

# Seeking God's Kingdom

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 01 September 2019

Preacher: Nigel Anderson

[ 0 : 00 ] Well, please turn back with me to Luke chapter 12, and let's read again on page 871 of your church Bibles.

Let's read again from verse 29 for Jesus. It says, And do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, nor be worried.

For all the nations of the world seek after these things, and your Father knows that you need them. Instead, seek his kingdom, and these things will be added to you.

This morning when we conducted the baptismal service, we centred on the words of Jesus, Jesus' words regarding little children, not to hinder them from coming to Jesus, because to such belongs the kingdom of God.

And I want to develop that theme of the kingdom of God the same. We touched on it this morning, but I want to develop much more. What do we mean? What do we see when we hear Jesus speak about the kingdom of God?

[ 1 : 08 ] What do we mean by the kingdom? I mean, what's so different about the kingdom of God compared to the kingdoms of the world?

What kind of life does the believer to live who lives within the kingdom of God? What kind of life, what kind of lifestyle is so utterly contrary in living in the kingdom of God with living in any other kind of kingdom, any other kind of authority?

Now, of course, there are many, many instances when Jesus actually refers to the kingdom of God. I haven't counted every one of them, but even in Luke's Gospel alone, I counted over 30 references that Jesus makes to the kingdom of God.

And that tells us surely something about how important that teaching is that Jesus gives of the kingdom. And we could, I suppose, have looked and latched onto many of these instances when Jesus refers to the kingdom of God.

But we're going to look at this particular instance that we read there from verse 22 this evening. What it means to live as new creatures in the kingdom, to live as citizens, citizens of heaven and earth.

[ 2 : 27 ] What it means to be subject to the Lord of lords and King of kings, living in his kingdom and for his glory and praise. And when we try and understand what we mean by the kingdom, let's even start from a, if you like, an ordinary and earthly perspective.

Because when we speak about kingdoms, I mean, I know it's obvious, but kingdoms speak of kings. Kingdoms speak of those who have much authority, great authority, great rulers, a kingdom ruled by a monarch.

Someone who wields great power. Someone who has subjects who are willing to serve that king and serve that monarch, willing to fight for them. Willing to fight for that monarch against the enemies of the kingdom.

Those who have no other loyalty but to the king, to the ruler, to the monarch. Those who have that loyalty because of the territory in which they were born.

Now bring that, project that, we might say, unto, when we think of the kingdom of God. And then we see God in his reign. God in his rule. God in his power.

[ 3 : 37 ] God in his power. And for you and for me to be willing subjects to our Lord, our King, our great God and King. To do his will and delight to do his will. Ask King to serve the one who is King.

To engage in that spiritual warfare that God asks us to be engaged in. To fight that good fight of faith for the King. For the King's sake and so be submissive to him.

And to be loyal to him. And to him alone who gives you that eternal protection. That's the kingdom that Jesus came to inaugurate. That's the kingdom that Jesus came to bring in when Jesus came in

human flesh.

When Jesus came from heaven to earth to bring in his kingdom. And of course his kingdom is so different to the kingdoms of the world. For the kingdoms of the world come and go. The kingdom of our Lord and Saviour is an eternal kingdom.

And Jesus calls men, women, boys and girls into that kingdom. So that men, women, boys and girls who put their trust in him. Know Jesus as Lord, as Saviour.

[ 4 : 46 ] Having that rule over them. And his rule of course is a benign rule. A kind rule. And so it's for you. For me. For all who are in him.

To bow in that reverence of mission to him. As Lord. As King. For you. For me to give that absolute undivided loyalty.

To serve him who came to serve and to give his life. As that ransom for many. So that sinners might enter into his kingdom. So. By way I suppose of introduction.

But what about the teaching that Jesus gives us. That tells about the kind of life to be lived in the kingdom of God. How do we show that we are citizens of that kingdom while we're on earth.

What's the kind of mind that the believer has that drives the believer to seek first the kingdom. The kingdom of God. What's the kind of life that the Christian has to live to show that.

