

GENERAL SUBJECT: A LIVING OF SEEKING FIRST  
THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Message One

**Living the Kingdom Life for the Growth of the Seed of the Kingdom within Us**

Scripture Reading: Matt. 6:33; Luke 17:20-21; Mark 4:3, 26-29; Dan. 2:23-35, 44; Rev. 1:9; 11:15, 18

Hymn # 395

- I. **The kingdom of God, the reign of God, is the totality of Christ being life to us with all His activities:**
  - A. A kingdom is the totality of a certain life; the plant life is the plant kingdom, the animal life is the animal kingdom, and the human life is the human kingdom; in the same way the divine life (God's life – Christ Himself – John 14:6a; 3:5-6) is the divine kingdom, God's kingdom.
  - B. The kingdom in its reality is the Lord Jesus as the Spirit – 2 Cor. 3:17; Matt. 12:28.
  - C. Just as the plant kingdom is a realm of the plant species, and the animal kingdom is a realm of the animal species, so the kingdom of God is a realm of the divine species.
  
- II. **The kingdom of God is Christ Himself as the seed of life sown into His believers, God's chosen people, and developing into a realm over which God can rule in His divine life – Luke 17:20-21; John 14:6a; Mark 4:3, 26:**
  - A. The entrance into the kingdom is regeneration (John 3:5-6), and the development of the kingdom is the believers' growth in the divine life (2 Pet. 1:3-11).
  - B. The kingdom is the church life today, in which the faithful believers live (Rom. 14:17), and it will develop into the coming kingdom as a reward to be inherited (Gal. 5:21; Eph. 5:5) by the overcoming saints in the Millennium (Rev. 20:4, 6).
  - C. Eventually, the kingdom will consummate in the New Jerusalem as the eternal kingdom of God, an eternal realm of the eternal blessing of God's eternal life, which all God's redeemed will enjoy in the new heaven and the new earth for eternity – 21:1-4; 22:1-5, 14.
  
- III. **“He said, So is the kingdom of God: as if a man cast seed on the earth” – Mark 4:26:**
  - A. This seed is the seed of the divine life (1 John 3:9; 1 Pet. 1:23) sown into the believers, indicating that the kingdom of God, which is the issue and goal the Lord's gospel, and the church life in this age (Rom. 14:17) are a matter of life, the life of God, which sprouts, bears fruit, and produces a harvest (1 Cor. 3:6-9; Rev. 14:4, 15-16).
  - B. The Triune God in humanity (Col. 2:9) is the seed, “the gene,” of the kingdom of God to be sown into God's chosen people that He might grow in them, and be expressed from within them to develop into God's ruling realm (Mark 4:26-29; 1 Cor. 3:9).
  - C. As the stone cut out without hands, Christ will come as the smiting stone with His overcoming bride to smash and crush the entire human government of mankind, and

the corporate Christ (Christ with His overcomers) will become a great mountain ( a great kingdom – the eternal kingdom of God) to fill the whole earth forever and ever – Dan. 2:34-35, 44; 4:26; Rev. 19:11, 14.

**IV. Seeking first the kingdom by living the kingdom life for the growth of the seed, the gene, of the kingdom within us – Luke 8:11, 15:**

