

**Pray**

In the Gospel of Matthew, the writer mentions “*the kingdom of God*” or the “*kingdom of heaven*” more than 50 times.

Jesus begins his preaching ministry with “*repent for the kingdom of heaven is near*”.

- What are we to repent of?
- And why focus on the Kingdom and not the Lord (himself) or the King (God)?

It’s an interesting question that I don’t think I’ve ever thought about it.

Keep in mind as we talk about this that any kingdom is a reflection of the King.

If then, God’s kingdom is coming, then there must be another kingdom and Jesus spends his time describing and showing us how to live in a kingdom we are not familiar with.

He does this all the while contrasting God’s kingdom and the anti-God kingdom.

Let me show you from scripture this anti-God kingdom that we are living under.

**Danial 10:10-14**

*A hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. 11 He said, “Daniel, you who are highly esteemed, consider carefully the words I am about to speak to you, and stand up, for I have now been sent to you.” And when he said this to me, I stood up trembling.*

*12 Then he continued, “Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. 13 But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia. 14 Now I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the future, for the vision concerns a time yet to come.”*

This person that is talking to Danial is not a human being. It is an angel. The prince of Persia is not a human prince but an under lord to Satan himself. It took the angel 21 day and the help of Michael to get through the other kingdom to deliver Danial the message.

The reality is that there **are** two kingdoms.

- Anti-God kingdom ruled by the most beautiful angel that God has ever created, Satan.
- God’s kingdom ruled by Jesus who is the son of God and our Lord.

Why would God allow a anti-God kingdom to exist? Couldn’t he just wipe it out and fix everything.

The problem is that without a choice there is no freedom. God wants those who enter into eternity to do so because they want to be with him not because they had no choice.

Adam and Eve were given a choice as to which kingdom they would side with.

God spent time with Adam and Eve, and they walked with him in the cool of the evening and talked. They got to know the King of the kingdom.

Then, they were confronted by the king of the other kingdom. He cast doubt on God and his truthfulness. And we all know the choice that they made that has since put us all in rebellion against God and under this other kingdom.

So, when John the Baptist and Jesus focus their ministry on getting people to repent because the “*kingdom is near*” and Jesus was constantly teaching people what the “*kingdom is like*” it’s because the people didn’t know the kingdom of God or it’s King.

Paul, in Romans 1&2, says the evidence of God and his kingdom is in nature and in our conscience, yet we suppress the truth.

The kingdom of God is a reflection of the King, but people don’t want to know the kingdom or it’s King.

So, this morning I want to deal with an aspect and a benefit of God’s kingdom that we don’t think about.

- It’s been really hot the last couple of weeks so do any of you worry about staying warm.
- We are going to have a nice lunch after we are done here so is anybody worried where we are going to get something to eat today.
- There are a lot of things we are not anxious about but there are a whole lot of things that can make us anxious.

Worry and anxiety are a huge problem in our country today. It drives a whole section of our health care industry and provides potentially 100’s of millions of dollars for many of the professionals involved in treating worry and anxiety. Yet, even they worry that people will stop being anxious because it could affect their finances.

Read: **Matthew 6:24-34**

- Do you realize that Jesus is making a very real and personal (to us) comparison between the two kingdoms?

What would you rather have:

- A life with no worries or anxiety, or
- A life with worry and anxiety every moment?

This is exactly what Jesus is talking about. In fact, look at verse 27, he puts it in clear perspective.

“*Who of you by being anxious (or worrying) can add a single hour to his life?*” He is saying that you do not have control over your life (maybe that’s something you should worry about). Jesus is right, you can’t add a single hour to your life, but we know that worry and anxiety can rob days or years from your life.

Satan convinced Adam and Eve that they could control their lives but that was just a lie to get them to rebel against God.

Read: **Matthew 6:28-30**

He is saying that if you are truly people of the kingdom of God you would not have to worry about cloth, and he cites the flowers and grass as examples.

What he's really saying here is that as these things are temporary, (flowers and grass), they have temporary beauty just like us, why are you worrying about things that are temporary. Rather, why are you not concerned about the **thing** that is permanent.

- To which kingdom you belong?

Jesus is trying to get his listeners to understand that they are being tricked by Satan's lie and our own corrupted human nature.

Then at the end of **verse 30**, to shock his listeners, Jesus says to them that they have little to no faith. All because they are anxious and worried about where their material things are going to come from. To devote Jew that was a slap in the face.

Then to make sure they heard him right he restates in **verse 31** what he just said.

Next, is the part I love, he compares them to Pagans. **verse 32**

**Now he's got their attention.** Now Jesus can truly show them the difference between God's kingdom and the kingdom of the ruler of this world.

*"For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them."*

This is just part of Satan's trick, getting us to chase after things that in the end don't mean anything. He wants us to worry about them so that we are constantly distracted from being concerned about the very things that really do have meaning.

But your heavenly Father knows you need them and he won't hold back what you need if you are part of his kingdom.

- So which kingdom is better?

The one based on lies and tricks to manipulate you or the one that is based on love and making sure that you have what you need to live, learn, and grow as part of the kingdom.

So, once Jesus has their attention, he tells them if they don't want to have to worry then they need to seek God's kingdom first and "run" after His righteousness instead of the things of this world.

When we have our perspective and proprieties correct God will provide what you need in ways that will surprise us.

*Let tomorrow worry about itself I've got better things to be concerned about.*

Seeking God's kingdom first and His righteousness. God will provide the rest.

The reality is that this is not easy. We are behind enemy lines and everyone around us worries about things that our heavenly Father would take care of if we trust him.

- Would you like to start on that path, are you tired of the pain and anxiety caused by worrying?

Handing over our desire to be in control and trusting the King of the only kingdom that matters is just the beginning. But you must start.

When Jesus said to “*repent for the kingdom of God is near*” it’s our trust in ourselves and the other kingdom to provide that we need to repent of today.

- Are you ready to let God take over?

Then run after his kingdom and his right-ness. And if you need to make that commitment today then come down front and let’s pray to get you going in the right direction.