

*I press on toward the finish line, where the prize waiting for me is
the upward call of God IN KING JESUS.* (Philippians 3:14)

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Kingdom of God: Creator's Right to Love

Many speak of the Kingdom of God as if its meaning is well established in the minds and hearts of God's people. However, considering what is said and not said about it, I have concluded that the term *Kingdom of God* (or of Christ) has simply become Christian jargon like so many other terms that are bantered around in Christian circles, as if everyone clearly understands what it means. But do we? So, I ask: If you were to explain the Kingdom of God to the person on the street that has no comprehension of its meaning, how would you go about it? Here are some thoughts.

At the very core of the kingdom is a creator of all things, all things in heaven and on earth, and all things seen and unseen. If we do not establish the concept of a universal creator right from the beginning, there is no way we or anyone else will ever understand the true nature of the kingdom. Consequently, people must be brought to the understanding or, even more so, revelation that there is a creator behind all things, regardless of what we call this creator. To this point, we need not make this complex with religious explanations; put all that aside.

Even the most cursory study of the things around us—that is, the things we see that man has not made but which simply exist—causes one to marvel at the complexities, intricacies, and diversity in what we call *creation*. It is amazing.

Take any plant and observe how it grows and what it produces, as if some unseen hand or force is directing it; it is beyond comprehension. Yes; scientists can offer explanations and theories, but at the end of the day, it is still a marvel. How did things get to be this way in the first place? Or, take the human body; it is without doubt the most amazing creation on the face of the earth. Consider the eye and how it captures an image and changes it into a chemical and transmits it to our brain. How can anyone deny that there is a creator God? Consider the human brain; it is so amazing that no computer of man can rival it, no matter how many accolades are being bestowed on artificial intelligence. It is still artificial regardless of how much it can mimic the brain.

Stepping back from it all and taking a broad-brush look at creation, we also see that there are common elements to creation that run right through the whole. Just take the animal kingdom with man being the supreme being of animals with blood coursing through its veins. There is a common design that flows through all blood-bearing creatures. Some argue that this favors the whole concept of evolution apart from a creator. But no—it is

proof there is a genius behind it all; one who designed a certain concept and incorporated it in a variety of ways as if it is the very signature of a creator. Case in point; all the greatest artists in history are known by their particular technique, and to be sure people know it is theirs, they sign or initial their paintings. And so, does our Creator.

This is the starting point for the kingdom, and without a foundational understanding or revelation that there is a creative genius behind creation who has left His signature on all that He has created (by the way; out from Himself), we will not properly understand the Kingdom of God. So, the first matter in this regard is that there is a creator of all things. We call Him God. As Paul the apostle wrote: *There is but one God, the Father out of whom are all things* (1 Corinthians 8:6).

The second point to understanding the kingdom is that the Creator has rights over His creation. Stated another way is that **the Creator has creation rights**, meaning He has the right to call the shots, so to speak—to set the rules, principles, laws, etc. as to how things are to work and what He requires or expects out of His creation. He also has the right to determine creation's purpose, whether it is the whole or components of it.

We see this same principle throughout man's world. Take engineers that design modern-day cars with all their high-tech components operated through computer chips and software—they design cars within certain parameters to meet their expectations of how the cars will look and perform. There is an expectation built into the design, and as long as one follows the design specs, the cars will perform as the engineers designed them. Contrarily, not following these design specs and not doing what is needed to stay within them will mean the cars will fall short of the engineers' concept and most likely will fail along the way. As this argument goes, the Creator by definition has the right to the design and the performance of His creation, meaning He not only builds His creation but He also determines the very principles by which it is to operate. If creation, at any level, deviates from this, then that portion of creation will ultimately fail to reach or attain to the peak performance and purpose for which it was designed.

Adding to this; take the matter of sin. Ask preachers what sin is and for the most part they will offer some religious/theological explanation. Frankly, I find most explanations too complex, for they are either filled with seminarian speak or are too critical of God Himself. Case in point is Jonathan Edwards famous and often quoted line *sinners in the hands of an angry God.* (A much better title is ***sinners in the hands of a loving God.***) Many such explanations leave people in fear of God and drive them away from a creator God who is love.

The good news is that sin (or transgression) is easy to grasp if we understand that our Creator has rights over His creation. He has set the parameters, knowing what is best for

His creation in order for it to operate as He designed it and to achieve His ultimate purpose for creation in the first place. Much like the old television show titled *Father Knows Best*, God alone knows what is best for His creation and its creatures. Again, He designed it!

Thus, sin at its fundamental core is simply not following God's specs for His creation or individual components of it. As for humanity, sin is harmful behavior that not only affects us individually but potentially others around us that could extend to all humanity (e.g., world war initiated by a madman).

Another way of defining sin, at least in relation to man, is that we fall short of God's design for us. Spiritually speaking, we fall short of His glory, but this may be a bit too complex for the person on the street. Falling short means that we are impaired or, using mechanical terms, broken in some way that keeps us from reaching our design potential and, in a broader way, the corporate design potential of humanity. Look around you today; broken humanity abounds.

I trust you see that sin explained in this way moves it from a religious concept for theologians to write about and preachers to instill guilt and fear in people to a very practical matter when viewed in the context of the design and operation of creation. Would you buy a new, expensive car if you knew it wouldn't operate as designed because it wasn't built to the design engineer's specs? Of course not. Then why should we expect our Creator to be satisfied with His creation that is out of spec? After all, God is a perfectionist; He creates all things with perfection in view, not flaws. The good news is that, with a view toward perfection, He will have the desire of His heart for His creation.

So, the kingdom is more than an acknowledgment that there is a creator; it requires an acknowledgement the Creator has rights over His creation and, as created beings, we must line up with His rights that are incorporated in His design specifications and performance.

However, we must face the reality that sin has turned many away from their Creator to the point of them shaking a fist at God as if He is too demanding and restrictive. Ones who do this have been blinded to the fact that ***God is love***, which leads to a third point.

The very essence of our Creator is love and, in His creative love, He has called forth all that there is. The entirety of creation is in the Kingdom of Love.

The love of the Creator expressed through the exercise of His rights has only one goal in mind, and that is to ensure His creation receives what is best, right, and good for it. This is what love does!

Our Creator God has exercised His right to love, for He can nothing but love what He brings forth. In His love, He will not fail to perfect His creation so that it images His essence of love through and through.

Thus, the very foundation and essence of the Kingdom of God is love, a love that, according to Paul, will never end.

In all this, let us not lose sight of the one through whom God the Father created all things. In writing of God's Son, the visible image of the invisible God, Paul tells us that *in* the Son all things were created. Paul also tells us that all who have the faith of the Son have been transferred (translated) into the Kingdom of the Son of God's love.

The Kingdom, the Son, and Love are inseparable when it comes to explaining and understanding the Kingdom of God.

Thank God, our heavenly Father and His Son, our brother Jesus, have exercised their right to love. They can do nothing but love.

Love is the heart of the Kingdom of God and the very essence that holds all of creation together.

From a human perspective, this how Paul explains love.

Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends. (1 Corinthians 13:4-8 ESV)