

## The Kingdom: Living Within: Part 1

We just finished a segment on the Kingdom of God belongs to... And we learned that it belongs to:

1. ***Those who do the will of the Father***—they now and continually **behold** the Son for who He is (the Lord God Almighty) and they now and continually **believe** by betting their lives on who He says He is.
2. ***Those who live by faith***, where all things—every part of your life—becomes an issue of betting it all on the Name of the Son of God, refusing to believe the lie.
3. ***Those who are poor in Spirit***—those who are identified in their abject neediness and therefore chose to now and continually live in a state of absolute vulnerability while they wait upon the Lord to do everything He has promised He would do.
4. ***Those who are converted by God and choose, as a matter of lifestyle, to become like a little child***—those who live completely dependent upon their Father and look to Him to be their entire provision for all aspects of their life always refusing to take any matter into their own hands and refusing to make any decisions by their own wisdom and understanding.

If a person does not live in this manner they will **NOT** ever enter the Kingdom of God. It does not matter how much they are convinced they belong, we have found that these requirements are exacting and uncompromising. But for all who enter the Kingdom of God through the narrow gate of faith and choose to walk the pathway of tribulation, the path which so few find, they will suffer persecution.

**John 16:1-4** says that they will make you outcasts from the synagogue (in other words, they will kick you out of the centers of so called worship and fellowship and disenfranchise you from their religious communities). And not only that, an hour is coming when these same people will kill you all the while entirely convinced they are offering service to God. Jesus said that these things they will do because they do not know the Father or Jesus. But He has spoken them to us so we will not stumble when it happens having been warned of, and prepared for, this type of persecution. After all, if the religious community persecuted Jesus and killed Him, they will persecute and kill His true followers.

These requirements for entry into the Kingdom of God are even more salient and biting when you consider that the **Kingdom of God is at hand**. In other words, there is now no excuse. The time is so near when Jesus is going to complete this epoch where the kingdom of the world, and the king of this world, runs rampant throughout the earth (**Revelation 1:3; 22:10**); therefore, you must choose. For those of you who have been struggling and have not yet chosen to do the will of the Father, to live by faith, to be poor in spirit, and to become like a little child, Jesus said in **Matthew 4:17**, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Repent is rendered in the *present active imperative*. Jesus commands you to now repent or to reconsider the way you have been living and choose to enter the Kingdom through the very narrow gate of faith. And keep in mind, repentance is not about feeling guilty, feeling sorry, feeling remorse, or going through another demonstrative cycle of justice, shame, and mercy. Rather, repentance is about changing your mind willing to conform your thoughts to the truth we have learned. It is about laying down your self-love and self-pity and letting Jesus truly be your

Lord God Almighty. Jesus is now calling you to now repent, just as He did those to whom were physically present when He preached. The only issue that remains is whether or not you are going to hear His voice and follow Him down this pathway of repentance, through the narrow gate, on to the road of tribulation, which leads to life, peace, rest, and the glory of God.

He calls us to repent, now, because the Kingdom is here or is at hand. This phrase, “is at hand” is rendered in the *perfect active indicative*. Being in the *perfect*, we can be assured that the Kingdom of God has come and it is now present. And since it is in the *indicative* mood, we know this is a statement of fact. The point is that you are not waiting on anything else to happen; the Kingdom is here, the offer to enter is here, and the means to enter and abide is here. The Kingdom of God has forcefully invaded the kingdom of this world; and the Lord of Lord’s is calling you to enter, be assured of your entry, and to now and continually abide in His Kingdom.

I find it interesting that although the Kingdom of God is a spiritual kingdom, as Jesus did not come to set up His throne on the earth (that is for a very soon and coming season), still this spiritual kingdom has a very real and physical impact on our world. For example, the presence of the Kingdom of God has been evidenced by the healing of every kind of disease and sickness (**Matthew 4:23**), as well as by the casting out of demons (**Matthew 12:25-29; Luke 11:20-23**). All of this we have not only read about but have personally witnessed and experienced in our own lives. The Kingdom of God is truly at hand.

Now, I want to continue with this idea that the Lord is calling you to enter, be assured of your entry, and to abide in His Kingdom; but before we do, let’s examine a few interesting aspects of the Kingdom that has to do with its movement

throughout the kingdom of this world. First, the Kingdom of God has the innate ability to spread on its own. We tend to think that someone has to be there to preach; but God has His own way of ensuring that every person has the chance to know Him and to come to Him.

