

## What is the Kingdom Like: Part 5

Once again, let's quickly review what we have learned about the key aspects of the Kingdom of God. We know that:

- It will have no end, it is an eternal Kingdom.
- The citizens of the Kingdom are also eternal and will have no end.
- The Kingdom will be given to the true citizens of the Kingdom of God.
- For now it is an unseen Kingdom that lives within the souls of its citizens.
- It is not of this world.
- It cannot be shaken or moved.
- It is a Kingdom of ultimate power.
- It is a Kingdom that is marked by mercy, redemption, compassion, and forgiveness.
- This Kingdom is inside out and upside down when compared to human logic, reasoning, and wisdom.
- It is a kingdom of righteousness.

As we studied in **Hebrews 1:8-9**, the Lord rules His kingdom with a righteous scepter, for He loves righteousness and hates lawlessness. Accordingly, His kingdom is deemed to be fair, impartial, even handed, unbiased, morally right, just, virtuous, upright, justifiable, lawful, and correct. These are all the attributes that will be part of our lives if God's righteousness is both in us and is flowing through us; which, as citizens of the Kingdom of God, is obviously to be our goal. As we have

learned, God makes us right with Him—He makes us righteous—but practically, we have to learn how to let this condition of being right with God pour forth into and ultimately from our lives. In a way, this list is sort of a litmus test—a reality check—about your life, as to whether or not you are actually abiding in Christ. As Paul says in **2 Corinthians 13:5**, “Examine yourselves to see if you are in the faith (or if your faith is genuine). Test yourselves. Surely you know that Jesus Christ is among you; if not, you have failed the test of genuine faith.” If the righteousness of God is not something that is readily recognizable in your life, then you have faith issues and you are not now abiding in faith. You have failed the test or as it says in the literal Greek, you are living like one who has not been approved of by God—as one who is not righteous.

This is something that deeply grieves the heart of the Father for He has given you the gift of righteousness (**Romans 5:17**); and all you had to do to receive this gift was believe. According to **Romans 5:1**, God chose to make you righteous, or to be in right standing with Him, through Jesus Christ and He always continually makes us right with Him (it is rendered in the *aoist passive participle*). It is an amazing and glorious reality. But I want you to consider something. For you to have received this gift of righteousness, you had to dig down deep in your soul and choose to believe that Jesus is God. You had to choose to believe that Jesus is the Son of God; came down to earth as a man; died for your sins, once and for all; rose from the dead thereby conquering both sin and death; after which He ascended into heaven where He now sits at the right hand of the Father. Somehow you were able, with the assistance of the Holy Spirit, to believe something that seems to most people to be absolutely incredulous—nothing more than a fanciful tale—which is why so

few people have ever chosen to believe. But you did it; you made the choice, and in so doing have become a child of God—a joint heir with Jesus Christ—at least that is what you have chosen to believe about yourself. And now you even call yourself a Christian, a true Believer, one of the chosen. Yet, you have not seen God; you have not actually met Him; still, you claim to know Him. And for some reason, you have dug down deep into your soul and chosen to believe all that was written about Him in a very old book—a book that you barely even understand for yourself. And you let this book be the authority over your life. It all sounds a little crazy; others think you are crazy; nevertheless you have chosen to believe. You have chosen!

In the same way (no matter how crazy it may seem), according to **Romans 6:1-11**, all the Father wants is for you to choose to believe that when you placed your faith in Jesus Christ you were actually baptized into Christ's death and His resurrection; and like Him you have also died to sin and have been given new life in Jesus Christ, such that you can now live free from the bondage of sin (no matter what that sin may be). That is why the Father **commands** you, right now, to dig down deep in your soul, and by the power of the Holy Spirit who now abides in you, consider yourself dead to sin and alive to God (**Romans 6:11**). It is essentially the same radical decision of faith that you made when you first believed. It is the same decision of faith you exercise every time you consider yourself to be a Christian. From faith to faith; that is what the Father desires. We began by faith and we must now live in faith.

In the Greek, this word translated “consider” in **Romans 6:11** literally means to assess the facts, take an inventory of your spiritual reality, and conclude, in this instance, that you are dead to sin and fully alive to God. This is a faith decision

wrought with just as many antagonists (both internal and external) and reasons not to believe as when you first decided to trust yourself to Christ. There is no difference. You still have to overcome what you feel, what you do, what you have done, what others think and feel (including the demonic spirits that lie to you), and so on. It is exactly the same thing. It is a choice—your choice.

