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The Signs of the Kingdom

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Sermons of Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones - MLJ Trust

Luke 17:20-21 — From the time Jesus Christ went around Palestine preaching until the present century, there is a misunderstanding of the arrival the kingdom of God. There is a common fallacy shared by the Pharisees, Pilate, and the disciples long ago that also is shared today by the Roman Catholic church and liberal Protestant advocates of the social gospel. In this sermon on Luke 17:20–21 titled “The Signs of the Kingdom,” Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones states that they all believe the kingdom of God comes visibly and through social participation. In this passage, Jesus issues a strong warning to the contemporary church concerning the danger of believing the kingdom is brought about through legislation, social reform, or military conquest. Dr. Lloyd-Jones argues that the forms of the kingdom of God are quite clear from Scripture. In the past, the kingdom of God came in the power and presence of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Presently, the kingdom of God is manifested in the body of Christ—the church—as He reigns in their hearts. In the future, the kingdom of God will be fully visible when Christ returns at His second advent. Listen to Dr. Lloyd-Jones’s teaching on the kingdom, avoid errors common to the modern church, embrace the truths given here, and learn how to belong to the realm in which Christ reigns.

Transcript

The words to which I should like to call your attention this evening are to be found in that portion of scripture we read at the beginning, namely in the gospel according to sin Luke in chapter 17, reading again verses 20 and 21. And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, the kingdom of God cometh not with observation. Neither shall they say, lo, shear or lo, there.

For behold, the kingdom of God is within you. Now, there are those who would translate that last statement like this. For behold, the kingdom of God is among you.

We can't say finally which of the two is right. It's wise, I believe, to accept both of them. The kingdom of God is within you.

The kingdom of God is among you. Now, I'm calling your attention once more to the bare elements and essentials of the Christian faith. I say I'm doing this once more because I've already been doing it for two Sunday nights.

And I'm doing it as I've been explaining it because of the terrible and appalling confusion. At the present moment with regard to this very question as to what the Christian faith rarely is. Now, I say that this is a tragic confusion for this reason.

The world is in terrible trouble. All the ideas of men have been tried and have been found wanting. They've been given an opportunity, but they've not yielded any results.

And men and women at long last, beginning to ask, is there any hope? Can anything be done? And it's at that point the Christian church appears, and she stands before the world, and she says, listen to what we've got to say. Here is the message. And I believe that in many senses the world is more ready to listen than it has been for many a long year.

But unfortunately, when it does turn to listen, it hears a confused sound. And as the apostle Paul puts it in writing to the Corinthians in the first epistle in chapter 14, if the trumpet yield an uncertain sound, who shall prepare him for the battle. If the sound is uncertain, well then we are going to add to the confusion.

And that is why I say that nothing is more important at the present hour than that we should be perfectly clear in our minds as to what this Christian message rarely is. What does Christianity offer to people? What is it? How can we become Christian? Those are the questions which it seems to me we've got to answer at this present time. Now what makes this terrible confusion so utterly inexcusable of course is that we've got an open Bible before us.

And we have it in a language that we can understand. It's in English. Here it is translated into so many other languages.

If we hadn't a Bible at all, if we had merely some oral tradition, well, there would be some excuse for this terrible prevailing confusion. Or if we'd got a Bible but we couldn't understand the language in which it was written. Again, there would be considerable excuse.

But that's not our position at all. We've got it. It's open before us.

There's no difficulty obtaining it. And it is in a language, it's been translated into a language that we can all understand. Why is there any confusion? And there's only one answer to that question.

It is because men and women instead of taking the message as it is here, are imposing their own message upon it. They're approaching Christianity as if we hadn't an open

book. They're approaching it with their minds, with their philosophies, with their theories, with their ideas and their attempts to understand.

And they're bypassing. What is here stated in this book that is open before us, I say, in a language that we can all understand. So likely is just this, that in honesty, apart from anything else, we are bound to come back to this book.

Here are the documents of the early church. Here are the records of how Christianity came into being, how Christianity began, what she taught at the beginning, and something of what happened as the result of that. Here it is.

And I suggest to you that the time has arrived when we must come back to it and listen to what it has got to say. Whatever we may make of it, we must have done it, listen to it. And we must say that is clearly the message of the New Testament itself.

And in particular, we must come back to the words and to the teaching and to the message of the Lord Jesus Christ himself. Now that's what we've been doing. And as a result of turning back, we've seen already certain things.