[ 5 : 43 ] That yes. Our Lord and Saviour is first in his life. And self last. And that we live not for the kingdom of self. Not for any self glory.

But for the glory of the king who reigns and reigns eternally in the hearts of his people. So. Well. Let's focus now on. Particularly in this section of Luke's gospel.

Because we're hearing the voice of Jesus. Again. Speak to each one of us about. About the true kingdom. The true kingdom life. And that's what we're seeing. And that's what we're seeing. And that's what we're seeing.

And that's what we're seeing. And that's what we're seeing. Well. All that's absorbed in another kingdom. As we said. The kingdom of self. And the kingdom. Or the kingdoms of the world. So. Why does Jesus speak about the kingdom here in the particular context that he does?

Well. That's why we read from verse 13. Jesus just doesn't. You know. Bring in something new. In isolation from what's already been taught. Because if you look at the passage from verse 13 to 21.

[ 6 : 47 ] What do you notice? You notice that Jesus has been teaching about this rich fool. This man who thought by his own judgment that he could find lasting security in his possessions.

Rather than find his eternal security in God. And what do we find that Jesus teaches in the parable? God demands that that man's life. That man's life is given up as it were.

That very evening. That very evening. Even before this man's great schemes can be put in place. His life is demanded of him by God. That man who was rich.

Yes. Rich by the standards of the world. And yet utterly in poverty. In that spiritual poverty. In God's eyes. This man who thought he was so wise in his own eyes.

But in fact he was a fool. A fool. That man who had nothing of true godly wisdom. Why? Because he trusted in himself. He didn't trust in God. The man who measured his life by the material possessions that he had.

[ 7 : 52 ] But in fact that exposed his life to a life of utter futility. And a wasted life. That rich fool's heart was so wrapped up in the kingdom of self.

He was so concerned about his lifestyle. His life. His riches. That he had no time for God. No desire to enter. And know God's kingdom.

And that's the background to what we read next from verse 22. Because after Jesus tells that parable of the rich fool to the crowd. The people that had gathered around him. Jesus turns to the disciples and preaches to the disciples.

And Jesus wants to teach his disciples how to apply the truth of that parable. The basic problem of having the kingdom of self.

That was generated by greed. By self. That self-absorption in the kingdom of self.

[ 8 : 52 ] That mindset that wants to make kings of self. When in fact that kingdom of self is empty and powerless and useless.

And of no eternal value. So what's the antidote? What's the antidote to the kingdom of self? What's the antidote to that kingdom of self that's so often seen and realized in the greed of man?

In other words, how do followers of Jesus, how do you seek to avoid that deep-rooted sin of self?

That causes so much emptiness and distress and lovelessness and godlessness.

Because the sin of self, the sin of dwelling in the kingdom of self shows a lack of trust in God. The God who provides.

And so Jesus tells his disciples here, don't worry. Don't be anxious about your life. Don't allow the material things of the world to somehow, you know, so absorb your thinking that you're seeking these things as your greatest priority.

[ 9 : 55 ] Rather than seeking first God and his rule and his reign. So, let's look again at verses 22 and 23. Kingdom living, as we said, an antidote to anxiety.

This rich fool who'd been so absorbed by all the material things that he had. It so gripped his life. It's all focused on self. So, when he has this bumper crop and it's harvested, all he thinks about is, how am I going to store all this?

The kingdom of self is that priority that he has in his life. And he's so anxious about his material well-being. He'd forgotten the true spiritual dimension.

He'd forgotten. He had no concern about where true riches lie. And his anxiety, his worry led to greed. He measured his life in relation to material things.

He had such anxiety about these material things that he's pinning all his hopes for the well-being of his life. And these things rather than God. He had no time for the God who provides.

[ 11 : 04 ] No time for the God of creation. He had no time for the God who cares eternally. And that rich fool had no part in the kingdom of God.

He refused to trust in God. He refused to let God rule and reign in his life. And you know that tragic destruction of a life that's lived for self.