Think through this with me. Normally, when sin is at issue, people usually feel bad, guilty, and shameful. In other words, they refuse, in those moments, to believe that Jesus actually died for their sin, once and for all. For some reason, the faith they had in Jesus' death and resurrection goes out the window. Then they try to go out and stop sinning, whatever their "sin" may be, in an attempt to get "right" with God. But as we know, that never works, at least not for very long. The work of the hands is more than just worthless, it is entirely futile. After all, it is from faith to faith, not from faith to works. Soon they are back to feeling bad, guilty, and shameful about their sin; and the cycle continues and continues.

But our lives are to be from faith to faith. We came to the Lord by faith and we are to live in the Lord by faith. Consider yourselves dead to sin but alive to God. Think about it, dwell on it, meditate on it, examine it, take inventory, and conclude that what the Father has commanded is true: you are now under grace. Consider what Jesus did for you on the cross. If you take an inventory of your sin, you will not find it. The Spirit will confirm that your sin has been thrown far, far away—as far as the East is from the West (***Psalm 103:12***). In fact, "When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh (meaning that your *Old Sinful Nature* still automatically controlled you), He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, having canceled out the certificate

of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross” (**Colossians 2:13-15**). So forget the guilt, feeling bad, and all the shame. Put it aside and instead consider the fact that He made you alive together with Him. Yes, consider yourself dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. You might be thinking, that sounds nice, but how in the world can I actually live this way? Let’s go back to our study last week in **Romans 6:12-14** and we will go from there.

### ***Romans 6:12-14***

Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

Here we find five commands. With five being the number of *grace* you can understand this series of commands to be absolutely wrapped up in grace; in other words, He has already given you the supernatural ability to fully obey these five commands, seeing that His divine power has already given you everything you need for life and godliness through the true knowledge of Jesus Christ (**2 Peter 1:3**). He has equipped you to believe; therefore: 1) Do not let sin reign or have dominion in your body; 2) do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin; 3) present yourself to God as those alive from the dead; 4) present your members as

instruments of righteousness; and 5) for you are not under law but under grace. These are five commands that are obeyed by faith and the key is the true knowledge of Jesus Christ. You just must be willing to choose.

In one of the greatest movies of all time, a father tells his son: “Your dead to me boy, you’re more dead to me than your dead mother.” And in another famous movie, a younger brother says to his older brother: “Fredo, you are nothing to me now. You’re not a brother, you’re not a friend. I don’t want to know what you do, I don’t want to see you. I don’t want you near my house. When you see our mother, I want to know a day in advance so I won’t be there.” When people consider themselves dead to another person, it means they completely cut them out of their lives. They no longer even consider them a person, much less a memory; they have nothing, nothing to do with them. It’s as if they never existed in the first place. This is to be our relationship with sin. We are to have nothing to do with the things that once bound us; and by faith we can live free from sin, if we are willing to choose.

By the power of the Holy Spirit, through the true knowledge of Jesus Christ, you are to consider yourself dead to self-protection. Why do you even need it if the Lord is your **Jehovah Nissi**? You are to consider yourself dead to all your attempts to please God and make Him happy with you. After all, if He is your **Jehovah Tsidkenu**, He is your righteousness; thus, you can say goodbye forever to the good child bad child syndrome. You are to consider yourself dead to all your insecurity because **Jehovah Mekoddishkem** has chosen you and set you apart, from the billions, to belong only to Him; and **Jehovah Qanna** will continue His pursuit of you until He has everything—all of you. You are to consider yourself dead to control and manipulation in your desperate attempt to get what you want in this life for

He is **Yahweh** and He is the one who establishes your steps and the paths upon which you will walk. Your control is nothing but an illusion anyways. You are to set aside worry and all your anxiety for **Jehovah Shammah** is there always and **Jehovah Raah** will carefully lead you to the best places where you can feed; find rest, good water, and safety. You don't even have to worry about your failings and weaknesses, for **Jehovah Shalom** declares that you have peace with God and **Jehovah Rapha** will heal you of every wound that **El Shaddai**, in His wisdom, caused. You don't even have to worry about tomorrow, but can focus only on today because **Jehovah Jireh** will provide for your every need. And **Jehovah Sabaoth** will ensure that everything He has promised to you will be fulfilled, for He will move time, space, and all the powers of the heavens to ensure you are always cared for and His will is always enacted in your life—this is what **El Elyon** the Mighty God declares. And why should you fear if the Lord, your God Almighty—**El Shaddai**—calls you His very own.