- A. This is illustrated by the parable of the sower in Matthew 13; the Lord sows Himself as the seed of life into men’s hearts, the soil, that He might grow and live in them and be expressed from within them – v. 3:
1. The wayside signifies the heart that is hardened by worldly traffic and cannot open to understand, to comprehend, the word of the kingdom; the birds signify the evil one, Satan, who comes and snatches away the word of the kingdom sown in the hardened heart – vv. 4, 19.
  2. The rocky places that do not have much earth signify the heart that is shallow in receiving the word of the kingdom; deep within such a heart are rocks – hidden sins, personal desires, self-seeking, and self-pity – which hinder the seed from taking root in the depths of the heart – vv. 5, 20-21.
  3. The thorns signify the anxiety of the age and the deceitfulness of riches, which utterly choke the word, preventing it from growing in the heart and causing it to become unfruitful – vv. 7, 22; Luke 12:15-21.
  4. The good earth signifies the good heart that is not hardened by worldly traffic, that is without hidden sins, and that is without the anxiety of the age and the deceitfulness of riches; such a heart gives every inch of its ground to receive the word that the word may grow, bear fruit and produce even a hundredfold – Matt. 13:8, 23.
- B. The seed is sown into the soil to grow with the nutrients of the soil; as a result, the produce is a composition of elements from both the seed and the soil – v. 23.
- C. We have within us certain nutrients created by God as a preparation for His coming into us to grow in us; God has created the human spirit with the human nutrients along with the human heart as the soil for the divine seed – cf. 1 Pet. 3:4.
- D. The rate at which we grow in life depends not on the divine seed but on how many nutrients we afford this seed; the more nutrients we supply, the faster the seed will grow and the more it will flourish – Psa. 78:8; Matt. 5:3, 8; 2Pet. 1:3-11:
1. If we remain in our soul, in our natural man, there will not be any nutrients for the growth of the divine seed, but if we are strengthened with power into our inner man and if we pay attention to our spirit, take heed to our spirit, and exercise our spirit, the nutrients will be supplied and Christ will make His home in our hearts – Eph. 3:16-17; Rom. 8:6; 1 Tim. 4:7; cf. Jude 19; Mal. 2:15-16.
  2. If we are going to have the Lord as the seed of life grow within us to be our full enjoyment, we have to open to the Lord absolutely and cooperate with Him to deal thoroughly with our heart – Psa. 139:23-24.

## Message Two

**The Growth of the Divine Seed of the Kingdom in the Human Heart for God's Building**

Scripture Reading: 1 Thes. 3:13; Prov. 4:23; Matt. 13:3-9, 19-23

Hymn # 1211

- I. **According to the Bible, growth equals building; this takes place by the growth of the divine seed of life, the seed of the kingdom within the human heart – 1 John 3:9; Col. 2:19; Eph. 4:15-16; Mark 4:26; Luke 17:20-21.**
  
- II. **The heart is the conglomerate of man's inward parts, man's chief representative, his acting agent:**
  - A. Our heart is a composition of all the parts of our soul – the mind, the emotion, and the will (Matt. 9:4; Heb. 4:12; Acts 11:23; John 14:1; 16:22) – plus one part of our spirit – the conscience (Heb. 10:22; 1 John 3:20).
  - B. Our heart and its condition before God are organically, intrinsically, and inseparably related to the condition of our spirit, soul, and body:
    1. The exercise of the spirit works only when our heart is active; if man's heart is indifferent, the spirit is imprisoned within and is unable to show forth its capability – Matt. 5:3, 8; Psa. 78:8; Eph. 3:16-17; cf. James 4:8.
    2. The soul is the person himself, but the heart is the person in action; the heart is the acting agent of our entire being.
    3. The activities and movements of our physical body depend on our physical heart; in like manner, our daily living, the way we act and behave, depends on what kind of psychological heart we have.
  - C. The heart is the entrance and exit of life, the "switch" of life; if the heart is not right, life in the spirit is hindered, and the law of life cannot work freely and without obstruction to reach every part of our being; though life has great power, this great power is controlled by our small heart – Prov. 4:23; Matt. 12:33-37; cf. Ezek. 36:26-27.
  
