

UPWARD CALL

Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but this is my one aim: to forget everything that's behind, and to strain every nerve to go after what lies ahead. I press on toward the finish line, where the prize waiting for me is the upward call of God

IN KING JESUS.

(Philippians 3:13-14)

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Kingdom of God: Realm of God's Will

It is interesting that some Christian groups speak a lot about building and advancing the kingdom, as if these were commands given to the ecclesia of God. However, scripture never once calls the ecclesia into action in this regard. Scripture does speak of seeking the kingdom, proclaiming and preaching the kingdom, testifying about the kingdom, entering the kingdom, receiving the kingdom, belonging to the kingdom, being worthy of the kingdom, being called into the kingdom, and inheriting the kingdom; but it never speaks of building it. We are to pray for the kingdom to come; and when it does come upon us, good things happen, such as healing. Not only does the kingdom come, but it can be near us, it can be among us, and it can be within us. So, there is both a present and a future aspect to the kingdom. Also, there is a present transference into the kingdom and a future waiting for the kingdom.

Obviously, these references speak of various aspects or manifestations of the kingdom as revealed by the way the kingdom is described, whether it is the kingdom of God, the kingdom of the heavens, the kingdom of the Son of His love, or the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, which are all the same. Further, the kingdom is spiritual in nature, which means that it is hidden from those who are not spiritual; but when it is manifested, it is visibly seen by all, regardless of their spiritual condition.

The word *kingdom*, as translated from the Greek word *basileia*, means “reign.” It most often refers to the reign of a king, or “the realm ruled by a king or the territory, people, or sovereign power pertaining to it.” By dividing the word into its two components, we see that it is made up of *king* and *dom*, which is the abbreviation for *dominion*, which means “rule or power to rule; sovereign authority; sovereignty.” Thus, the word *kingdom* means that a king rules over a realm. There can be no kingdom without a king, and the kingdom operates in accord with the will of the king.

The point is that the kingdom is not described as something to be built, for it is not a structure like a building or even a house but rather a realm (or: a dimension). When He was questioned by Pilate, Jesus declared: ***My kingdom is not of this realm*** (John 18:36). Most translations state ***not from here*** or ***not hence***. In other words, one cannot find His kingdom by looking at the nations of the world or at what is transpiring among the nations. Plainly, God's kingdom is not of the realm of man.

This is the point that needs to be underlined: The kingdom of God (or: the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ) operates in accord with the will of God. Simply, the very heart of the kingdom is doing the will of God the Father and His Son. If a person or nation is fully aligned with the will of God and is doing it, then that person or nation has entered into the kingdom of God. To be more specific, if a person or nation is fully aligned with the will of God's King, our Lord Jesus Christ, and is doing it, then that person or nation has entered into the kingdom of Christ.

This is where so much teaching and emphasis on the kingdom go off the rail, so to speak. Among Christian groups that speak of building and advancing the kingdom, the emphasis is often on manifestations of power and authority, moves of the spirit, infiltrating every aspect of life with the kingdom, getting people saved (i.e., increase the kingdom by numbers) or, perhaps, even revivals. However, there seems to be a

lack of emphasis on doing the will of God or being obedient to His word. This is not to say it is totally absent, but it seems that, in many cases, it is not central to the message.

Again, to emphasize—the kingdom is about doing the will of God. If one does not do the will of God, then, arguably, that one is not in the kingdom but is a rebel of the kingdom, one that must be left outside the door, cast out into outer darkness, or burned up as a tare.

In teaching His disciples to pray, Jesus most clearly defines the kingdom of God as the will of God. ***Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth*** (Matthew 6:10). Jesus did not tell them to pray that God's will be done in heaven but that it be done on earth. This could be reworded: ***As His will is done in heaven, may it be done on earth***. In other words, He made a very declarative statement that in the celestial or heavenly kingdom, the will of God is done. The heavenly host knows the will of God and obeys His will.

The challenge is getting the inhabitants of the earth to do the will of God, and this is the heart of the prayer. It is an acknowledgement that if the kingdom comes to earth, then the will of God will be on earth, as well. Thus, Jesus has defined the kingdom for us. When the reign of God comes, the will of God is done, so the kingdom and the will of God are synonymous.

To make the point even more emphatically, Jesus says: ***Not every one saying to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter into the kingdom of the heavens, but the one doing the will of My Father, the [One] in [the] heavens*** (Matthew 7:21).

This verse not only adds more proof to the matter but makes it very personal, as well. For one to enter the kingdom of the heavens, one must do the will of the Father who is in heaven. Thus, a prerequisite for even entering the kingdom is obedience to the will of the Father. Why is this so? It is so because, by definition, the kingdom is doing the will of the Father. Today, we learn how to enter the kingdom by learning how to obey the will of the Father while living in the kingdom of the world.

Let's face the reality that even after we are begotten of God, we struggle to do the will of God. We must learn His will as we struggle through life and, especially, as we are held in captivity to the beast systems of the world. We learn to obey through the word of God and the leading of the spirit of the Lord worked out in our life experiences. Although beyond the topic at hand, James tells us that we are to ***receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls*** (James 1:21). James was not referring to initial salvation of justification by faith through grace but to the process of coming into the will of God through the ingenerate word, which is Christ Himself. Through this process the laws (or: will) of God are put into our minds and written on our hearts (Hebrews 8:10), and we realize more of the kingdom in our lives.

Today, we have to think about the will of God as we go through life, facing many situations and issues of life. But there is good news. Can you imagine the day in which you no longer have to think about or pray to know the will of God, but you know it and you do it with the same ease that you breathe in and out all day long? This is what life in the kingdom is all about. It is our very being doing the will of God. Another way of stating this is that we are a **vessel of the will of God**. We don't have to inquire as we so often do while in bodies of death; we just do it as a spiritually-natural part of our being. This is the life of one who has been placed as a son of God in the kingdom of God. Sons know and live the will of the Father, just as Jesus, the Son of God, knew and lived the will of God when He came to this earth proclaiming the kingdom of the heavens. Thus, the kingdom is the realm of God's will.