men.

And they having left their draw nets, immediately followed him. And then the same thing happened to the two sons of Zebedee, James and John. Now, what is it? In other words, the gospel of the kingdom is preached.

And immediately after the word of the kingdom is received, then it follows with the call of discipleship. Immediately you'll find the Lord began to call these who believed in him to be his disciples. Come after me.

Oh, dear brothers and sisters, we in a sense make a division, unfortunate division, between believer and disciple. We think that first of all, we believe. And then after maybe five years, we hear the call to be disciple.

But actually, in reality you'll find to be a believer is supposed to be a disciple. The believers were disciples. The disciples were believers.

Here you'll find these people who heard the word of the gospel of the kingdom. They believe. Oh, but it is more than believe, they obey.

The gospel is not only to be believed in, but the gospel is to be obeyed. So here you'll find the Lord call for disciples. Come, follow me.

Who are the real sons of the kingdom? The true sons of the kingdom are those who are disciples to Christ. You know, dear brothers and sisters, I do not know if I am mistaken. If I am, please correct me.

But as I read the New Testament, nowhere I found that we are called to be disciples to anybody other than the Lord Himself. Other people may help us towards discipleship, but we are called to be disciples of Christ. The only place where there may be some hint or some mistake is, you remember, when Saul, after Saul was converted, and then he was with those disciples in Damascus, and because he boldly proclaimed Jesus as Christ, as the Son of God, and they tried to seize him.

And the Bible said, his disciples let him down in a basket from the wall. Well, some manuscripts do not say his disciples, just say the disciples. So I wonder whether these are Saul's disciples or not.

Now, if they were Saul's disciples, that was really strange, because he himself was a new believer. And if he tried to disciple people to himself, I'm afraid, this was because of his ignorance. We are disciples to Christ.

And what is meant by disciples? Oh, the word disciple is very different from what we understand today. Because today we understand a disciple as a student. Now, as a student, you go to class, you listen to the professor, to the lecture, you try to absorb all the knowledge that this professor has.

And after you have exhausted him, then you graduate. But the disciple in the old days is very different. Why? This is the way the Lord disciplines his disciples.

He said, come after me. To be a disciple is to come after him. Why? Because it is the old system of apprenticeship.

In the old days, when you want to learn a trade, there is no trade school, there is no technical school. If you want to learn to be a plumber, the only way is you find a master plumber. And if your parents find a master plumber and you have to ask a plumber to accept your son to be an apprentice, he may not accept him.

And even when the master is willing to accept the young man as an apprentice in China, the parents have to pay a sum of money to the master. And he wants to leave his family. An apprentice is not allowed to stay in his parents' home.

He has to leave his parents' home, go and stay with his master to learn the trade. And usually during the first year, the master will not even allow him to touch any tool. He will be like a slave in his master's home.

He will sweep the floor, he will carry the baby, help carry the baby, and do all kinds of things having nothing to do with the trade. And this may happen for a year. He will not even be allowed to touch the tool.

He will not be instructed in any way about that. Just do all these things. And he will not be allowed to go back home without permission.

It's only after maybe a year of slavery. Then probably the next year the master began to tell him a thing or two. Or began to let him touch the tool or take him along with him when he was doing that kind of work.

And this may continue for three years or seven years. Until the day comes, the master said, now you can go on your own. And you know what is the result? The result is this young man not only learns the skill of his master, become as skillful as his master, but he also learns the manner of life, the way of life of his master.

Sometimes he even talk like his master. He walk like his master. He has been transformed, shaped, reproduced.

Dear brothers and sisters, this is the meaning of discipleship. The Lord said, come, after me. The only way to be a disciple, you have to leave everything and follow him.

And that's the way you find in the Gospels. Every time the call of discipleship comes, you find they left everything and followed him. Now, of course, it may not mean that you have to physically leave your home, leave your father, mother, and some husband will be just too happy to leave their wife, or some wife will be just too happy to leave their husband, and some parents will be very happy to leave their children, or their children will be very happy to leave their parents.

No, this is not the meaning of it. If you are happy about that, probably the Lord says, stay with them. That is part of the discipleship.

But anyway, you will find, in order to be a disciple, you have to leave everything behind. In other words, you have to be detached in your heart from everything. Everything has to be settled.

In Luke chapter 14, the Lord said, if you want to build a tower, sit down and count the cost. If you are not willing to pay all that you have, don't start. If you want to war with an enemy, and you are only willing to give part of your forces to that battle, then don't fight at all.

Unless you forsake all things, you cannot be my disciples. Dear brothers and sisters, it is not the physical thing. It is the spiritual meaning in it.

In other words, to be a disciple of the Lord Jesus, you have to deny everything, even deny your own lives. You have to count your cost, nothing emotional. You have to count your cost, but the love of Christ constrains you, and you are willing to let go everything and say, Lord, you have the word of life, I know where to go, I am arrested by you, I'm yours.