And here they are. Let me summarize them. It's a clear message.

We are told that when John was cast into prison, Jesus came preaching, proclaiming, making an announcement, like a man blowing a trumpet, a kind of town cry, making a proclamation, not putting forward rival theories, but killing them something. And what did he tell them? Well, what he said was this. He said, the time is fulfilled.

What time? Well, the time that God had indicated many centuries before to the children of Israel and even before that. The time when he was going to send a deliverer, a messiah into this world. He says, it's come.

The kingdom of God is drawn near. And he says that he is that king of that kingdom and that it is with his coming that the kingdom of God is drawn near unto men and women in this world. And then he goes on, as we saw, to urge men and women to seek this above everything else.

See, he first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, he says, and all these other things shall be added unto you. He says, the trouble with life and with men and women is that their whole ideas run. The trouble is not that we are wrong here and there.

Our fundamental outlook is run. We are putting the wrong thing first. We are putting clothing first, food and drink.

We are putting money first. No, no, he says. You need a radical reorientation of your whole outlook.

You need a change at the center of your God and his righteousness. That's the thing that

you need above everything else. The world, he says, is looking in the wrong directions for happiness and peace and joy and from the solution to its problems.

He says, this is the thing to look for and you must go for it with the whole of your being. You must make a fresh start. You must make a new beginning.

The only hope, he says, is to be in the kingdom of God. Very well. The question we now have to face therefore is this.

What is this kingdom of God that he talks about? You must have noticed as you read your four gospels, the great prominence that is given to this theme, the kingdom of God or the kingdom of heaven. Our Lord was always preaching about it. He puts it in different ways, but that was his major theme.

So we don't have any hope of understanding his message unless we have some clear idea as to what he means when he talks about this kingdom of God. You seek that first. He says, you get into that.

All these other things shall be added unto you and we saw something about what is this kingdom? Well now then here again I am constrained to say that there is no excuse for the confusion. There is tremendous confusion as to what this kingdom of God is and it's because these verses that I've read to you deal specifically with that particular question that I'm calling your attention to them tonight. This, it seems to me, is the next step in our approach to this essential message of the Christian faith.

So I would divide up the matter like this. How does the Lord Jesus Christ set up his kingdom? Or if you prefer it, how does the kingdom of God come? Now you see he was demanded of the Pharisees when the kingdom of God should come. That was the question they kept on putting to him and his reply is, the kingdom of God comeeth not with observation.

Now either shall they say, lo, here or lo, there, for behold the kingdom of God is within you. Now then here is our first point. The way in which this kingdom of God comes is something that has been misunderstood from the very beginning.

Now here is the case in point, you see, the Pharisees ask him, this year always talking about the kingdom. You say that you are coming means that the kingdom of God has drawn near, what is this kingdom of God of yours? When is it going to come? Isn't it about time they said that you told us now how it's going to come and when of course because he deserves immediately that their whole nation of the coming of the kingdom is entirely wrong. And as you go through the gospels, I say you will see this happening repeatedly.

There's another illustration of exactly this same thing in the sixth chapter of John's gospel in verse 30. Here they come to him the same people and they said, therefore

unto him, what sign surest thou then that we may see and believe thee? What is thou work? They say, you keep on talking about this kingdom. Now they said, we want some sign for me.

Moses gave our fathers, our fathers did eat manna in the desert and it is written, he gave them bread from heaven to eat. What are you doing they say? Moses was God's leader, he was the law giver and he gave a sign by giving the manna. What sign are you giving? What evidence are you going to give us? They said that you rarely are this king that you're talking about and that you are going to bring in a kingdom.

Now the Pharisees and scribes were constantly arguing and debating with him over that very point. Haven't you been struck as you read your four gospels? As to how much of that time is taken up and particularly the gospel according to Saint John. In mere arguments and disputations and wrangling between our Lord and these Pharisees and scribes and doctors of the law, what was it about? Well it was all due to the fact that they were completely and entirely wrong in their notions and ideas about the coming of this kingdom.

They listened to him and then they'd play him with their questions. They'd say, when's it coming then? You've been talking about it, when's it going to come then? We want some tangible evidence, we want some real sign, we are practical men, we are tired of this mere preaching. When are you going to show us your kingdom? Now this is true not only of the Pharisees and scribes, it was equally true of the Roman governor, the governor of Pilate.