- III. **In order to live a holy life for the church life, the kingdom life, we need the Lord to establish our heart blameless in holiness – 1 Thes. 3:13:**
  - A. God is the unchanging One, but according to our natural birth our heart is changeable, both in our relationship with others and with the Lord – cf. 2 Tim. 4:9-11.
  - B. There is no one who, according to his natural human life, is steadfast in his heart; because our heart changes so easily, it is not at all trustworthy – Jer. 17:9-10; 13:23.
  - C. Our heart is blamable because it is changeable; an unchanging heart is a blameless heart – Psa. 57:7; 108:1; 112:7; 51:10.
  - D. In God's salvation, the renewing of the heart is once for all; however, in our experience our heart is renewed continually because it is changeable – Ezek. 36:26; 2 Cor. 4:16.
  - E. Because our heart is changeable, it needs to be renewed continually by the sanctifying Spirit so that our heart can be established, built up, in the state of being holy, the state

of being separated unto God, occupied by God, possessed by God, and saturated with God – Titus 3:5; Rom. 6:19, 22

- IV. In order to be those “who are being sanctified” in living a holy life for the church life, the kingdom life, we must cooperate with the inner operating of the One “who sanctifies” by dealing with our heart – Heb. 2:10-11; Psa. 139:23-24:**
- A. God wants our heart to be soft:
1. When God deals with our heart, He takes away the heart of stone out of our flesh and gives us a heart of flesh, a soft heart – Ezek. 36:26.
  2. To be soft means that our heart is submissive and yielding toward the Lord, is not stiff-necked and rebellious – cf. Exo. 32:9.
  3. A soft heart is a heart that is not hardened by worldly traffic – Matt. 13:4.
  4. God softens our heart by using His love to move us; if love cannot soften us, He uses His hand through the environment to discipline us until our heart is softened – 2 Cor. 5:14; 4:16-18; Heb. 11:6-7; cf. Jer. 48:11.
- B. God wants our heart to be pure:
1. A pure heart is a heart that loves God and wants God; besides God, it has no other love, inclination, or desire – Psa. 73:25; cf. Jer. 32:39.
  2. Our heart should be single for God so that we are fearful of nothing except offending Him and losing His presence – Psa. 86:11; Isa. 11:1-2.
  3. Our goal and aim should be God Himself, and we should not have any other motive – Matt. 5:8.
  4. We must pursue Christ “with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart” – 2 Tim. 2:22; 1 Tim. 1:5; Psa. 73:1.
- C. God wants our hearts to be loving:
1. A loving heart is a heart in which the emotion loves God, wants God, thirsts after God, and yearns for God, having a personal, affectionate, private, and spiritual relationship with the Lord – 42:1-2; S.S. 1:1-4.
  2. We must turn our heart back to the Lord again and again and have it continually renewed so that we may have a new and fresh love toward the Lord – 2 Cor. 3:16; Hymns #546 and #547.
  3. All spiritual experiences start with love in the heart; if we do not love the Lord, it is impossible to receive any kind of spiritual experience – cf. Eph. 6:24.
  4. Our love for the Lord qualifies, perfects, and equips us to speak for the Lord with His authority; if we love the Lord to the uttermost, we will be filled and overflowing with Him – John 21:15-17; Matt. 26:6-13; 28:18-20; Psa. 45:1.
- D. God wants our heart to be at peace:
1. A heart at peace is a heart in which the conscience is without offense, condemnation, or reproach – Acts 24:16; 1 John 3:19-21; Heb. 10:22.
  2. If we confess our sins in the light of God’s presence, we receive His forgiveness and His cleansing so that we may enjoy uninterrupted fellowship with God with a good conscience – 1 John 1:7, 9; 1 Tim. 1:5.

3. The result of practicing fellowship with God in prayer is that we enjoy the peace of God, which is actually God as peace mounting guard over our hearts and thoughts in Christ, keeping us calm and tranquil – Phil. 4:6-7; Psa. 131:2.
  4. We need to let the peace of Christ arbitrate in our hearts by forgiving one another to put on the one new man – Col. 3:13-15.
- V. As our hearts are being established blameless in holiness by the continual renewing of the sanctifying Spirit, we are becoming the New Jerusalem (the eternal kingdom) with the newness of the divine life and we are becoming the holy city with the holiness of the divine nature – Rev. 21:2; 1 John 5:11-12; 2 Pet. 1:4; Heb. 2:10-11.**