For every sin that resides in our being, there is an aspect of God that is our very provision; which, if we were to believe in His name, would allow us to set aside that sin and consider ourselves dead to it. If we truly bet our lives on who He says He is—the true knowledge of Jesus Christ—we would say to those areas in our soul that stand in opposition to the reign of God: You are nothing to me now. You're not a brother. You're not a friend. You're not a lover. You have no place in my life. I don't want to know what you do or what you want. I don't want to see you, and I don't want to hear from you ever again. I don't even want you near my house. Yes, through the true knowledge of Jesus Christ He has equipped you 1) to not let sin reign or have dominion in your body; 2) to not go on presenting the members of

your body to sin; 3) to present yourself to God as those alive from the dead; 4) to present your members as instruments of righteousness; and 5) for you are not under law but under grace. Remember, our lives are to be from faith to faith. We believed in Jesus; we did it. Therefore, I know that we can believe in the life He has given to us confident that we are dead to sin. Choose to be obedient from the heart and present yourself to God for Him to use for His own purposes. Don't fight Him; don't fear Him; don't resist him; instead, yield to His grace and you will come to know the power of His resurrection. As Paul said:

***Philippians 3:8-11***

I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, that I may know Him and the **power of His resurrection** and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

To know the power of His resurrection, the power to consider yourself dead to sin but alive to God, you must count all things as loss and rubbish for the sake of knowing Christ. Let go of your self-protection; it just keeps you separated from people and from enjoying God. Take the risk of being unguarded before Him and



before others. Let go of the good child bad child dynamic; it is a roller coaster of hell that never ends. Let go of the foolishness of your pride; you are just humiliating yourself. Let go of your demands for your life and all the ways you have determined it should be; trust instead in His wisdom, for He knows better. Let go of the desire for praise and glory and receive all the praise and glory from God. He promises that if you humble yourself, He will lift you up. Let go of the desire for success and trust that He knows the best pathways for your life. Be confident He will always lead you down them. Let go of your desperate neediness and find that He will be everything you always could ever need; besides, He knows how to satisfy you in the relationships He will freely give you. Let go of your selfishness and accept the futility of living for yourself; it is a lonely, lonely existence. Let go of your drama and love for chaos and disorder; He can bring you peace and rest. Let go of it all; consider it all rubbish. There is not a single piece of our sin that is worth missing out on knowing the power of His resurrection. Consider yourself dead to all of it. This is an issue of faith.

Instead, consider yourself alive to God. And since His righteousness is a gift and the life He has extended to you is a gift, all you have to do is look within to discover the power consider yourself alive to God. There is a special place in every true believer. This special place is the home of the Holy Spirit where we abide with both the Father and the Son. This special place is called the **New Creation** and according to **Ephesians 4:24** it has been created in the likeness of God in righteousness and holiness of truth. It is because of this new life that we can be sure we have conquered sin and death, for God Himself abides in us in the fullness of His holiness and glory. I know, it is quite an audacious statement, but it is the truth. The fullness

of the Godhead dwells in you. Somehow you have come to **know** and **believe** that Jesus is God while at the same time the Son of God who came down to earth as a man having been born of a virgin. What He is asking you to now believe is not any less audacious. This is why we are commanded to consider ourselves dead to sin and alive to God. God lives in you; and now He simply wants is to live through you. Believe this to be true, live as if it is true, and it will become your practical reality.

Sadly, we do not live as if we really believe the fullness of the Godhead dwells in us in all power and authority. And this sad fact, this one truth, explains for us and makes sense out of everything that has happened to us throughout our entire lives. This brings us to the rest of the passage we have been studying in ***Romans 6***.

### ***Romans 6:19-23***

I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in further lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification. For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death. But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The goal of presenting your body to Jesus is your sanctification, or as we

understand it our living “**Hope.**” It is the fulfillment of the idea that we can truly be like Him. Being found in His image is not just a hyperbole, it is to be our reality if we let Christ, through our ***New Creation***, have full and complete access to our body. What we call “sanctification” is just a word that captures this process whereby we come to **know** and **believe** the love which God has for us. It is the process whereby we become convinced that God has given us life, He is our life, and we are alive to God. This process involves our choosing to let go of our sin believing it all to be rubbish and being absolutely convinced that it does not lead to life but leads to the incessant bondage of pain, loneliness, isolation, anger, bitterness, resentment, fear, insecurity, failure, etc. All that God takes us through in this life, the suffering, persecution, trials, and ordeals, is specifically arranged (in painstaking detail) to help us decide that we must choose to let go of everything that is not Him. He does not force us to become like Him, but He teaches us over and over again why it is the right and better decision. As he says, “what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death.” If you are honest, you know you have received no real benefit from your self-protection, from your control, from your fear, from your goodness, from your coping mechanisms, or from any of the darkness that has reigned within your soul. It has all lead to death and a dissatisfaction in your life with God, with others, and with yourself; it is sad and pathetic but true nonetheless.