Let me read to you from the 18th chapter of John's gospel and this is what I read. Here is our Lord standing before Pilate in the judgment hall, Pilate entered into the judgment hall again and called Jesus and said unto him, are thou the king of the Jews? Jesus answered him, sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me? Pilate answered, am I a Jew? Thy nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me, what hast thou done? Jesus answered, my kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight that I should not be delivered to the Jews, but now is my kingdom not from him? Pilate therefore said unto him art thou a king, then Jesus answered thou sayest that I am the king.

To this end I was born and for this cause came I into the world that I should bear witness unto the truth. Everyone that is of the truth hereeth my voice. Pilate you see again was in trouble.

He says they say you are a king and you say that you are a king. What is your kingdom then? Where is your kingdom? I am representing an earthly kingdom. I am the emissary of the emperor of Rome.

I understand the thing like that, but where is your kingdom if you say that you are a

king? And his answer is my kingdom is not of this world. My kingdom come as not with observation. My kingdom is not of this world.

But you see it's the answer to the same sort of misunderstanding. Indeed still more remarkable we are told that his own brothers didn't understand it. In the sense chapter of John's gospel I read this, the time of the feast of tabernacles that arrived.

His brethren therefore said unto him, depart hence and go into you bear that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest. For there is no man that doeth anything in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly if thou do these things shall thyself unto the world. For neither did his brethren believe in him says John.

Our Lord answers his own brothers and he says my time is not yet come, but your time is always ready. The world cannot hate you but me it hate it because I testify of it that the works that are of a review. Now that's the most significant thing.

His own brethren, his own brothers born of the same mother. They were during it him and mocking him and saying, now you're claiming so much for yourself. If you are what you say you are, well go up to Jerusalem, go up to the feast.

People will have come there from everywhere, stand up to fold them and make a proclamation. Show yourself what's this you're doing, you're claiming a lot but you're spending your time here amongst a handful of poor people. What is this? Why don't you do something about it? They were expecting the kingdom of God to come with some sort of observation.

Indeed, still more remarkable and most remarkable of all was the way the very disciples and the puzzles themselves stumbled over this very thing. We've got illustrations of it in the gospels. I won't worry with them but let me give you an illustration of how they still stumbled even after his resurrection.

It's in the first chapter of the book of the Acts of the Apostles. Being assembled together with them our Lord commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem but wait for the promise of the Father which said he you've heard of me. For John truly baptized with water, but he shall be baptized with a holy ghost not many days hence.

When they therefore were come together they asked of him saying, Lord, will thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? Now this is after the resurrection. These men have seen the crucifixion, they've seen him dead, they've seen him buried, they've seen that he's risen, they know that he's risen or still they hold on to this notion. Will thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? He said unto them it is not for you to know the times of the seasons which the Father hath put into his own power.

But there it is, even his own chosen apostles. They're in trouble about this. They said now then having conquered death and the grave shawvy and having risen from the dead

he's now surely going to bring in his kingdom.

He talked a lot about it so they even ventured to ask him, is this the moment when you're going to do it? You see the misunderstanding concerning the kingdom was universal. Now I've taken you through all that evidence because it seems to me to be most important. You see there's a common fallacy in them all and the fallacy is that the kingdom of God is something that comes visibly, that it comes externally, that it comes as the result of some momentous action.

It wasn't until it is there. They were all expecting it to come in a similar way and manner by observation. Their whole notions concerning it were in the realm of the visible.

What was their idea? Well it was the same idea they all had it. Their idea was this, that the Messiah of God when he came the great deliver when he arrived would be first and foremost a military and a political percentage. You see they'd been conquered by the Roman Empire and they were disgruntled and they were unhappy and they wanted to be said at liberty.

They were patriotic Jews. They had a great past and they wanted their great past restored. They'd become unimportant.

They wanted to be the chief nation in the world and their idea of the Messiah, the Savior when he came, was that he'd come and gather a great army. He'd lead them against the enemy, drop the enemy. His royal would be the greatest nation in the world.

Jerusalem would be the capital city of the universe and he would be the king who should reign over them. That was their notion. So they were expecting him to set up a kingdom.

And that is why we read that extraordinary thing in the 6th chapter of John's Gospel in verse 15. Our law did just work their tremendous miracle of feeding the 5,000 and they were all deeply impressed. Then these men when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did said, this is of a truth, that prophet that should come into the world.

