

THE KINGDOM IN YOU THROUGH UNION

- A. Introduction: We're talking about why Jesus came to earth, what He accomplished through the Cross, and how we are to live in light of what He has done. We're going to continue our discussion in this lesson.
1. If you want to walk in all the peace, joy and victory that God has for you in this life you must learn to see your life in terms of the big picture or the overall plan of God.
 - a. There is more going on than what we experience in the moment. This present life is just a tiny part of our existence and we are only passing through this life as it is. We're part of a much bigger plan that is in process and moving toward completion.
 1. In eternity past God devised a plan to have a family of sons and daughters with whom He can dwell and through whom He can express Himself (His holiness, power and love). He created earth to be home for Himself and His family. Eph 1:4,5; Isa 45:18
 2. He fashioned Adam and Eve and gave them the privilege of beginning the process of bringing the rest of the family into existence. Gen 1:26-28
 - b. But God's plan was taken off track. Adam (and man in Adam) chose independence from God through sin. Because Adam was the head of the human race and the first steward of earth, his actions had a huge effect on both the race and the earth. Rom 5:12,19; Gen 3:17-19; II Cor 4:4; etc.
 1. In consequence of Adam's disobedience a sin nature was produced in men and women, earth was infused with a curse of corruption and death, and Satan became the God of this world.
 2. This world is not as it should be—not as God created or intended—due to rebellion against His rule as rightful King over all. It began with an angelic rebellion in eternity past and spread to earth when Adam disobeyed God. Isa 14:12-14; Ezek 28:1-19; Luke 4:6
 - c. Jesus went to the Cross to pay the price for sin so it can be wiped out, opening the way for the kingdom of God to be established in men and through men on earth. The word kingdom means reign. Jesus came to bring the reign of God, the reign of Heaven, to earth. Matt 4:17; Mark 1:15
 - d. The term kingdom of God has a number of different meanings in scripture because there are different aspects to the reign or kingdom of God.
 1. There is an unseen place called Heaven (God's home) where believers in Jesus go when they separate from their physical body at death. Ps 11:4; I Kings 8:30; Heb 12:22,23; etc.
 2. At the return of Jesus the invisible kingdom (the present Heaven) will come to earth and Jesus will establish the visible, eternal kingdom of God on earth. Dan 2:44; Rev 21,22; Rev 11:15
 3. There is also a present aspect of the kingdom or reign of God which is available in this life to all who have put faith in Jesus. More about that in a moment.
 2. Not only must we understand the overall plan of God, we need to know that there is more to reality than what we see with our eyes. God created both seen and unseen things—visible, physical, material things and invisible, spiritual, immaterial things. Col 1:16, II Cor 4:18; I Tim 1:17
 - a. God, who is Invisible, presides over an unseen kingdom of full power and provision. Not seen doesn't mean not real. It simply means we cannot perceive it with our five senses.
 1. Although this realm is not normally visible to men on earth, the Bible records numerous examples where the heavens (or invisible dimension) opened permitting men to see the unseen and experience its power. II Kings 6:15-17; Luke 2:13-15; Gen 28:10-15; etc.
 2. This invisible realm can produce tangible changes and results in the visible, material world.
 - A. When Jesus proclaimed that the kingdom was at hand He backed it up by demonstrating the power of the kingdom—healing people and casting out devils. Matt 4:23-25
 - B. Jesus administered the power of the kingdom to produce visible results. Invisible power healed bodies and minds, stopped storms and multiplied food. Matt 8:3; Mark 4:39; etc.
 - b. Adam (and man in Adam) was designed to live in a physical, material world. But he could freely interact with the Invisible God and had access to the unseen realm. Eden was God's home or Heaven expressed on earth. Access was closed to man when Adam fell. Gen 2:15-25; 3:8; 3:22-24

1. Jesus came out of the unseen realm (John 6:38,51; 3:13; etc.) and paid the price for sin to restore access, to open this dimension to men once again (John 14:6; 10:9; etc.).
2. Jesus opened the way into God's home (the invisible Heaven) for us at our death. But He also opened access to the power and provision of the unseen kingdom of God for us in this life.

B. In the past few lessons we referred to Paul the apostle. He too proclaimed and demonstrated the kingdom (Acts 14:22; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23,31). Jesus personally taught Paul the message he preached (Gal 1:11,12).