## Message Three

**Being Watchful in Life and Faithful in Service**

Scripture Reading: Matt. 25:4, 9-10, 14-15, 20-23

Hymn # 1308

- I. For life, we need oil, the Spirit of God, even His filling, that we may be enabled to live the virgin life (the kingdom life) for the Lord's testimony – Matt. 25:4, 9-10:**
- A. "At that time the kingdom of the heavens will be likened to ten virgins, who took their lamps and went forth to meet the bridegroom" – v. 1:
1. Virgins signify the believers viewed from the aspect of life – 2 Cor. 11:2.
  2. Believers, who are the kingdom people, are like chaste virgins, bearing the Lord's testimony (the lamp) in the dark age and going out of the world to meet the Lord; for this they need not only the indwelling but also the filling of the Holy Spirit.
  3. Lamps signify the spirit of the believers (Prov. 20:27) , which contains the Spirit of God as the oil (Rom. 8:16):
    - a. The believers shine forth the light of the Spirit of God from within their spirit; in order for the divine light to shine into man's inward parts, God's Spirit must soak (mingle with) man's spirit as the wick (cf. v. 16) and "burn" together with man's spirit (12:11); cf. 2 Tim. 1:6-7.
    - b. Thus, the believers become the light of the world and shine as a lamp in the darkness of this age (Matt. 5:14-16; Phil. 2:15-16), bearing the testimony of the Lord.
  4. The prudent virgins took oil in their vessels with their lamps – Matt. 25:4:
    - a. Man is a vessel made for God (Rom. 9:21, 23-24), and man's personality is in his soul; hence, *vessels* in Matthew 25:4 signifies the souls of the believers.
    - b. The five prudent virgins not only have oil in their lamps but also take oil in their vessels; that they have oil in their lamps signifies that they have the Spirit of God dwelling in their spirit (Rom. 8:9, 16), and that they take oil in their vessels signifies that they have the Spirit of God filling and saturating their souls (cf. 1 Pet. 2:25; Heb. 13:17).
    - c. The word *buy* in Matthew 25:9 indicates that a price must be paid; having the filling of the Holy Spirit is at a cost, such as giving up the world, dealing with self, loving the Lord above all, and counting all things loss for Christ; if we do not pay the price today, we will have to pay it after we are resurrected – cf. Rev. 3:18; 2 Cor. 5:10; cf. Matt. 5:25-26.
    - d. Our urgent need is to gain more of the Spirit as the consummation of the processed Triune God, to live a life of buying an extra portion of the Spirit to saturate our entire being – Matt. 25:9; cf. Dan. 5:27.

- B. Every day we need to be watchful by paying the price to buy the Spirit as the golden oil so that we may supply the churches with the Spirit for the testimony of Jesus and be rewarded by the Lord to participate in the marriage dinner of the Lamb – Matt. 25:9-10; Rev. 3:18; Zech. 4:6, 12-14; Judg. 9:9:
1. We need to love the Lord above all, having our eyes opened to see His supreme preciousness – Matt. 22:37; Phil. 3:8; 1 Pet. 2:4, 6-7; 1:19.
  2. We need to count all things loss on account of Christ that we may gain Him, be found in Him, and know Him – Phil. 3:7-10.
  3. We need to enjoy the Lord in the Word every day early in the morning to have a new start of each day – Psa. 119:147-148.
  4. We need to deal with sins thoroughly – 1 John 1:7, 9.
  5. We need to abide in the fellowship with the Lord daily and hourly – v. 6; 2 Cor. 13:14.
  6. We need to redeem our time and spend our energy to be saturated and soaked with God’s holy Word – 2 Tim. 3:16-17; Col. 3:16.
  7. We need to be watchful, on the alert, for our prayer life, redeeming our time to pray – Eph. 6:18; Dan. 6:10; Col. 4:2.
  8. We need to live, act, behave, do things, and have our being according to the mingled spirit – Rom. 8:4; 1 Cor. 6:17.

