

Advancing The Kingdom of Heaven

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[0 : 00] Bold I approach the eternal throne. You know, Christianity is something bold.! It's adventurous. It's determined. It's a manly thing to sing His praises and to give Him glory.

! I want to talk along the theme of heaven, of the kingdom of heaven.

Our Lord prayed, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. What heaven wants and what God wants in heaven for you and I, it should matter.

It should be something that's important. It should be something that makes a difference in how we live in the here below and in the hereafter. That we have a saviour, we have a kingdom and we have a king whose will we seek and pray that it be done on earth as it is in heaven.

And we're told there that some will just have a lip service and say, Lord, Lord, but they won't do the will of God. Matthew 4, verse 17.

[1 : 12] The Lord Jesus, in His first words, uttered in preaching, in testimony to His world, Jesus began to preach and to say, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

And the gospel of Matthew, this phrase, the kingdom of heaven is right through the whole book. As even John the Baptist, that was what he likewise preached.

Repent, the kingdom of heaven is at hand. And we know that it's even more at hand. The Lord is coming. The king who came as a babe in a manger is coming as the all-conquering, glorious, victorious king.

All-conquering, the mighty king, the rightful owner of planet earth. He's coming back. And so the kingdom of heaven, what does it mean? What's it all about? When we think of a king, we think of authority.

We think of someone who's seated in that ultimate place of power, of kingship, of a kingly throne, of royal power and reign. And the one who we serve, the one who is our king, our master, if we have trusted him, is all deserving of our praise, of our love.

[2 : 25] And he has the ultimate authority that we should want to bow to his will, to his way for us. And we should want to glorify God with our body, with our heart, with our lives, to glorify him with our spirit.

And the kingdom of heaven, when we think about a kingdom, you often can picture, as they put it in the movies often, of kingdoms and kings and knights and armour and soldiers and battles and of warfare.

And the kingdom of heaven is something that's an invading force, it should be, on planet earth. We're part of the kingdom, of making, of bringing the king's will to earth, in effect, as part of his army, as this advancing army, as this invading force, as the church is pictured, as the Lord tells us in Matthew 16, that the gates of hell shall not prevail.

And so it's pictured as being like an army, an invading army. It's got a picture there of storming the gates of hell. It's been pictured in movies at times, how there's a big battering ram, as the invading armies are bashing and bashing that gate of the fortress, and making the gates crumble and fall, and attacking that fortress.

And that's the picture for you and I, of the kingdom of God, of the church of God. As revolutionaries, as a conquering army, the gates of hell, we need to storm the gates of hell, to demolish the gates of hell, the powers of hell that grip people and hold them bound and captive and enslaved.

[4 : 02] You could draw the analogy that I was talking about witnessing, that the gates of hell are where people are bound, held captive, in some structure, in some fortress, in some stronghold, that the gates of hell shall knock those gates down, and those captives can be released.

We can invade and take them, rescue them, as it's seen in picture two in Jude, how we're to snatch them, as from the fire. It's got the picture of rescue, of the urgency of it.

And that's the kind of task that we are challenged to be a part of, brothers and sisters. I think sometimes we miss that. We miss the urgency of it. We miss the sense of it, that it's an army, and

our very king, when he came, his words were, repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. And that should be our message too, to challenge, to be bold, to be forthright with that message. As we are in the army of the king, a like scripture is 2 Corinthians 10 verse 4.

It says, It says there that our weapons are not carnal or fleshly.

[5 : 13] It's not a fleshly means that we're using, but it's the very mighty, powerful weapons that our king has given to us.

And then it goes on in 2 Corinthians 10 verse 5. It says, People being bound in strongholds that they're captives, they're prisoners of war.

And I suppose you can picture it, how we are to demolish those. We are to pull down those strongholds and destroy them. One of the strongholds that holds people captive in our world today is evolution.

Amen. And I know I was talking Friday night with a young man, and this was his stronghold that was holding him captive. The stronghold of, he called himself an atheist, but then when he got talking with him, he could see that maybe there was an intelligent design behind things.

And he could see that the chinks in the armor, you could see that the bricks in the stronghold start to crumble. You know, because you can see when you start talking to people, that there's a demolition of their arguments, because it just doesn't stand up to the truth, that the word of God can gain entrance into their hearts and bring light.