Then listen, here's the next verse. When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force to make him a king, he departed himself again into a mountain alone. He understood their name.

He heard them murmuring to one another. They said, this man must be the prophet. We've never seen a miracle like this before.

This is this unusual person that we were expecting. This is the prophet. So they said, well now then let's take hold of him.

We must get him from here. He should be in Jerusalem. He should be set up as a king.

Let's take hold of him and they were about to take him by force to make him a king in

Jerusalem. He saw it. He intercepted.

Then he went up into a mountain again himself alone. Now there you see was the common fallacy with regard to this kingdom of God and unfortunately it's a fallacy that has persisted. I want to be very plain and simple.

We are living my friends in a terrible age. It's an age of bums. It may be the last age of the world.

There are many signs and indications of that and our eternal destiny depends upon our belief or disbelief of this gospel. I therefore do not apologize for speaking very plainly. This misunderstanding about this kingdom has persisted.

The Roman Catholic Church has helped to persist the wrong idea when she states that she is the kingdom and she's political as well as spiritual and the pope is a political personage and you send ambassadors to his court and he has his ambassadors. There it is. This union of church and state.

You've got it in Rome and all her persecution came out of that the way she persecuted people. Let me be quite honest. Even Protestantism has fallen at times into the same era and there have been periods and eras in the history of the world when men have tried to make others Christian at the point of the sword.

When armies have gathered together to try to compel people to become Christian at the very point of the sword and face to face with death. It's all this misunderstanding about the kingdom and unfortunately the misunderstanding has persisted even down until tonight. One of the Communist ideas about the kingdom of God in this present century has been this.

That the kingdom of God comes by reforming the world, by changing the world and that as the world is reformed and as it's changed show the kingdom of God comes. I'm old enough to remember the first 13 years of this present century. I remember some of them and I remember the cray-dage of the so-called social gospel.

That was what they believed. They said, you know, it used to be said that you brought in the kingdom of God by preaching that was wrong. The liberal party is going to bring it in by passing acts of parliament and it was believed that that liberal government of nineteen six onwards was really legislating into being the kingdom of God.

This is it. You relieve the poor, you build hospitals, you build better houses, you bring in your welfare state, you bring in your affluent society, you do away with children working in minds and so on. The world is so much better.

You brought in the kingdom of God. There are still many who believe that. I shouldn't be surprised but that at just this moment a program and one of the channels of the

television has just been carrying some such message.

Others have put it in this form that the business of bringing in the kingdom of God is to make your protest, organize your movements, marches, campaigns and protest against injustices against bombs and war and in so doing and by agitating on social political matters you are bringing in the kingdom of God. That's their idea of it. Jesus, a political social teacher.

Now this has been the tragedy of the centuries. People complain of the empty chapels and churches today. Why are they empty? I think one of the main reasons is this.

That before that first world war it used to be said that the Tory party was nothing but the Church of England at prayer. The liberal and non-conformity was nothing but the liberal party at prayer and there was a deal of truth in it and so the kingdom of God became lost. Between these two rival parties the whole thing had been materialized and so men and women began to say we don't know any longer need our churches.

We don't need our Bibles. The things being done. It's there happening before our eyes.

The kingdom of God has come in a visible manner. We've brought it in by legislation. What more is that? And that is why I believe the masses are uninterested at the present time.

Well now that's the fallacy with which our Lord deals. That wrong is us. The kingdom of God come as not with observation.

Well then how does it come? Well now I want to deal with this in a second point. What are the forms of the kingdom of God? That's the question that emerges from what I've been saying isn't it? If it doesn't come like that how does it come? Well there are three main answers to that question and they're all put before us in the Gospels in the New Testament teaching. The kingdom of God comes and came with the very presence and power manifested by the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

Now there's a very wonderful illustration of that in the 17th in the 11th chapter of the gospel according to sin Luke. I must read this to you because it's so vital my friends that we should be clear about this kingdom. I read that he was casting out a devil and it was dumb and it came to pass when the devil was gone out the dumb speak and the people wondered.

But some of them said he casteth a devil through the Elzebub the chief of the devil and all those tempting him sort of him a sign from heaven. But he knowing their thoughts said unto them every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation and the house divided against the house for it. If Satan also be divided against himself how shall his kingdom stand? Because he say that I cast out devils through the Elzebub.