That life that's lived outside the kingdom of God. It's so contrasted with the life of the believer. The one who'll have Jesus rule over his life. The one who'll have the Lord as king and all his sovereign power.

That's what we see Jesus teaching us here. What true kingdom living involves. What does it involve? It involves faith. Faith in the God who provides.

Faith in God who provides in all his glorious, majestic reign in love. As we see here Jesus contrasting this rich fool's anxiety.

[ 12 : 10 ] This man's folly. This man's spiritual poverty. Jesus contrasting that with what it truly means to live in the kingdom of God.

And not to be anxious about your life because God is sovereign. God is in control. And so here's Jesus teaching the disciples. Well he's already taught them before of course.

He goes to the Sermon on the Mount. Remember when Jesus spoke there to the disciples. And he's repeating this teaching about seeking first the kingdom of God.

Telling them don't worry. Don't worry. Don't be anxious about anything. I mean I'm prone to worry. I'm sure many of you are prone to anxiety. Because when we allow our sinful human nature to somehow overwhelm us in worry and anxiety.

When we leave God out of the picture. And not exercise faith in the God who provides in his kingly power. We need to be reminded constantly that where our priorities must lie in life.

[ 13 : 17 ] God first. God first. God to be trusted. God to be obeyed. For the Lord God to have first call in your life as Lord and King.

So if you're seeking first his kingdom. Surely that means for you and for me to have that whole hearted trust in him. In all things.

You see anxiety. Anxiety. Anxiety is the result of the person who lacks faith in our sovereign God. Anxiety. Whenever we allow anxiety to take a grip of our heart.

Then we're actually revealing a tragedy in our heart. That we're not fully submitting to the reign of God in our life. So don't allow worry to somehow destabilize your faith in the Lord of heaven and earth.

He's promised that you will lack nothing. The Lord is my shepherd. I shall lack nothing. And so Jesus is going to preach again on this theme of the kingdom of God.

[ 14 : 21 ] About avoiding that mindset that worries about life. The life that God has given you. When Jesus is saying, you know, he's emphasizing that he's teaching this.

Verse 4. Yet I tell you. Yet I tell you. This is the Lord who's giving these instructions. Giving me this command to seek the kingdom of God. This is the Lord who reigns.

This is the Lord whose voice we're to listen to. He doesn't just ask you. Don't worry. He doesn't just ask you not to worry. He's commanding you. Not to be anxious about your life.

Because if he's to reign in your heart. If he's to exercise his rule over your life. It's for you and for me to trust him for all things.

Yes, even down to the very basic necessities of life. Food and clothing. And if he provides you with that, he'll provide you with all things that you need. As we see Jesus mentioned in verses 23 to 28. [15:24] And in teaching about kingdom living. A motive for trust. Because you see, if life that's lived under God's reign. If that life is much more than food and clothing.

Then we see, don't we, the love and kindness of God. The goodness of God. Yes, we see his care over his creation. But above all, we see his care over his own.

I mean, we see different examples of various kingdoms here. The animal kingdom. The plant kingdom. And of course, the kingdom of God. The animal kingdom that Jesus speaks of.

First example of the raven. The raven. You're not the most pleasant of birds. That time. Certainly the Old Testament times. They were considered actually unclean.

Unclean birds. Yet God provided for them. Unlike the rich fool in the parable. The ravens had no barns or storehouses.

[16:25] The ravens didn't sow or reap the grain for food. As certainly the rich fool did. God takes care of the ravens. And if God feeds these creatures.

If God feeds these birds. These birds that have no privileges. No resources to provide for themselves. From the lower to the higher.

How much more will he feed you? How much more will he care for you? How much more valuable are you than birds? You who are the apex of God's love and creation.

I mean. I mean. His kingly rule provides. For all you need. So trust him. For all that you need. Give thanks.

Give thanks. To God. The God who provides. Yes. Food for all the animal kingdom you see around you. And bring that from the lower to the higher. And remember that God provides.

[17:22] You. For all you need. In life. If he's your lord. If he's your king. If you've trusted in him. For that great salvation. That's been won for you through the Lord Jesus.