[6 : 30] We're wanting to see the kingdom built. We're wanting to see God's kingdom extended on earth. But there's also a demolition work that's going on. Now we know all around us lately there's houses getting demolished.

There's places getting knocked to the ground. And then there's a reconstruction happening. And we see that right through the word of God too, that there's a destruction and there's a construction.

Like, for example, you could see in Deuteronomy 7, verses 5 onwards, it talks about how there's a destruction of the things of the enemy.

It says in Deuteronomy 7, verse 5, But thus shall you deal with them. You shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire.

For they are unholy people unto the Lord thy God. The Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself above all people that are upon the face of the earth.

Now you can think, for example, of 2 Chronicles 34. It talks about Josiah, where he destroyed the altars of Baal. And then they rebuilt the temple. They rebuilt the altar of the Lord.

[7 : 35] And the prophets of old, Elijah, I think, talked about the same. There's a destruction, and then there's a construction. As the people of God, sometimes we call to be destructive, to destroy the works of the enemy, to pull down the strongholds, to demolish, to destroy them, and to smash down those gates of hell.

They shall not prevail. Sometimes we lose the picture of that, that Christianity is not some effeminate thing. It's not some weak thing. It's a very advancing, manly thing.

It's a strong thing. It's the greatest thing that you can do to love him, to serve him, to belong to him.

And I've heard a quote that I read recently, too, about evangelism itself.

You know, some people would think, as they might be critical of people, especially if they're giving a confronting message, that really it's the most loving thing that we can do. Isn't it?

The most loving thing that we can do is to be a forthright and a bold witness of Christ, to say repent, to urge people to trust him. It's the greatest love that we can give to warn people of the wrath to come, to warn people and urge people to trust the Lord.

[8 : 42] The kingdom of heaven is something that's strong, it's important, and it should be forthright. And yet today we sometimes settle for what you could call a minimalist Christianity, a minimalist Christianity, where people just settle for the least that they can do.

Shouldn't we rather, instead of having half measures, we should have the full measure of our faith. We should want to be full on. We should want to be forthright and full on with our faith, not settling back in an easy chair kind of ride of kind of Christianity that's, as much as we trust in him, it's not a faith without works, because that's dead.

Our faith should be working, alive and active. And what is our purpose? Why are we here on planet earth? Our purpose is his glory. Everything is about him and his glory. In the beginning, God.

He made all things for himself, it says in Proverbs 16, 4. Colossians 1, it says from verse 16, all things were created by him and for him. And Romans 11, 36, for of him and through him and to him

are all things, to whom be glory forever.

In Revelation 4, 11, we are and were created for his pleasure. And that word pleasure, you could translate purpose. We were created for his pleasure, for his purpose, for his desire, for his will.

[10:05] That's the whole reason why we're here. It's the kingdom of heaven. It's the king of heaven. That is why we planted on planet earth. That's why you've been born. That's why you've been made. That's why you've got breath in your lungs today, so that you can give him pleasure.

So that you can give him his will, his desire. Let's talk about the purpose-driven life. Really, the whole purpose, the ultimate purpose, is his pleasure.

It's his pleasure to give him pleasure, to give him glory, not about us having some fulfillment of our own, but for him to get the pleasure, for him to get the joy, for him to get the honor, that he's truly deserving.

A whole reason for being. It's not us, it's him. It's him. And so the kingdom of heaven, that should drive us. It should motivate us. The king of heaven. If you know him, if he's your king, then you're his subject.

You're his servant. And you've got a reason for being. You've got a purpose for life. And it's his pleasure. That is the purpose. The kingdom of heaven. When we think about the kingdom, think about the community.

[11:07] The kingdom of heaven is like a community. The church of God. The church, the gathering together of believers, as brothers and sisters, as a family. We're a community created by the Holy Spirit.

To be his disciples, to be learning, to be growing, to be developing. Not to be stagnant, but to be growing. The word disciple is used 269 times in the New Testament.

The word disciple is a word that describes the people of God of the New Testament era. Disciple, it means learner. That's what we should be. We should want to be learning.

We should want to be growing and taking it in, absorbing it, soaking it in, learning, growing, finding out more, asking questions, and learning, and growing. Not stagnant.

For example, 2 Corinthians 3, 18, it says, But we all, with an open face, beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed. We are changed, or transformed.

[12:04] We are changed, transformed, into that same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. We're changed, we're transformed, into ever-increasing glory.