1. From Paul's writings we learn that believers in Jesus are in the kingdom and the kingdom is in us.
 - a. To be in the kingdom means to be a citizen of the unseen kingdom of Heaven. Although we don't yet live there, it is our home, our protection, our source. We are authorized to access the provision and administer the power of the unseen kingdom in this world as Jesus did. Phil 3:20; John 14:12
 1. Eph 1:3--Blessed be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing that heaven itself enjoys (Norlie); every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realm (Williams).
 2. Spiritual blessings doesn't mean unreal or less real than physical blessings. Spiritual means invisible. The invisible can and will produce visible, tangible results in us and our lives as we learn how to access the kingdom to which we now belong. (lessons for another day)
 - b. The kingdom in us is the reign of God in men's hearts through the new birth (Luke 17:20,21).

The kingdom in us refers to what happens when a person believes on Jesus and is born again. At the new birth something comes into you that was not there before—something from the unseen realm.

2. God's initial plan was that Adam (man in Adam) eat from the tree of life and be united to eternal life (Gen 2:9). Eating from the tree was an expression of submission to and dependence on God.
 - a. This union with life would produce transformation: God's created beings would become His literal sons and daughters through partaking of the life in Him. Eternal life is not "live forever life". It is the uncreated life in the being of God Himself. John 1:4; 5:26; 14:6
 - b. Adam and man in Adam chose independence from life and were instead united to death (Gen 2:17). Jesus went to the Cross to pay the price for sin so it can be removed and men and women can be united to the uncreated life in God through Jesus (eternal life) as planned.
 1. Eph 1:4--For he chose us in our union with Christ before the creation of the universe, that we might be holy and blameless in his sight, living in the spirit of love. (20th Cent)
 2. II Tim 1:1--Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, in accordance with the promise of life that comes through union with Christ Jesus. (Williams)
 - c. It was and is God's intention that men and women become literal, actual sons and daughters by becoming partakers of His life, His being, His nature. We don't become God; we are born of Him.
 1. Jesus said that entrance into the kingdom comes through new birth (John 3:3,5). Born again literally means born from above. This Greek word is used for whatever is heavenly or from Heaven (John 3:31; 19:11; James 1:17; 3:17). At the new birth something from the invisible, unseen dimension comes into the unseen part of us.
 2. Human beings are dead because of our sin. We lack the uncreated eternal life of God in our being. Paul wrote that God saves men from this condition by regenerating us. Titus 3:5
 - A. To regenerate means to give new life to. A new creature in Christ (II Cor 5:17) is not someone who never existed before, but someone who has been made new (KAINOS).

The Greek word means new as to form or quality; of a different nature from what is contrasted as old; better. Our spirit, our innermost being, is regenerated by the new birth.

B. This word is used in one other place in the New Testament in reference to what God is going to do to the earth (the home He made for His family) when Jesus comes again. It will be regenerated, the curse of corruption and death driven out by life. Matt 19:28--

When the world is born anew (Rieu); in the Messianic rebirth of the world (Amp).

- d. Jesus alluded to this union between Himself and believers in John 3:16—The one who believes on

Me believes “into” Me (in the Greek), and John 15:5—I am the vine, you are the branches.

Whoever remains in union with me and I in union with him will bear abundant fruit (Williams).

