

The Gospel of the Kingdom Pt 14

Kingdom Living for Everyday Life

Kingdom living works itself out in the details of everyday life. To do that, we begin by deciding who and what we will live for. As a people of the Kingdom of God, we choose to live for Him and to expand His Kingdom through the way we live our lives. The pull of this world is strong, so we must make Him our master or else the tug of wealth, things, comfort, power, and personal success will draw us toward them and away from Him.

1. Pile Up Treasures in Heaven

Matt 6:19 "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Let's be real. We need stuff. We need shelter, food, clothing, and transportation. These are the four basic needs of every human being. Having them and wanting them are normal and have been there since the fall of Adam. Before then, all we needed was food. The need for shelter, clothing and transportation all came as a result of sin. As human beings who have fallen under the pull of original sin, not only do we need those things, but the enemy has conned us into believing that there is never enough and that if a little is good, a lot is better. His favorite temptation is that we have a need to be like God and has instilled in us a spirit of poverty and an ever-growing desire for more. If we give into that lie, then the pursuit of more becomes our master.

The need for more is what led to the downfall of Satan, and it is what he wants to instill in all of us in order to make us his slaves.

22 "The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, 23 but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

It all begins in the Garden of Eden when Satan tempts Eve and,

Gen 3:6

"So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes..."

It all begins with the eyes. We need to protect our eyes because they are the windows into our souls. If we look at darkness, then darkness comes into our soul and soon the mind and the body will follow. We need to curate what we watch on TV, the internet and on our phones. Understand, that sometimes we are giving Satan an open door to attack us and tempt us, just by the things we watch. Modern advertising is designed to make us feel like we're missing out and we need things that just aren't necessary. Even modern cable news are designed to stir us up and view the world through their lens so that anyone who doesn't agree is evil and they are the enemy.

While I have my own political views, as a pastor I keep them to myself. But I've had to stop watching cable news because they are so biased one way or the other that it gets my blood boiling. I even have to censor what I watch on YouTube and other social media.

Phil 4:8-9

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. 9 What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

The eye is a lamp that reveals the quality of a person's inner life. A healthy eye that has clear vision suggests loyal devotion to God. A bad eye denotes moral corruption. In this day and age where children have their own iPads and phones and are being bombarded with images of sin and corruption from an early age, it is no wonder that they have a hard time distinguishing good from evil and rationalizing everything. They are constantly seeing people affirm sin, debauchery, and deviant behaviors as the new normal. Truth is relative and they have no objective morality.

24 "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.

The language here is something that the Hebrew audience understood. If you have a master, then you are a slave. You are the property of your master, and your services are his, and his alone. You either serve God or you serve Satan. There is no middle ground. While they didn't know what they were saying, the band Rush has a great lyric in their song "Free will" that says, "If you choose not to decide, you still have made a choice". While they were rejecting God and thinking they were choosing free will, they were really choosing to serve Satan. It's one or the other.

2. Protect against Anxiety and Stress

25 "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? 26 Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? 27 And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? 28 And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, 29 yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? 31 Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all.

This goes back to the four basic needs that I mentioned before. We need to know that while God promises no one wealth, regardless of what Prosperity Preachers say, we know that He will provide our basic needs.

Now this is going to offend all of you animal rights activists. Human beings are of more value to God than animals, even though He created them. Only humans, out of all God's creatures are made in His image. They are the pinnacle of His creation. After He made Adam and Eve, He said it is good enough and He stopped and rested on the seventh day. God gave them dominion over all the earth and all its creatures. He loved us as His creation so much that He gave His only Son to die for our sins.

The fact that He cares about us more doesn't mean that He doesn't care about the rest of His creation. Look how He takes care of the birds of the air. Look at the beauty of nature which in this passage is illustrated by the lilies of field. He even cares about every blade of grass which was meant for food for animals and to be burnt for fuel for humans.

One of the things that my wife and I love so much when we go to our condo at the beach is taking pictures of the sunset. That is God's creativity in His nature. It is incredible that no two sunsets are the same.

If He cares so much about His lesser creations, don't you think He'll take care of you?

Peter reminds us that God will take care of us, but all these things in which we place so much importance are temporary and fade away.

1 Peter 1:24-25

"All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, 25 but the word of the Lord remains forever."

Charlene and I love our house. It was brand new when we moved in. But just a few short years later we're having to spend money to maintain that house trying to keep it looking nice because it is constantly deteriorating.

3. Pursue Kingdom Living

33 But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

The only thing that lasts and is forever is God's Kingdom, and His Word. If we dedicate ourselves fully to Him and His Kingdom, God will take care of the rest. This is a promise that is predicated on our singular focus.

34 "Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

John 16:33

I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."

Every day comes with its own problems. Satan wants us navel gazing and with our focus on all the bad things that happen. Even I succumb to that ploy every now and then. That's what so great about the wife that God has given me. She let's me wallow for a little bit, but then she tells me that by a certain time we need to sit down and talk through the issues, and she helps me refocus on God.

Yes, we will have trouble, but Jesus has overcome the world so that we can walk in victory.

Conclusion

Don't be a hoarder in this life. Instead, pile up treasures in heaven where they can't be touched.

Protect yourselves from stress by focusing on God and the blessings that God is giving you every day.

Be singularly focused and pursue God and His Kingdom and leave the rest to God.