So as we grow in the Christian life, there's an ever-increasing glory, about you, about how you live, about the reason you're here. And until that ultimate point, when you transition, from this earthly life, into the one beyond, that you've been transformed, from glory to glory, by the Holy Spirit.

And this community of heaven, is a wonderful family, it's knit together, as it's pictured in Colossians 2, verse 19. There's a wonderful unity, and joining together, that he makes us, his people, as a community of heaven.

And he gives us his grace, his forgiveness, his blessing. It talks about, how our senses, should be exercised, to discern, both good and evil. As we're those disciples, as we're those learners, as we're in that community, as we knit together, as we learn of one another, that our senses, our faculties, our perceptions, will be exercised, will be trained.

We can learn, to train up our body, and bodily exercise, profit of the little. But, much more important, is godliness. To exercise ourselves, unto godliness.

[13:20] To exercise, to train, to be exercised, to have our senses exercised, to discern, both good and evil. Because we've been bombarded, in our world today, with lots of messages, lots of, there's lots of advertising, and slogans, and concerns, that wanting to capture, our attention, and trick us.

I heard, of late, how, someone was telling me, how, they'd been tricked, into signing, for some purchase, that was going to send them, broke. And it was something, they didn't really need. Because the salesman, was such a, a sly tongued, talker, and he got them, to sign, for this debt, and now they're wearing it. And the devil's like that too.

He's a sly salesman. And he wants to, have your senses, warped, and twisted, and turned away, from the truth, and made to, follow his paths, of deadliness, and death.

And we need to have, our senses exercised. You need to be, tuning up your mind, constantly.

Tuning up your mind, in accordance with the word. Have your senses exercised, to discern, both good, and evil.

[14:27] To discern it, to distinguish it, to tell the right, from the wrong. And how do we do that? How do we have, our senses exercised? By having an esteem, of the scriptures. Have this word, as something you esteem.

You honour it. The ultimate, guide book, by which you, measure everything. And that's how you can, have your senses exercised. It says of this word, Psalm 119, verse 160, Thy word is true, from the beginning, and every one of thy, righteous judgments, endureth forever.

This is the standard of truth. It says of the godly man, in Psalm 1, verse 1, Blessed is the man, that walketh not, in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat, of the scornful.

But it goes on to say, that his delight, his love, his joy, is the word of God. And he stands in it, he grows in it, he's like a tree planted, by the waters, being fruitful, and growing by it.

And so, think of that scripture, for a moment. Blessed is the man, that walketh not, in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat, of the scornful. Sin follows a progressive path.

[15:37] You see, for this person described here, it says, first he was walking, then he stopped, and stood with them, then he finally sat down, and got comfortable with them. Sin is progressive.

Ungodly counsel leads to impurity, which leads to immorality. So, watch that. Don't hang around, don't walk with the ungodly, don't stand with the ungodly, don't sit with the scorners, have your delight, as the word of God, have your senses exercised.

We're a community of heaven, we want to be, living as we're pleasing, to our king, and this is the standard, by which we can discern, right from wrong, good from evil.

Friends, wake up, if you can, wake up, and see, the barraging, that's going against you, all the time. Because as the kingdom of heaven, we're under attack.

As his subjects, you are under attack, from the enemy of your soul. The kingdom of darkness, wants to, tear you away, from the king, the kingdom of light.

[16:37] We can, seek to ask the Lord, to help us, like in our home life, in our secret life, that our life, would be in tune, that we'd have our senses discerning, we'd have our senses exercised, and that heaven will be, the absolute focus of our life.

That, as we are the community of heaven, we'll want to fellowship with one another, we'll want to grow together, help one another to grow, and we'll put our love there, our heart's desire there.

There was a professor, talking to a preacher, one day, and this preacher was, quite a talented person, he could have been some, great educator, or some, well known person, in the world of his day, and the professor said to him, man you're a fool, you're a fool, you're wasting your life, doing the service of God, you're wasting your life, as a Christian, now come and live it up in the world, and join up, and do these other things, that will take you away from that.

But the man replied, when he said you're a fool, he said in which world, in which world, because, we can be counted a fool, in this world, but we know in the ones who come, that will be rewarded.

Don't seek the, popularity of this world, because this world is passing away, and the lust thereof, seek the, will of God, for the world to come.

[17:56] And so, I know there's folk here, who stand up, in the public places, and are accosted, and ridiculed, and mocked, but, wouldn't it be rather better, that, that was so, than, that we didn't speak out?