In your spirit, in your heart, you left everything, you detached from everything and attached only to the Lord. You put yourself under his rule and his authority. And dear brothers and sisters, you gave him opportunity to mold you and to fashion you in the way that he wants to do with you.

Now, it may not be in the way that you expect. Often times, we expect that if we really give ourselves to the Lord and say, now, Lord, I want to learn of you, well, you will think that he will give you a short course,

six months, and you graduate. But you'll find, often times, when you really give yourself to the Lord, the Lord begins to do something in your life that has to do with you.

It means nothing. Unrelated, completely unrelated. But it's through these unrelated small things.

He is teaching you. He is working in you. He is transforming dear brothers and sisters, those who left all and followed him.

Then he led them in chapter five to the mountains. You know, we probably all are familiar with the Sermon on the Mountain. Matthew chapter five, six, and chapter seven.

The Sermon on the Mountain. Here you'll find the process of it. First, the gospel of the kingdom is preached.

Then, the call to discipleship. And when these people really follow the Lord, then where does the Lord lead them to? The Lord leads them to the mountain. And as he led them to the mountain, he sat down, he opened his mouth, and he spoke to the disciples.

Dear brothers and sisters, the Sermon on the Mountain is not spoken to the multitudes. The Sermon on the Mountain is spoken to the disciples. If you are not a disciple of Christ, the Sermon on the Mountain is not meant for you.

But if you really answer the call of discipleship, you really give yourself to him, put yourself under his rule, his instruction, his discipline, then listen to what he said. Often times we misunderstand the Sermon on the Mountain. Often times we think that the Sermon on the Mountain is given to us, that we practice it.

Now, it is true. All that is said in these chapters ought to be practiced. Our Lord is most practical.

He does not want us to spiritualize away anything in these chapters. You know, there is one thing I feel. When you come to Matthew 5, 6 and 7, actually there is not much explanation needed.

Why? Because the more you explain it, the more it is explained away. The Sermon on the Mountain is meant just as it is said here. And it is to be practiced.

But who is to practice it? We think that it is a higher law. It is a law that is stricter than the law of Moses. And in a sense, it is true.

Because in chapter 5, the Lord said, You have heard what He was told to the fathers. Thou shalt not kill, but I say unto you. In other words, here was the law of Moses and here is the word of our Lord.

To me, I think the Sermon on the Mountain, chapter 5, 6 and 7. May I say, generally, chapter 5, the Lord is not proclaiming to us the law of His Kingdom. Rather, the Lord is presenting to us an image of the Kingdom. Now, there is a great difference there.

And to me, I think, chapter 6, the Lord is telling us a relationship in the Kingdom. And in chapter 7, generally speaking, He is trying to show us an experience of the Kingdom. In other words, chapter 5 is related to the Son.

Chapter 6 to the Father. Chapter 7 to the Holy Spirit. The Sermon on the Mountain begins with the Beatitudes.

Happy are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of God. You know, the Beatitudes are not laws. Because the Beatitudes are the persons.

It is not saying, now, you have to be poor in spirit. He said, blessed are the poor in spirit. It is not trying to teach you to be poor in spirit.

Trying to command you to be poor in spirit. It comes out with said, blessed are the poor in spirit. In other words, you are the poor in spirit.

Why? Because the Beatitude is nothing but the image of God's Son. What is the image of the King? The image of the King is poor in spirit. You read in Philippians chapter 2, we are familiar with that passage.

Though he was equal with God, and this was the something to be grasped at, and yet he emptied himself, he took upon himself the form of a slave, the form of a man, and being in the form of a man, he further humbled himself, becoming obedient to the Father, even to death, and that's the death of the cross, blessed are the poor in spirit. Here you'll find our Lord Jesus, the King, the Son, the King. What kind of a person he is? What image does he present to us? Because his image is the image of the kingdom, the character of the kingdom.

He characterizes the kingdom, and what is the image? Poor in spirit. Poor in spirit doesn't mean that he is really poor, that is, he has nothing, he has everything. He was equal with God, and there was no something that he strived at that was his from eternity.

He was the Son of God, eternal Son of God. All glory, all honor, all power, all dominion belonged to him by right, and yet he emptied himself, not only to be a man. As a man, he put himself under the rule of his father.

He obeyed his father even until death, and the death of the cross. This is poor in spirit. Dear brothers and sisters, we are the sons of the kingdom.

To be the sons of the kingdom, we have to be transformed, and conformed to the image of our king. And that is the work of the Holy Spirit. Dear brothers and sisters, there is no way for us to be poor in spirit.

Oftentimes we think that if we want to make ourselves poor in spirit, we are hypocrites. Why? Because we think we are pretty rich. In one sense probably you have advanced pretty far in the Lord.