And if I buy the Elzevub cast out devils by whom do your sons cast them out therefore shall they be your judges? But if I with the finger of God cast out devils no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon him. Now that's it. That's what I mean.

The kingdom of God came when the son of God was in this world. What is the kingdom of God? Well it's a manifestation of the power of God. It's a manifestation of God's the elements of nature that he superior to the devils and everything that he even.

The kingdom of God is God's reign. It's God's reign. And when Christ was here on earth and when he worked his miracles and manifested his marvelous powers he says this is the kingdom of God not legislation, not the army conquering another army but the manifestation of the power of God.

And do you notice what he did? He could calm a storm at sea. He could heal the blind, heal the lame, heal the death. He could even raise the dead.

He was a master of creation. He was a master of all the devils. And he says that is proof positive that the kingdom of God is come.

Now he gave this same answer in a very dramatic manner. You remember even to poor John the Baptist. Even John the Baptist went wrong about this.

You get that in the 11th chapter of Matthew's gospel. He came to pass when Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples. He departed then to teach and to preach in their cities.

Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ he sent to him his disciples and said unto him, are thou he that should come? Or do we look for another? You see John's trouble. He'd heard that our Lord was preaching up in Galilee to some poor people. He wasn't down in Jerusalem setting himself up as a king.

He was there in the distant part of the country and working these works and there he was surrounded by poor people. And John in the prison in pain and in agony sends his two messages and says, look here. I thought you were the Messiah.

I said to my disciples, behold the Lamb of God that take it away the sin of the world. Do you know I'm beginning to wonder whether I was right? Are you rarely the Messiah? Are thou he that should come? Or are we to wait for somebody else? Are we to look for another? Jesus' incident said unto them, go and shout John again the things which he do here and see. The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them.

What does he mean? He means this. He says, go back and tell John what you've seen and ask him a question. Can't you see men that there are the signs of the coming of the kingdom? Can't you see the power of God is here? No one has ever done things like this

before.

The very miracles worked by our Lord. The manifestations of his Almighty power are an indication of the fact that the kingdom of God has come in his presence and in his power. Now then he says to these Pharisees who ask him, when is it going to come? He says, the kingdom of God come is not with observation.

You are waiting and looking. Can't you see it's among you? Can't you see it's the power of yourselves? It's among you. It's here.

It's in me and my mighty power which my father has given me through the Spirit. That's his answer. It's already come in that way.

But then it comes in another way, the second way and that is of course in the church. The kingdom of God being the realm in which God reigns and rules. The kingdom of God is present where men and women have subjected themselves to God and to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

That is the church. And the church is a manifestation of the kingdom of God. But let me be perfectly plain and clear about this.

When I say the church, I'm not thinking of an external organization that comes into it, but it isn't only that. I say once more that that system known as Roman God, that's an earthly state and kingdom with pomp and power. And the kingdom of God doesn't yet come with pomp and power and show.

Neither is it any other state church. Neither is the church merely men and women were church members. For alas, you can be a member of a church and not be a Christian.

There are many such unfortunately. There has been a time in the life of many of us when we were like that. We were members of the church.

We had no ideas to what Christianity was. I was received a member of the church at the age of 14. I hadn't the faintest idea as to what Christianity meant, but I was received into the church.

I was allowed to take a minute. I had no notion as to which meaning. I was in the church.

Nevertheless, I was a member of the church. That's not what I mean. I don't mean formal adherence to a society.

I don't mean my name on a church role. I don't even mean activities within this society. Well, what do you mean as someone? Do you mean this latest popular idea and stumped that what we need is a religionless Christianity? The teaching of this German Bonheffer that you abolish your churches and cease to have religious rights and ceremonies and worship.

And you find the kingdom of God by going out into the world mixing with people. And there, as you mix with people in their needs and troubles, you find the kingdom of God. One of them goes further and says that if you really want to find the kingdom of God, you don't go to churches.

You go to the brothels in Algeria, somewhere like that. And there you'll find it amongst the drink and the prostitution. Now he's actually said that in the name of Christianity.

I don't mean that. I don't mean a formal institutionalized church. I don't mean a churchless religionless Christianity.

What do I mean? Well, what I mean is this. I mean a body of men and women who have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. I mean a body of men and women who believe in their hearts that he is the Son of God.