Wouldn't it be better, that, the folk that can hear that message, can hear that, can have that message, given to them? It's so vital, it's so important, that people hear the message, in whatever way, we proclaim it, we must be, about the work, of the kingdom of heaven, whilst they may call us, fools down here, when we witness, as people often deride, even giving out tracts, people will deride, and turn away, I know there's some little ones, giving out tracts, some wild back, being rejected, and I said, don't worry, that's, you know, don't let that put you off, you'll suffer more rejection, than anything else, but, don't let the rejection, put you off, you know, if people reject you, they're really rejecting him, they're really rejecting the saviour, he's appealing through you, to them, so think about, the earth is really, a preparation for heaven, all that we can do down here, is really just a preparation, for heaven, let's be willing, to be a fool, for Christ, in this world, because we're preparing, for the one to come, and we're making that, our priority, so think about, what is your priority, as you live the day by day, of your lives, here below, is heaven, a priority for you, does it really matter, or is it just, you're just saying,

Lord, Lord, and you're not doing anything, about it, shouldn't heaven, be a priority for you, that the atmosphere, of heaven, should pervade, your life, that that's, your all consuming desire, that you should have, a love for the Lord, as the psalmist, cried in Psalm 145, verse 3, great is the Lord, and greatly, to be praised, and his greatness, is unsearchable, you know, they want to praise him, exceedingly, vehemently, that their love, they wanted to express, their love, as they sang, the psalmist's psalm, you wanted to be, greatly praising the Lord, great is the Lord, and greatly, to be praised, we want to, rejoice, and declare, God's greatness, God's glory, as we sing together, as we have heaven, as our priority, as we have the fear of God, as we have the love of God, as we have, the service of God, in our lives, here below, that everything we do, is wanting to honour him, to reverence him, to have that simplicity, of the faith of Christ, and we want to share it, with others, and that we put, first things first, first things first, that means, seek ye first, the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, seek that first, as that, be your ultimate priority, and then we think about, the power of heaven, the power of heaven, as part of the kingdom of heaven, the very king of heaven, lives within you, the very king of heaven, his very spirit, comes and resides within us, the Holy Spirit, the very power, of the almighty God, and,

I think for many, we don't, tap into that, we stifle it, we don't, we hold back, we, quench the spirit, we, grieve the spirit, we, don't unleash, the spirit, and release, the spirit, in terms of his power, that wants to be at work, within our lives, his power, his, ministering, that he wants to do, through us, his giftings, that he's given to you, are for you to use, for him, and he wants to give you, that spark of life again, as a Christian, as a believer, as a brother, as a sister today, he wants you to have, that breath of heaven, and harness that power, that he wants to, use you, and use that power, for his glory, to live in that, spiritual dimension, because there are forces, at work in our world today, and there's forces, that are wanting to, tear you away, from Christ, they're wanting to, distract you, and deter you, from living the Christian life, it says in Ephesians 6, verse 12, about these powers, and authorities, that are demanding, and calling for your loyalty, that want to win you over, and I think sometimes, we go about our day by day, without giving a thought to this, we don't, often cotton on, and think of, the reality of this, that we're living, in a spiritual dimension, even while we're living, on planet earth, that there are, forces at work, as you live, your everyday, regular lives, your average, everyday life, there are forces, waged against you, and we're not talking, about, physical people, necessarily, whilst in some countries, that can be true, but, it says in Ephesians 6, 12, for you wrestle not, against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers, of the darkness, of this world, against spiritual wickedness, in high places, there's a wrestling, that should be going on, we need to be conscious, of that warfare, that we're about, as the kingdom of heaven, as subjects of the king, as the army of the king, that, there's a battle front, and it's everyday, warfare, that we're waging, as we are, waging war, as we are trying to, demolish and destroy, to pull down, those strongholds, as we battle, against these forces, that are intent, on destroying people, and binding them, and dragging them, down to hell with them, that we have, a commission, a calling, a mission, as we, face this, we have the armour of God, that encircles us, we have,