3. To Paul was given the full revelation of what happens when a person acknowledges Jesus as Savior and Lord. Every believer is brought into a living union with the life in God through Jesus.
 - a. Acts 9:4--This was the first revelation Paul received from the Lord. When Jesus appeared to Paul (Saul) on the road to Damascus He referred to the believers whom Paul was persecuting as “Me”.
 1. Paul later wrote that he was commissioned by the Lord to preach this previously unrevealed aspect of God’s plan for men—union with the life in Him through Jesus. Col 1:25-27.
 2. v27--For this revelation means nothing less than — ‘Christ in union with you, your hope of glory’ (20th Cent).
 - b. This is an organic union. Webster’s dictionary defines organic as: an integral element of a whole (as opposed to vegetables and fruit in the produce aisle that cost more and have bugs because no pesticides have been sprayed on them). This is a real, vital union. Paul used the examples of head and body and husband and wife to illustrate union and shared life between Jesus and believers.
 1. Eph 1:22,23--(the Church) which is His body, the fullness of Him Who fills all in all—for in that body lives the full measure of Him Who makes everything complete and Who fills everything everywhere [with Himself]. (Amp)
 2. Eph 5:31,32--For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is very great, but I speak concerning [the relation of] Christ and the church. (Amp)
4. Salvation is transformation and supernatural. Sinners are turned into holy righteous sons of God by the power of an unseen dimension. We become partakers of eternal life, the uncreated life in God.
 - a. The entrance of that life into our innermost being produces tremendous changes. Union with Christ (receiving eternal life) produces a nature change. Rom 5:19
 1. Paul’s writings make clear: You **WERE** a sinner. Now you **ARE** a holy, righteous son. Note how Paul addressed the believers in the church located in the city of Corinth. I Cor 6:9-11
 2. They had lots of problems: strife and divisions, abuse of spiritual gifts, tolerated immorality, drunk and gluttonous at communion. He told them: That’s not what you are any more.
You’re washed (cleansed), sanctified (set apart for God), justified (rendered just or innocent).
 - b. The new birth does not directly affect our mind, emotions and body. But God wants to work in us and through us by His life to establish His reign in our soul and body. (lessons for another day)
 1. Peace and joy is God reigning in your mind and emotions. Health is God reigning in your body. Victory over sin is God reigning in your flesh. The kingdom in you through union!
 2. At the new birth a process begins that will ultimately make us like Jesus in every part of our being (lessons for another day). Rom 8:29,30
 - c. The condition of your spirit is the basis of your identity. Your spirit fills your body. The changed part of you is bigger than the unchanged parts. Consider what else Paul wrote to this church.
 1. II Cor 5:21--Him who never knew sin God made to be sin on our behalf; so that we through union with him, might become the Righteousness of God. (20th Cent)
 2. I Cor 1:30,31--But you, by your union with Christ Jesus belong to God; and Christ, by God’s will, became not only our Wisdom, but also our Righteousness, Holiness, and Deliverance. (20th Cent)
 - d. When you know what you are and learn to walk in the light of it, it will change what you do. Paul, in his letter of correction, argued against fornication (sex with someone you’re not married to) this way: Why would you join a part of Christ to a harlot? I Cor 6:15-20
 1. v15--Do you not know that your bodies are parts of Christ Himself (Williams); Have you not realized that your bodies are integral parts of Christ himself? (Phillips)
 2. v17--But the man who is in union with the Lord is spiritually one with Him (Williams)
5. God now wants to work in us and through us by the kingdom within (this union with Christ). Paul

knew that he had Jesus by His life working in and through him and wanted Christians to know it too. Consider what he taught and how he prayed for believers.

- a. Col 1:28,29--We are proclaiming Him, warning everyone and teaching everyone with ample wisdom, in order to present to God everyone **mature through union with Christ**. For this I am toiling and struggling by **His active energy which is mightily working in me**. (Williams)
- b. Eph 3:20--Now to Him Who, by (in consequence of) **the [action of His] power that is at work within us**, is able to [carry out His purpose and] do superabundantly, far over and above all that we [dare] ask or think—(Amp).
- c. Phil 2:13--[Not in your own strength] for **it is God Who is all the while effectually at work in you**—energizing and creating in you the power and desire—both to will and to work for His good pleasure and satisfaction and delight. (Amp)
- d. Phil 4:7--Then, **through your union with Christ Jesus, the peace of God**, that surpasses all human thought, **will keep guard over your hearts and thoughts**. (Williams)
- e. Phil 4:13--I have strength for all things **in Christ** Who empowers me—I am ready for anything and equal to anything through Him **Who infuses inner strength into me**. (Amp)
- f. Eph 3:16--May He grant you out of the rich treasury of His glory to be strengthened and reinforced with **mighty power in the inner man by the (Holy) Spirit [Himself]—indwelling your inner most being and personality**. (Amp)
- g. Eph 1:19,20--And [so that you can know and understand] what is the immeasurable and unlimited and surpassing greatness of **His power in and for us who believe**, as demonstrated in the working of His mighty strength, which He exerted in Christ when He raised Him from the dead. (Amp)

- C. Conclusion: God by His life in working in you through union with Christ. The kingdom is in you. True transformation has occurred in your innermost being. God desires that this inward change show up on the outside. Fruit is outward evidence of the life within. Consider these points as we close.
1. There is real power on the inside of you, the power of the unseen kingdom of God. The power of this kingdom is activated by faith. Faith is based on your perception of reality.
 - a. Your view of reality has to be consistent with the way things really are. Take time to think about the things we are discussing. Go over the verses given in these outlines.
 - b. Col 3:1,2; II Cor 4:18--Make yourself think about unseen realities. Our minds automatically gravitate to what we see and feel. You have to counteract that tendency until the thought and awareness of unseen power in you becomes more automatic.
 2. Eph 1:19,20--Ask God to help you know and understand the exceeding greatness of His power in you. We waste time asking God to give us what we already have in us through union with Christ, through the kingdom in us. Thank God for what you have in you—power and life. More next week!