I mean a body of men and women who are living to his glory and who know him and who are here to serve him. That's what I mean by the church. He reigns in the hearts of his true believers.

He reigns in the hearts of those who have come strained by his love. He reigns in those whose chief desire is to know him and to serve him and to be aware of his power. That's the church.

And it is one of the forms of the kingdom of God. It is its main form at the present time. When he was here in the flesh, there it was.

He's here in his people. The church is the body of Christ. He acts through them.

Body of Christ members in particular. But according to this teaching, there is to be a third form of this kingdom and that is one which is to come. And it was that, of course, that he went on to speak about to these Pharisees who put this question to him that we are considering together in this 17th chapter of the gospel according to Saint Luke.

There's a day coming, Jesus. It's the day of the Son of Man. And what he means is this, you see, there is a day coming when the kingdom of God will come in a visible manner, in an external manner.

In a manner when all shall see it and none shall be able to evade it. Not yet. It doesn't come.

This is the third form. This is at the end of the church age. This is at the time when Christ comes back again.

When he really returns to earth in a visible bodily form surrounded by the angels, riding the clouds of him, he's going to come like that. He said to himself, the son of men, he said, he's going to come riding on the clouds of him. Every eye is going to see him, yay,

they that pierced him also.

The kingdom of God will come with great external pomp and glory. He will come in the majesty of his eternal Godhead. And he will come to room, to reign, to judge, and to set up his everlasting kingdom.

No, let me give you his own words in which he said this. You'll find them at the end of the Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all and followed thee. What shall we have therefore? And Jesus said unto them, verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me in the regeneration when the son of men shall sit in the throne of his glory.

You also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. That's it. The son of men is going to come and sit in the throne of his glory.

It's the regeneration, he says. What does that mean? Well, you see, it means this, and this is the great message about the visible form of the kingdom that is to come. That when all the elect have been gathered in, the son of God will return again, as I say, into this world.

He'll set up the judgment throne. He will judge the whole world in righteousness. All who don't believe in him will be consigned to everlasting punishment with the devil and all the evil angels, and they'll be banished out of his sight.

Then the whole world, the cosmos, shall be purged of all evil. Nature is now read in tooth and claw. It won't be then.

The lion will lie down with the lamb, and the wolf with the ox will eat straw together. A little child shall lead them, if the child shall put his hand upon the whole of the asps. This is the regeneration.

It's coming. Sin and evil are going to be banished into the cosmos. There'll be a realm of glory, and he'll set upon his throne in the glory, and all who believed in him will be with him.

They will reign with him forever and forever. That's coming. It's his own teaching, as it is the teaching of the whole of the New Testament.

Now then, there you see, I've answered the second question. Those are the three forms which the kingdom of God takes. Two of them has already ceased.

The other is in operation. The other is yet to come. That brings me to my third and my last great principle, which is this.

Our relationship to this kingdom. Now then we know something about it, don't we? The kingdom is that realm in which he reigns, in which he masters all his enemies, in which he controls all evil, and finally disposes of it. And the one thing that matters to us there

for is to belong to that kingdom.

That's the thing we should all be concerned about. And the question is, how can I enter this kingdom? How can I be sure that I belong to this kingdom so defined, and he answers us? The kingdom of God he says is within you. The kingdom of God is among you.

What does this mean? Well, again, I must emphasize what it doesn't mean. It doesn't mean you see that I just accept that part of his teaching which agrees with my ideas. There are many people doing that.

There are people who come to services here, and they come to talk to me afterwards, and that is what they say to me, some of them. You see, they've got certain ideas about world improvement and reform, and they read the sermon on the mountain. They say, now, there are very good ideas there.

We must use these as Mr. Dandy used to do. He'd pick out portions of Christ teaching, and he'd adopt them, though he remained a Hindu, and he thought that was a way of bringing in the kingdom of God. That isn't it? Neither does it mean that we accept out of his teaching that with which we agree.

You don't enter the kingdom of God like that. There are many trying to do that. They're looking out for the best teaching.

They're looking out for the best ideas. They want the world to be a better place. They want to be happier themselves.

They've read the philosophers. They've read about Confucianism and Buddhism and Hinduism. They've read about the cults, and they come to what they call the teaching of Jesus.

And they're going to take this and adapt it in order that they may know something about this kingdom of God. It can't be done like that. Neither is it done by our trying to imitate him.