**II. For service, for work, we need the talent, the spiritual gift, that we may be equipped as a good slave to accomplish what the Lord intends to accomplish – Matt. 25:20-23; 2 Tim. 3:17; 4:5; Col.4:17:**

- A. “The kingdom of the heavens is just like a man about to go abroad, who called his own slaves and delivered to them his possessions. To one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability. And he went abroad” – vv. 14-15:
1. Slaves signify believers viewed from the aspect of service – 1 Cor. 7:22-23; 2 Pet. 1:1; Rom. 1:1.
  2. *His possessions* signifies the church (Eph. 1:18) with all the believers, who constitute God’s household (Matt. 24:45).
  3. Talents signify spiritual gifts (25:15-23; Rom. 12:6; 1 Cor. 12:4; 1 Pet. 4:10; 2 Tim. 1:6-7); the filling of the Spirit in life enables us to use the spiritual gift in service (work), and the spiritual gift in service matches the filling of the Spirit in life, so that we may be a perfect member of Christ.
  4. *The joy of your master* signifies the enjoyment of the Lord in the coming kingdom as a reward for our faithful service to Him (Matt. 25:21, 23).
  5. In this age we must use the Lord’s gift to save people and to minister His riches to them – v. 27.
- B. Our inward motive for serving the Lord is our love for Him – Exo. 21:5; Rev. 2:4-5.
- C. We need to use the Lord’s gift to build up the church by serving others with Christ and ministering Christ as grace to them – Matt. 25:27; 1 Pet. 4:10; Col. 1:7; 4:12:

1. We need to serve as laboring priests of the gospel of God, saving sinners to offer them to God as acceptable sacrifices and eventually present them full-grown in Christ – Rom. 15:16; 12:1; Col. 1:28.
  2. We need to supply others with Christ as their spiritual food at the proper time – Matt. 24:45:
    - a. We need to speak Christ to all kinds of people daily in season and out of season – Acts 5:42; 8:4; 2 Tim. 4:2.
    - b. We need to desperately endeavor to build up a habit of speaking in any meeting – 1 Cor. 14:26, 4-5, 12, 31.
  3. We should not mistreat our fellow believers by criticizing, judging, or exposing them; instead, we should admonish the disorderly, console the little-souled, sustain those who are weak in spirit, soul, or body, or weak in the faith, and be longsuffering toward all – Matt. 24:49; 1 Thes. 5:14.
  4. Through our involvement in the world, we should not render the Lord's gift useless, letting it lie waste under the cloak of certain earthly excuses – Matt. 25:18-19.
- D. Our work and labor for the Lord in the gospel are not by our natural life and natural ability but by the Lord's resurrection life and power; resurrection is the eternal principle in our service to God – Num. 17:8; 1 Cor. 15:10, 58; 16:10:
1. The life-giving Spirit is the reality of the Triune God, the reality of resurrection, and the reality of the Body of Christ – John 16:13-15; 20:22; 1 Cor. 15:45b; Eph. 4:4.
  2. All those who know resurrection have given up hope in themselves; they know that they cannot make it – Num. 17:8; 2 Cor. 1:8-9; cf. Eccl. 9:4.
  3. We must acknowledge that we are nothing, have nothing, and can do nothing; we must come to the end of ourselves to be convinced of our utter uselessness – Exo. 2:14-15; 3:14-15; Luke 22:32-33; 1 Pet. 5:5-6.
  4. The resurrected Christ as the life-giving Spirit lives in us, enabling us to do what we could never do in ourselves – 1 Cor. 15:10; 2 Cor. 1:8-9, 12; 4:7-18.
- E. We should always abound in the work of the Lord, knowing that our labor for the Lord in His resurrection life with His resurrection power will never be in vain but will result in the fulfilling of God's eternal purpose – 1 Cor. 15:58.