Paul starts this passage off by mentioning the weakness of our *flesh*. Interestingly, “weakness” is not an adjective describing our *flesh*, but it is a noun. In other words, the *flesh* is weak; always has been and always will be. You cannot experience the true life which God has for you, much less the righteousness of God,

by anything you do. Only Jesus can be your righteousness and your life; yet, His righteousness and His life is experienced through this process of sanctification. This is why every one of us should cry out for the Lord to let His fire burn off the parts of our soul that still hold on to believing that we can do this life without Christ.

Paul then makes a critical point about our lives of lawlessness, or our lives in the *flesh*, which are always disobedient to God. He says that since you have willfully chosen to present the members of your body as slaves (bond slaves really) to impurity and lawlessness, which resulted in further sin (after all, *flesh* always begets *flesh*), you can make the same choice to present the members of your body as bond slaves of righteousness resulting in sanctification—in being like Him. And remember, a bond slave is not forced into servitude. Rather, a bond slave is one who loves his master to such an extent that he would rather live under his master's protection and care and serve his master with his entire heart, mind, soul, and strength than to risk his life to the wiles of this world or any other master. Paul's point is that you do get a choice in the matter. Because you have been baptized with Christ and the control of your *flesh*, the *Old Sinful Nature*, has been cut away from your life, it is now all a choice. You can present yourself to lawlessness as you have been doing and continue to live in and experience death, or you can present yourself to God as one alive from the dead. It is your choice.

Then he basically says, "Come on, get a clue. Is your *flesh* really all that wonderful? Has it ever really helped you live? Even before when you were bound to sin and had no obligation to righteousness (this speaks of the time before you accepted Christ, because it utilizes the formal Greek *past* tense in the *indicative* mood) and you did not have a choice but to sin (in other words you were truly a

slave and you had not yet been spiritually circumcised from your *flesh*), it never helped you. In fact, those things you indulged in now shame you for they have led you to death and not life. And even if you argue that certain things may have been necessary to protect you for a time, it is now time to set it all aside and choose to live to God. But again, this is a choice, this is an issue of faith. Do you want to continue to experience death in this life, all the while calling yourself a Christian? Or do you want to experience His life, all the while knowing that you are a Christian?

All you experience when you present yourself to your *flesh* is death and more death (after all, the wages of sin is death). You experience a dearth of all that is life. However, your benefit, or literally the fruit, of having been freed from sin and voluntarily enslaved to God is that you get to be like Him. You get to know His life in yours. You get to actually experience Christ in you—the *Design Point* mentioned in **Galatians 2:20**; and the end of it all will be eternal life. And like the righteousness of God, it is a free gift that is obtained and experienced only by faith: from faith to faith, believing it to be true.

This is how the righteousness of God is experienced in our lives. I know it is nothing you have not heard before, but honestly because of the weakness of our *flesh* we need to be reminded of this over and over again until we attain to a measure of faith whereby we actually believe that we are alive from the dead having conquered sin, free to present ourselves to God as His bondservants. Going back to **2 Corinthians 13:5**, “Examine yourselves to see if your faith is genuine (or if you are in the faith). Test yourselves. Surely you know that Jesus Christ is among you; if not, you have failed the test of genuine faith.” If the righteousness of God is not something that is readily recognizable in your life, then you have faith issues

and you are not now abiding in faith. You have failed the test and are living like one who is not approved of by God. If this is you, it is time for you to consider the truth. Take a true accounting of what God has said, who He is, who He has been to you, and make the choice, according to the true knowledge of Jesus Christ, to consider yourself dead to sin and alive to God. Let the Spirit of God begin to dominate your mind, your body, and your emotions. You do this by believing in the **Name**, which gives you every reason to practically present yourself to Him, all the members of your body, as instruments of righteousness for Him to do with as He pleases.

I want to make one final point. Going back to **Hebrews 1:9**, we were told that Jesus loved righteousness and hated lawlessness. Therefore, the Father has anointed Him with the oil of gladness above all others. And I believe that if we were to choose to hate lawlessness, to hate the sin that dwells within our being, to truly consider ourselves dead to it all, God will similarly pour upon us the oil of gladness above all others. We will be dripping with the Holy Spirit and His joy will effuse from our lives—it will be contagious. People will see it, they will want it, and it will be beautiful and glorious. That can be you.

You believe that Jesus is God. You believe He is the Son of God. You believe He came to earth in the flesh, being 100% man and at the same time 100% God. You believe He was born of a virgin. You believe He suffered for our sins and was killed bearing the full burden of every sin you would ever commit. You believe it was all nailed to the cross. You believe He was buried, rose from the dead, ascended into heaven, and is now alive with the Father sitting at His Father's right hand of authority. You even believe He will be coming back to take you to be with Him for all eternity. You believe. Take this same faith and apply it to what He has

commanded: For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace. Therefore, by faith, consider yourself dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. It's simply an issue of faith, betting your lives on the true knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Let's Pray