***Mark 4:26-29***

And He was saying, "The kingdom of God is like a man who casts seed upon the soil; and he goes to bed at night and gets up by day, and the seed sprouts and grows — how, he himself does not know. The soil produces crops by itself; first the blade, then the head, then the mature grain in the head. But when the crop permits, he immediately puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come."

The Lord sends forth His Word upon the soil of the hearts of man. Sometimes that Word comes in the way of direct access to the Word of God and other times it comes by way of something as simple as a person's awareness through the majesty of creation that God must exist. But either way, it is cast upon the soil (a euphemism for the soul of a man). And depending upon the condition of the soil, whether is soft, hard, rocky, or infested with weeds (***Matthew 13:3-9; 18-23***), the seed takes root and the Word of God works within the heart of a person. The seed sprouts and grows, or literally springs up and grows up. With "grows" being rendered in the *middle voice*, it confirms ***Hebrews 4:12*** which says, the "Word of God is living and active." As the Word does its thing, eventually there are those who reach maturity and bear the type of fruit (which we have learned is God's *agape* love) which proves

out their maturity. Thus, the Kingdom of God has the ability to spread forth on its own through the kingdom of this world.

Second, the Kingdom of God is spread throughout the kingdom of this world by its citizens because the Kingdom of God goes wherever the citizens of the Kingdom go. With that said, the implication or the impact of this truth is mind-blowing and quite sobering.

***Luke 10:3-12***

Go; behold, I send you out as lambs in the midst of wolves. Carry no money belt, no bag, no shoes; and greet no one on the way. Whatever house you enter, first say, "Peace be to this house." If a man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; but if not, it will return to you. Stay in that house, eating and drinking what they give you; for the laborer is worthy of his wages. Do not keep moving from house to house. Whatever city you enter and they receive you, eat what is set before you; and heal those in it who are sick, and say to them, "The kingdom of God has come near to you." But whatever city you enter and they do not receive you, go out into its streets and say, "Even the dust of your city which clings to our feet we wipe off in protest against you; yet be sure of this, that the kingdom of God has come near." I say to you, it will be more tolerable in that day for Sodom than for that city.

The Kingdom of God goes forth with its citizens and the implications are far reaching beyond what most of us realize. There is so much in this passage that it

can stand alone as a complete teaching. However, I do not intend to do a full exposition, I will just hit the highlights as it brings up some very important truths in terms of the way the Kingdom spreads through the kingdom of this world and the way we interact with those who have made their abode in this world.

With that said, the first line in this passage is a bit harrowing. It is something I want every one of us to understand as it goes to the heart of the idea that the citizens of the Kingdom of God will face persecution. We are sent out—commanded to now go—as lambs in the midst of wolves. Keep in mind, lambs are meant for sacrifice. Like Jesus, our lives are offered up as a sacrifice for others, and we are sent out in the midst of danger. The kingdom of this world is full of wolves, and wolves love to tear apart lambs. These wolves are even found in our midst dressed like sheep to avoid detection (**Matthew 7:15-23**). This is the situation we exist in, which is another reason we need to become like a little child and live fully dependent upon the Lord God Almighty. Sheep are not very good at defending themselves, protecting themselves, much less providing for themselves, which is why we have to live fully dependent upon God. Hence, the Lord instructs us not to take our own provisions into this journey. This is similar to Him telling us to become like little children.

But notice that it says when you enter a city and you are received by them or when you leave a city having been rejected by them, that you are to say, “The Kingdom of God has come near to you” or “unto you.” This is rendered in the *perfect active indicative*. So we know, beyond a shadow of a doubt, if we belong to the Kingdom of God, we carry this Kingdom with us everywhere we go. In fact, our very presence brings people to their own personal encounter with God; thus, from

that time forth they are without excuse. Accordingly, each encounter with a true citizen of the Kingdom of God brings them to a point of receiving in their lives either the blessing of God or the judgment of God.