You can trust him. He is absolutely trustworthy. In every aspect of your life. So listen to the words of Jesus. And keep listening to them.

Do not worry about your life. Your life is under the sovereign care of God. But then. We come to another example. In the passage. The example before.

The example of the lilies. From verse 25. You might even say it's an example from absurdity. I mean. You. Can't. I can't add.

Another hour to my life. You can't add another. Hour to your life. That God has mapped out for you. Worrying won't. Add anything to your life. I mean.

[18:16] The rich fool thought he could. You know. Live for the rest of his life. And the kind of luxury. That he was making for himself. That he was called to account. By God. That rich fool couldn't add one extra hour.

To his life. God took that life away from him. In God's time. That rich fool had no. No control. No control. Even over the very measure of his days.

Even worrying about the future. Adds nothing. And could add nothing to that man's life. And surely this is a teaching. And I've got a grasp.

When we think about worry and anxiety. Think of. When you have situations. When you've got. You feel anyway. You've got no control over. Worrying is not going to achieve anything.

I mean. I have no control over time. God is the creator of time. God is the creator of your life. My life. We can't add any extra hours to our life. When we're living under the sovereign control of God.

[19:15] So we've got to face that reality. We have limited strength. Limited power. Yes. We know there are times. There are things we feel we can't change. And what happens? We tend to worry. We worry about how we're going to cope with this.

Or with that. Or the various different circumstances of our lives. But if you're in Christ. If Jesus is Lord in your life. Then realize that Lordship.

Acknowledge that Lordship. Bow to His Lordship. Because if you're seeking to follow Him. Then it's for you. And again for me to rest in Him.

For all things. Everything that perplexes you. Bring them before our great God and King. Rest in His sovereignty. Because everything in life.

Points you. Yes. Reveals your limited power. But reveals His infinite power. His infinite unlimited power. So you know.

[ 20 : 15 ] My limitation. Your limitations. Don't let them lead you to worry. But lead them. May they lead you. To the one who's sovereign. May they lead you to the one who has that rule over your life.

You can't add an hour to your life. You can't add. You know. A hair to your head. But God supplies all your needs. And you know then. That you can do all things through Him.

Who strengthens you. And you know then by faith. That you can move these mountains by faith. But in the one who enables you so to do. The one who enables you to do above and beyond.

You can even ask or think. The psalm is right. In Psalm 18. I can advance against a troop with my God. I can scale a wall. Because when we worry.

When we have anxiety. And other anxiety to take root in our hearts. We're being detached. And detaching ourselves. From the reign and rule. Of our Lord and our life.

[ 21 : 17 ] So trust in Him. Take your eyes of self. And put your eyes on our Lord and Savior. Trust in His enabling power. That surely is the antidote to worry.

That surely. That solution. To look to Him. And put your faith and trust in Him. And listen to it when He tells you. I am with you always. Even to the very end of the age.

He will enable you so. To grow in grace. And the knowledge of the Savior. Trust in Him. Yes. Trust in those things that. You know. Seem. To loom so large in your life.

That seem too big. Too. You know. Too much of a burden. Too much of a hurdle. But trust in the one who's bigger. Than any of these hurdles. Any of these problems.

Trust in Him. For you to overcome. These hurdles. And again. To do as Jesus says here. Verse 27. Consider the lilies. I'm sure you've heard that expression many, many times.

[ 22 : 22 ] It's used in literature. It's of course first and foremost found in Scripture. You know. And again. Listen to what Jesus is saying. You know. Look at the flowers. Look at the flowers of the field.

Look at. You know. Whatever flowers that you come across. Even the grass of the field. Here today. Gone tomorrow. The brief transit. Existence. But if God can so provide the beauty of the lily.

The beauty of the wildflowers. If God can give that beauty that's so transient. So passing. How much more will He provide for you? You.

The apex of His creation. Look. Yes. Look to what we might call the lesser forms of creation.