There are many who are trying to do that. We are even being urged to do it by some of these modern representations of Christianity. We are told that his great secret was his selflessness, that he didn't consider himself.

He became weak and allowed the world to edge him out to anything they like to him. They say if you do the same, you are in his kingdom. You're imitating him and you're like him, and that's the way you save yourself.

The imitation of Christ becoming selfless, making great acts of self-sacrifice, doing good in the world, trying to improve it, and trying to give a helping hand to people. We are told

that as we imitate him and try to repeat his life and his actions, so we introduce ourselves into the kingdom of God. But he gives the lie direct to all such notions.

No, no. How do I enter this kingdom? Oh, he says the kingdom of God is within you. What does he mean? How can the kingdom of God be in me? How can it be a master? Well, you see, it comes to this.

This is his teaching. The kingdom of God is in me when I recognize who he is. That's the first absolute essential step.

The kingdom of God is only in me when I suddenly realize who he is. I may have admired him as a great man. I may have admired him as a great teacher.

I may have admired him as the greatest political expert that the world is ever known. The one who had the greatest insight, the greatest social reformer. I may have looked at him in all these ways and admired him and praised him.

The kingdom of God isn't in me. The kingdom of God only enters into me when I realize that he is the son of God incarnate. When I listen to him saying that I miss fulfilled, the kingdom of God is at son of God because I'm the one who's come from the glory and have taken on me human nature.

My belief in him has God in the flesh come to redeem me. There I see him and the kingdom of God has entered me, but he doesn't stop now. It means that I give a recognition to his demands of me.

It means that I say my are men to the rightness of his teaching. You see, that's what the Pharisees were always arguing him with him and giving him their trick trap questions and disputing every point with them. You see, the trouble was that he came and he began to expand the law to them.

They were the experts on the law. They thought they knew all about it, but now he begins to expand the law. He starts off by saying this, except you are righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of God.

Now there it is, flat, straight, absolute. The Pharisees fast twice in the week. They give a tenth of their goods to the poor, not good enough says this man, not good enough, not sufficient.

It's not enough. No, that's not enough. It must exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees.

What's he talking about? Well, he goes on to expand it. He says, verily I send to you till him and earth pass. One jotter, one tittle shall he know wise pass from the law till all be

fulfilled.

Therefore, who soever shall break one of the least of these commandments and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven. But who so shall do and teach them? The same shall be called great in the kingdom of him. And then he goes on to illustrate what he means.

He says, you've heard it said, there shall not kill. And who soever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment. But I say unto you that who soever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of judgment.

And who soever shall say to his brother, Raka shall be in danger of the council. But who soever shall say, thou fool shall be in danger of hell or fire. That's his teaching about that.

Then he goes on, thou hast heard it was said by them of old time, thou shalt not commit adultery. All rights is the Pharisee. I've never committed adultery.

I'm all right. Wait a minute, says Christ. I say unto you that who soever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

And only goes he says, if you're right or your friendly, plug it out and cast it from thee. It is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand hath indeed cut it off and cast it from thee, it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

Then he goes on with his teaching about divorce. They just wrote a bill of divorce and all was well. He says, who soever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, cause a third to commit adultery.

He then says thou shalt not forswear thyself. I say unto you, we're not at all neither by heaven nor by earth for it is God's throne nor by earth for it is his footstool. Let your communication be ye, ye, ye, nay, nay, for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.

You have heard it has been said an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, but I say unto you that he resist not evil, but he who ever shall smite thee on thy right cheek turn to him the other also. If any man will sow thee at the lawn, take away thy cup, let him at thy club also, and on he goes. Having the kingdom of God in your heart means this my friend that you accept the teaching, that you are not content with you a bit of morality, that unlike the Pharisees you say he's right.

He gives a spiritual view of the law. He says that God is concerned as much about my heart, as about my actions, about my motives, as about my deeds, as about what I do

actually with my hands on my feet. God's search of the heart and is not content with a mere casual inspection of my superficial actions.

It means that I accept his teaching. I cease to argue. I say that's right.

God demands an absolute righteousness of me. And then it means this, that I listen to and accept his definition of me. This is the hardest thing of all.

What does he say about me? What he says about me is that I'm lost. The son of men, he says, is come to seek and to save that which is lost. They that are whole, have no need of a physician, but they that are sick.