As crazy as it sounds, if you are a citizen of the Kingdom, your very life brings what I would call a key inflection point into the lives of others. If they receive you, they in effect welcome Jesus; and they will be blessed (**Mark 9:37**). In fact, the one who even gives you something as small as a cup of water to drink because you are a follower of Christ, will not lose his reward (**Mark 9:41**). Remember, with Jesus it is all very personal. Thus, Jesus says you are to say, “Peace be with you” or “Peace to this house.” But the effect of those words all depends on the response of those in the city. If they receive you, your peace will rest on them. If however they reject you, then they will be judged for the Kingdom of God had come to them and they did not want it. Jesus said, “I say to you, it will be more tolerable in that day for Sodom than for that city.” That is so intense and scary. Being a part of the Kingdom of God is more significant than any of us have ever imagined. Every single person who is part of the Kingdom has a determining impact on those around them; it is sobering. And this impact is not dependent upon whether you do it all right or not. This inflection point, this decision point, comes with your very presence; and people will be held accountable one way or another.

Think of the various “cities” you have visited. It could be the churches you have attended, the businesses where you have been employed or frequent, the schools in which you have been enrolled, as well as the houses of friends, acquaintances, or family members you have either stayed in or lived. I believe this dynamic covers every aspect of our lives—everywhere we have been. You are a personal vehicle

for either the blessing or the judgment of God—wrap your head around that! And be sure that as you enter any “city” you first say, “Peace be to this house.” The rest will be up to them. God never removes their capacity to choose, He just holds them accountable for their choice. And their choice is exhibited in how they choose to treat you.

This truth that the kingdom of God goes where you go, substantiates Jesus statement to the Pharisees in **Luke 17:20-21** when He tells them, "The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed; nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or, 'There it is!' For behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst" or “within you.” They were, like so many others who now are, looking for signs that God has come (as if the healings, miracles, and demonic exorcism is not enough). However, the proof that the Kingdom of God is at hand lies with its citizens, for the Kingdom of God occupies the hearts, minds, and souls of its citizens—it lies within. The Kingdom of God is within and it is here—at hand. And the impact the citizens have—the very proof that the Kingdom of God has come—is either blessing or judgment which results from how they are treated by others.

Now let’s get back to the idea that because the Kingdom of God has invaded the kingdom of this world, the Lord is now calling you to enter, be assured of your entry, and to now and continually abide. We have discussed quite exhaustively what it means to enter. You must choose to do the will of the Father, to live by faith, to be poor in spirit, and to become like a little child. But since we still stumble around so much in our *flesh*, we can get confused as to whether or not we have actually entered. Thus, Jesus talks to us about how we can be assured that we are indeed citizens of the Kingdom and not just those who do all sorts of things for God—those



whom He never really knows. We quickly studied this passage years ago but it is always good refresh our understanding.

### ***2 Peter 1:1-11***

Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins. Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.

It is a curious thing that we are to make certain about His calling and choosing over our lives. The Greek literally says to use speed, to make haste, to be prompt or earnest to dig down deep in your soul and make certain in your now (it is rendered in the *present middle Infinitive*) about both His calling and His choosing of you. After all, remember, many are called, but few can be described as chosen (**Matthew 22:14**). Actually, in this passage, both calling and choosing are nouns; they are realities. You make certain about your calling and choosing—or you prove it out to yourself and to others, by now and continually practicing “these things” which are found in **1:5-7**. For if you do, you will **never ever** fall. In the Greek, it is a very emphatic phrase and is rendered in the *aorist active subjunctive*. Your’ not falling or tripping is subject to you choosing to now and continually practice these things, hence the *subjunctive*. But again, if you practice these things, you will never ever fall, for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.

What **1:5-7** tells me is that, even as a citizen of the Kingdom of God, my ability to know and fully experience this Kingdom of God is progressive in nature. It’s as if in each area of my life that is not yet subjected to faith, as I surrender it to the Lord and practice these things, the Kingdom of God acquires more possession in my life. This is entirely consistent with all that we learned. We know we must live by faith, for without faith it is impossible to please God (**Hebrews 11:6**); and as we choose to live by faith in each subsequent area of our life, Jesus possess our being further and further until the Kingdom of God and its King fully possess our heart, mind, soul, and strength. This is what Paul describes in **Galatians 2:20** (the design point of true Christianity), when he says that he no longer lives but Christ lives in Him.

With Christ possessing our being, there is no way for us to fall; in fact, it is impossible for us to fall.