And because you have advanced pretty much in the Lord, you feel that you are pretty rich. And to say you are poor in spirit, to take the position of humility, you find that it is false. We cannot do that.

If we try to make ourselves humble, our very humility is our pride. Look how humble I am. Brothers and sisters, remember, with man it is impossible, but with God all things are possible.

The Kingdom is the Gospel. Now where is the Gospel? The Gospel is you have the life of the King in you. Because the life is there.

The Holy Spirit is also in you. And what is the work of the Holy Spirit? The work of the Holy Spirit is to organize that life in you. To bring out that life.

The work of the Holy Spirit is to apply the cross in your life, cut off all that is of your flesh. Your arrogance, your pride. He will cut it off and He will let Christ grow in you.

And as Christ grows in you, what is it that you have do? You have to do what you do. do. You have to do you do.

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You have to do what You have to do what You have to do what you do. You have what You have to do what you do. You have to what you do.

You have to do you He does not need to moan for his own sin because he has no sin. We have to weep for our sins. But he does not.

He needs not. And yet, as he sees us. Oh, how few we have.

Jerusalem. How often I want to gather you as a hand, gather his little chicken under his wing. But you will not.

Blessed are those who mourn. Dear brothers and sisters, remember, this is character. This is image.

It is something that the Holy Spirit will bring out in you. But it is not you. It is the life of the people.

And you can go on and throw the whole reality. And dear brothers and sisters, how does he bring that out? Thank God the potential is already in. All that pertains to life of godliness has already been given.

Now it is the Holy Spirit who is trying to bring this out. To develop you. To transform you.

To conform you to the image of God's Son. And of course, in the process of transformation, it is very painful. This is why it requires you to be a disciple.

This is why it is necessary that you put yourself under his absolute control. Yes, there will be the time when you will argue with him. There will be time when you will resist.

There will be time when you feel that it is not this way. It should be the other way. But dear brothers and sisters, thank God.

As our brother has mentioned again and again, there is the sovereignty of God there. You cannot get away. And you will not.

This is what our brother said. Cooperation. The Sermon on the Mount is not a law put upon.

Not even a law put upon the disciples. The Sermon on the Mount is an image presented to us. And as we behold the glory of the Lord, we are being transformed from glory to glory according to his image by the Lord.

And as we are being transformed, then you will find he says, ye are the thought. Ye are the light of the world. You know brothers and sisters, often times we say now, we are the thought of the world.

Now are you? You are the thought of the world only after you are a disciple to Christ. Only after the gospel of the kingdom becomes your gospel. Only after you allow the King, his image to be reproduced in you by the Holy Spirit.

When this happens, you are the thought of the world. If this does not happen, you are like a thought that has lost his. And it becomes useless.

You are the light of the world. How can you be a witness and testimony to the nations? Only after you have received the word of the kingdom and you allow the Holy Spirit to make you a true son of the kingdom. Then dear brothers and sisters, you are like a light, a city built on the mountain that cannot be hidden.

The whole Sermon on the Mount is telling us what is grace if you cooperate. The Sermon on the Mount tells us of a relationship. You have a relationship with the Heavenly Father.

And with that relationship, you are able to be transformed and be perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect. The Sermon on the Mount tells us that you can have an experience. It is the experience of the working of the Holy Spirit in your life.

He will work in such a way that may seem unnatural to man. Now it is natural for us to judge. It is natural to us to see that little speck of dust in the eyes of our brothers and sisters.

And do not see that beam in our own eyes. That is natural. But the working of this Holy Spirit is so beautiful that He will make us see what is in our eyes.

And then after it is done, then we can help our brothers and sisters. It is by the working of the Holy Spirit that we can build our house. Not only heal us, but do us.

Because He has first worked in us to will and to do. And then we work out our salvation with fear and trembling. So brothers and sisters, the Sermon on the Mount is not a law.

It is grace. It is the life of the King in us. It is the Father's pleasure to give the Kingdom to us.

It is the work of the Holy Spirit to transform us. That we may be true sons of the Kingdom. And of course, if this is true, we have a testimony to give.

We are witnesses of that Kingdom. And the end shall come. Shall we pray? Our Heavenly Father, we do worship Thee because the Kingdom is the Gospel.

It is glad time. Oh, often times we feel that the Kingdom demands so much. How can we answer these demands? But we do praise and thank Thee.

Thou dost first put Thy life in us. Thou hast demonstrated to us what a life that is. What a Kingly life that is.

And now Thou hast sent Thy Holy Spirit to work in us and with us. To transform and conform us to His image. That we may be manifested in this world as true sons of the Kingdom.

As sought, as enlightened. That the Heavenly Father may be glorified. Oh, we pray that the spiritual reality of Thy Kingdom may increase.

That the Kingdom of this world may decrease. In the name of our Lord Jesus, Amen.

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