I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. These are the people who are in his kingdom, the people who recognize that they're lost, that they're sick, that they're sinners, that they're hopeless, that they're vile, that they're so bad that they can't be improved, that they must be born again. Have you accepted that, my friend? This is how you entered into his kingdom.

This is how the kingdom of God comes into you. The kingdom of God is among you. It's you and how does it come? It comes into when you see this.

When you say, yes, absolutely right. He says, I came to seek and to save that which is lost. And you've got to say, yes, it's perfectly true.

I'm lost. I've been trying to save myself and I can't. I've been taking my resolutions.

I've been trying to be moral and good. I can't do it. I'm lost.

I'm damn, I'm hopeless. I'm vile. He's right.

The moment you say that the kingdom of God has come in you because you've repented. And then the next step is, of course, the Jews admit to yourself utterly and absolutely. Oh, here's why of salvation.

You've got to accept his rule. You see, you never have respect. You've got to accept his interpretation of the law.

You've got to accept his diagnosis of yourself. And now in your utter helplessness, you've got to believe and accept and surrender to his way of saving. What is it? He tells you quite plainly the son of men came not to be ministered unto but to minister.

And to give his life a ransom for many. As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the son of men be lifted up that whosoever believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. You've got to believe it.

That a life that there is life, follow look at the crucified one, that you can do nothing. That

you can decide to be good for the rest of your life. It won't save you.

That you can try to imitate him. It'll damn you all the more. You've got to come helpless, hopeless, lost, vile, simmer and cast yourself at his feet and look up into his face.

In other words, you and I have got to do with him exactly as this man, whom we read of before we came to the text and I did. You remember those ten lepers that were healed? And we are told that one of them when he saw that he was healed, turned back and with a loud voice, glorified God and fell down on his face at his feet, leaving him thanks. And that's what you and I have got to do.

We've got to realize that he brings us into his kingdom by dying for us, by bearing our sins in his own body on the tree, by being made the lamb of God for us, that he bears our punishment and it's our only way of deliverance and salvation. You believe it and you say just as I am without one plea, but that thy blood was shed for me and that thou bids me country or lamb of God I come. In other words, it means that you make an absolute total surrender.

You cast yourself entirely into his hands. You deny yourself, you take up your cross and you follow him. And if you do these things, the kingdom of God is in you.

It's within you. You've entered the kingdom and the kingdom has entered you. Why? Well, because you see, he's everything to you.

You are nothing. He is everything. Nobody else counts at all.

You say Christ is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. He's the Lily of the He's the fairest of 10,000 to my soul. No Christ at all I want more than all in the I find.

You just give yourself to him and acknowledge him as the Son of God and your personal savior and your Lord. You say that you require nothing but him and he is everything to you and you're going to live to his glory. Your one desire is to know him to be near him and to follow him in order that you may be in that glory with him when he comes at the end of time.

That's it. It doesn't come with observation. It doesn't come by passing it's a Parliament in since Stevens.

It doesn't come by world reformation. No, no, the world may be going worse and worse, but the kingdom of God comes into you and it comes into you when you see that he's Son of God and you humble yourself at his feet and you say, my Lord and my God and you give yourself utterly absolutely to him and you enter the kingdom as you do so and the kingdom comes into you and he reigns in your heart. He's got the throne of your life.

He's your master. He's your Lord as well as your most blessed savior. Well, my friends, there it is.

What was your idea? I wonder the kingdom of God. Do you now see what the kingdom of God is? Are you in this kingdom of God? Is this kingdom of God in you? Are you looking here all over there? What can we do? What can we do to bring it in? Oh, has it come silently into your heart tonight? As you've listened to him, as you've realized that he's Son of God made men, as you've heard his teaching, his condemnation. Have you agreed? Have you given him? Have you accepted it? And have you seen him in the fullness of his divine savior? And have you given yourself over entirely and utterly under him? Have you fallen into his feet and looked up into his face? And have you made the grand confession? Though at mine and I am thine, I did not desire nothing but thee.

Let nothing please nor pain me, apart, O Lord, from thee. Is he the Lord of your life? Is he reigning in your heart? If so, the kingdom of God is within you and you were in the kingdom and you are destined for that glory indescribable, which is yet to come when he shall appear in the final regeneration and set upon the seat of his glory in the glory everlasting. Amen.

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