If “these qualities” (listed in **1:5-7**) are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the **true** knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. The key here is the **true knowledge** of our Lord Jesus Christ. In fact, the crux of everything in this passage rests on the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Do you remember the equation for true Biblical faith? Faith = active belief + truth. If our knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ is in any way distorted, for instance when we live as if He is not innately good believing the lie that some of what He directs in our lives is not entirely good, we cannot live in faith in that area of our life. But if these qualities are ours and are increasing, if we now and continually practice these things (it is rendered in the *present active participle*), we will be established in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ; thus, we will abide in faith and the Kingdom of God will be ours.

Let me explain a little further using **1:3**. “Seeing that His divine power has granted to us (or gratuitously and effectively bestowed and continues to bestow—it is rendered in the *perfect middle participle*) everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the **true** knowledge of Him who called us and continued to call us by His own glory and excellence.” I have said over and over that He has given us everything we need to live as aliens and strangers in this world doing only what the Father asks us to do, saying only what He tells us to say, and going only where He tells us to go. He has fully equipped us to live out everything He has commanded. However, such means, power, and ability is found through the **true** knowledge of Him who called us. In other words, it is found by faith—by actively betting our lives

upon the truth (which makes sense since living by faith is the entry ticket to the Kingdom of God). And this truth is found in His **Name** (which we studied in the first part of this series on the Kingdom): El Shaddai; El Elyon; Adonai; Yahweh; Jehovah Nissi; Jehovah Raah; Jehovah Rapha; Jehovah Shammah; Jehovah Tisidkenu; Jehovah Mekoddishkem; El Olam; Elohim; Jehovah Qanna; Jehovah Jireh; Jehovah Shalom; and Jehovah Sabaoth. In fact, it is the Father's will—it is the work that He has commanded for us—that we believe, as a matter of lifestyle, in the name of His Son Jesus Christ (**1 John 3:23; John 6:29**). And keep in mind, to “believe” is to choose live as if all that is revealed by the **Name** is true *all of the time* regardless of what you might otherwise think or feel.

Accordingly, he who lacks “these qualities” (or does not now and continually practice “these things”—*present active participle*) is blind and is now and continually short-sighted (*present active participle*), having forgotten and is continually forgetting his purification from his former sins (*aorist active participle*). In other words, they have chosen, and continue to choose, to live this way. In effect, they have come to believe that there is another way other than absolute faith. They think this way is found in tradition, in ritual, in the constructs of religion, in personal goodness, and so on; and they have forgotten that whatever is not of faith is sin (**Romans 14:23**)—whatever does not result from betting your life on the Name is sin. In fact, they have even altered the understanding of faith so it is much less practical and demanding; to them, faith is more of an intellectual assent than a lifestyle. As such, they are blind and that is a statement of fact (*present active indicative*) and they are short-sighted (near-sighted) and cannot see far off. They cannot see that the road they are walking down is the road to death and

destruction and not the road of tribulation which leads to life, peace, and glory.

Let's take a look at "these things" or "these qualities." "Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love." Here we have a progressive development of spiritual maturity. It is the progression by which the Kingdom of God comes to dominate ones heart, mind, soul, and strength. But let's start with "Now for this very reason." This refers to the immediately preceding verse in which Peter says, "For by these (His own glory and excellence) He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust." We have studied this when we studied faith, hope, and love, the building blocks to the Kingdom of God. He promises to make us like Him whereby we share the divine nature, which is the process by which He comes to live in and through our lives. However, since "become partakers" is in the *aorist middle subjunctive*, we know that we have to dig down deep in our soul and choose, as a matter of lifestyle, to indulge in all that is of God always leaving behind—or put to death—all that is in the world and all that is from our *flesh*. You remember: you have to die to live and you have to live to love.

Now for this very reason also, applying and continuing to apply as a matter of lifestyle (*aorist active participle*) all diligence, speed, and earnestness, in your faith supply or add virtue, or literally in the Greek manliness. The point is that we are not to have an attitude that is ok with plodding along and standing on the sidelines

watching others travel this path. We are to take this journey of faith—betting our lives on His Name—seriously; and in that seriousness we are to add virtue or in effect, we are to man-up and do things the way they need to be done. I hope you noticed that it said, “...in your faith add virtue.” Because Jesus is who He says He is (the Lord your God Almighty) and you are betting your life on that fact, you are therefore commanded to always live virtuously, as a matter of lifestyle, because He has your back. He will avenge those who do you wrong—remember, it is personal; therefore, you are free to stand in what is right or virtuous believing that you are safe and ok regardless of what is going on around you.