Ephesians 6, it talks of the various, parts of the armour, that I'm sure, you're familiar with, that, we have the, whole armour of God, that we have to, clothe ourselves with, we are to be prepared, for the battle, to, be ready, to, wage war, in the spiritual, dimension, that, faces us now, every one of us, live a life, that is, just, you know, we go about, our daily business, but, always bear in mind, that, this wrestling, is going on, this wrestling, is going on, the wrestling, that's going on, for the lost souls, that are around about us, the enemy, wants to keep them, in blindness, he wants to keep them, their minds blinded, that, the eyes of their, mind being, blinded, that the light, of the gospel, will not penetrate, and we need to have, wisdom, brothers and sisters, there's people around you, people in your family, your friends, your circle of acquaintances, that you, as a Christian, can help share the message, of Christ with, the gospel message, and this is the power, of God, unto salvation, to everyone that believes, this book is powerful, it's life changing, it's life transforming, this book, can, if, people can, but receive, the message here, and, personally, apply it, they can have, everlasting life, it says, this is the record, everlasting life, these things,

[25 : 13] I've written unto you, that believe, on the name, of the Son of God, that you may know, that you have, eternal life, and that you may believe, on the name, of the Son of God, this is the record, you can know, you can know, you're a Christian, if you don't know, you're a Christian tonight, seek out prayer, seek, to find counsel tonight, to speak to someone, about your soul, because there's war, going on, there's a warfare, going on, there's an enemy, he's wrestling, he's,

he's, strong, and powerful, he's wise, and sly, and sneaky, and, he's, ever deceptive, and deceiving, and, he doesn't look like, a big monster, he doesn't look like, a big, ugly beast, with horns, and, like some horror movie, he looks like, a beautiful person, who you could, admire, and, look up to, a glorious, shining, glowing, attractive, figure, a very, angel of light, that is how, he comes, and he deceives, the world, to follow him, with all of his, sly talk, and all of his, cunning ways, and he's, yet, without them knowing it, he's holding them, in chains of bondage, they're chained, and they're going to be, dragged down, to the pit, with that, angel of light, he's then going to, reveal his true character, as the very evil one, as we close, think about, the kingdom of heaven, that should be, our mission, that should be, our all consuming desire, that we have a king, that we're his subject, we're his servants, and the kingdom of heaven, it was his very message, when he came,

Christ declared, repent, for the kingdom of heaven, is at hand, the kingdom of heaven, is important, it's critical, and you're a part of it, and he wants his will, to be done, on earth, as it is in heaven, his kingdom, his will, should be all consuming, for us, we think about, the community of heaven, the body of Christ, the people of God, your brothers and sisters, who love the saviour, who love the Lord, if you're not a Christian yet, talk with them, learn from them, hear the message, of salvation, from their lips, because they're his ambassadors, of this kingdom, on earth, and he wants you, to be a part, of that community, of that bonding, of that being knit together, as his people, as brothers and sisters, think about the priority, of heaven, that we should seek, first the kingdom of God, that should be the first, thing that we do, the first thing, that we want for, that we long for, that we endeavour for, that we seek, first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, as the priority, and we think about, the power of heaven, we think about, the power of heaven, we're not here on earth, to struggle, and that it's some, huge effort, of our own strength, of our own flesh, of our own doing, of our own working, we've got his very power, resident within us, the very power, of the Holy Spirit, as we are the temple, of the Holy Spirit, as the very power, of heaven, as the very power, that breathed on the world, in the days of old, on the earth, as it was, without form and void, as the Spirit hovered, as God spoke, and it happened, that creative power, that amazing, incredible power, of the almighty God, his Holy Spirit, the very person, of the Holy Spirit, can be that power, of heaven, that can help you, live a powerful,

Christian life, a life that is, a testimony for Christ, a life that is, walking in the Spirit, and walking in the light, and walking with the Savior, that the very power, of heaven, can fill you, and use you, and so as you wrestle, not against flesh, and blood, but against those, spiritual forces, as you wrestle with them, for the souls of men, as you wrestle with them, as you struggle, with the temptations, of life, as you wrestle, with those forces, that are, intent, on destroying you, that you have, his power, to aid you, you have, his strength, to guide you, his life, within you, and his, the very power, of his very gospel, the power of salvation, the power of God, and that is the gospel, the power of God, unto salvation, to everyone, that believes it, it's in your hands, is he your king, you can be part, of the very kingdom, of heaven, you can sign up, and be part, of the army of God, and be part, of that army, that stands, and declares, the truth, that our world, so desperately needs, and you can be a man, a woman, who loves the Savior, and declares, that life changing message, that is your all consuming, love and desire, and you can crown him king, crown him king.