Further, the verb “to add” or “supply” is in the *aorist active imperative* and it attaches to each subsequent noun: virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love. Thus, we are commanded as a matter of lifestyle to add each of these nouns to our life.

And to virtue you are commanded, as a matter of lifestyle, to add knowledge or to live always to gain an understanding of who Jesus is and what His Name means to your life. And to your knowledge add self-control or temperance. We have been talking a lot about self-control these days when it comes to male/female relationships, when it comes to emotional reactions to one another, and when it comes to the desire to lash out at those who persecute us. Again, if you believe in His **Name**, you know you are safe to add self-control to your mental, emotional, and physical construct. After all, because He is the Lord and Your God Almighty, you are always safe and you are always ok. Your Lord has you exactly where He wants you and needs you.

And to your self-control, add perseverance in the form of patience, endurance

and long-suffering. This word even picks up the notion of your willingness to wait on God (which is a direct application of true Biblical faith). And in your patience add godliness. In other words, while you are waiting, while you are enduring the fires of persecution, you are commanded to examine the character and nature of God and if any of it is missing from your life you seek Him to bring it into your life. In fact, that is the main purpose of the fire—to burn off impurities—all that is not God. It is also the main purpose of persecution, to press your buttons—to show you those parts of your life that are not conformed to His character and nature so you can add them to your life.

And in your godliness, you are commanded to add brotherly kindness, affection, or love. It is the Greek word “*philadelphia*.” In other words, the progression of the application of your faith will lead you to choices where you must choose to care for others and basically do the right thing for them because you know you are safe in God. And in your brotherly kindness, you are commanded to add, as a matter of lifestyle, God’s divine *agape* love. This is something you must want, you must be open to, and you must give access to God so His love can be expressed through your life. Remember, on your own you cannot love with God’s divine *agape* love. It is a love that is part of His divine nature. So technically, only when you partake of His nature, only when He lives through you by faith, will you be able to love. Again, this is the purpose of the fire and the persecution. When you die to your self-love and self-pity, Jesus is able to finally live through your life and love in and through your body. And like Jesus, you will consider others as more important than yourself.

I want you follow me on this progression and understand that this passage is the ultimate declaration of our reciprocal responsibility in our relationship with God.

God has given us everything we need, but we must choose to add more and more of His character and nature to our lives. He will not force us. Therefore, when you are willing to stand for what is right, you will need the true knowledge of Jesus Christ so you can be confident you stand in truth. And if you stand in His knowledge, you will be persecuted (primarily by those who think they believe and hate what your stance means about their lives); thus, you will need self-control and perseverance—the ability to wait on the Lord for deliverance and not take matters into your own hands. Rest assured, this persecution and your time of waiting will produce godliness, for the fire of God will burn off that which is not of Him as the persecution brings it all up to the surface. And godliness will produce in you the ability to care for others unselfishly and ultimately to experience Jesus to such an extent that He loves others through you. And all of this is an application of your faith: by actively believing the truth about the Son of God. And it is only in applying your faith in this way will you be of use and fruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, with the entry way to the Kingdom of God being so exacting and uncompromising, this is how you can, with all diligence, make certain His calling and choosing of you; and if you now and continually practice these things, or apply your faith in this manner, the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied. The Lord wants you to have the confidence of His calling and choosing of you. He does not want you to be fearful and worried. But He is also not going to pat you on the butt and affirm you just because you say you believe. He wants the way you live to prove out to yourself and to others your' calling and choosing.



The Kingdom of God has invaded the kingdom of this world, the Lord is calling you to enter, to be assured of your entry, and to now and continually abide in His Kingdom confident that your very life is His implement of blessing and judgment on this earth. That is quite a calling and one in which you can and should rejoice. **The Kingdom of God is at hand**; waste no more time. Obey His command, as a matter of lifestyle, in your faith, to choose to add virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love. In this way, your entrance can be assured in your heart, mind, and soul.

Let's Pray