And you. Who have been made in His image. You realize it's God who provides. It's God who feeds you. God who clothes you. And therefore you cry out.

[ 23 : 17 ] Oh. Me of little faith. Yes. The God who's Lord over the plant kingdom. God who's Lord over the animal kingdom. God who's Lord over the kingdom. Oh. You trust in Him as you live and abide in Him.

In the kingdom. His kingdom. As He reigns over you as Lord. And surely that's it. Isn't it? You know. When we look at our hearts.

And we look at all these things that cause us to have anxiety. It's truly the reason is a lack of trust. That lack of faith. In the one who's brought me.

Who's brought you. Who know Him. Into His kingdom. Who's brought you there by His saving grace. My worry. Your worry. So often when we don't trust in His love.

When we don't trust in His all-encompassing salvation. So often it's these times when we have such small thoughts of God. But instead we have to have these thoughts of God.

[ 24 : 15 ] As God has made Himself known in His word. He reigns. He rules. He's the Almighty One. The One who created the universe. He's the One who feeds the ravens.

Clothes the lilies. How much more will He provide for you and all your needs in life? It's not just kind of, you know, some sort of feel-good fact. They're not some kind of wishful thinking that we're seeing here.

No. What Jesus is teaching us is rooted in the sovereign love and purpose of God. Your Heavenly Father knows you.

Your Heavenly Father has that intimate relationship with your life. With your whole being. What did Jesus say on another occasion?

Which of you, if a son asks for bread, will give him a stone? If he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you then, you are able, know how to give good gifts to your children. How much more will your Father in Heaven give good gifts to those who ask Him?

[ 25 : 17 ] We have that responsibility. You, I, we have that responsibility to trust in God. The one who provides. The one in whom we trust for all things.

And that's the sincerity of your trust. Your trust will be seen in the direction of your heart. It's what we see conclude, that Jesus concludes in this, in verse 29 to 31.

What is the direction of your heart? We're thinking of kingdom living. What does your heart desire more than anything else? You have that knowledge that you're more valued than anything in the plant kingdom, in the animal kingdom.

You have that knowledge that your life is more valued in these aspects of God's creation. And if God takes such care over these aspects of His creation.

So surely you who abide in Him are not to be anxious about your life. You who are in the eternal kingdom of God. Your life doesn't consist merely in seeking after food and clothing.

[ 26 : 25 ] I mean, if that's it, if physical satisfaction is all that it is, then we'll listen to what Jesus is saying to you. What's the most important thing for you to direct your heart to? Jesus says it must be His kingdom.

That's the direction of your heart. To depend wholly on God. To have that faith in the Lord Jesus. To glorify God in your heart and seen in all your actions. And have that dependence on the one who loves you with that everlasting love.

And so, that seeking, seeking the kingdom of God, that surely involves living your life in a way that shows that our God reigns.

That the Lord reigns. He rules in your heart. That He's first, that first place in your life. That first place in your mind. He's Lord of your mind. He's Lord of your heart.

He's Lord of your will. He's Lord of your life. And so, live each day acknowledging that God is Lord.

That God has the pre-eminence in every area of your life.

[ 27 : 29 ] Think about your relationships that you form. Think about where you work. Think about your leisure time. Think about even the very motives you have in life. Think of what God has gifted you in possessions.

Think of your life. Think of your very soul. Surely, in all these things, your first and greatest concern must be concern for the kingdom of God.

Concern that Jesus rules in your heart. And yes, in the hearts of others. So, surely, it's for each one of us to have that desire to live by these kingdom values.

For Jesus is Lord. For Jesus is King. And therefore, for Him to be obedient. And to trust Him for everything. Whether it be your physical aspect of life.

And above all, your spiritual life. Seek His kingdom. Seeking. And seeking, of course, in the very verb, seeking, involves action. In other words, you're looking in the right place.

[ 28 : 31 ] Where do you seek the King? Seek it in His Word. Because there, in God's Word, we're told that God reigns. And that we're told that, you know, your very life is lived with that eye to the kingdom of God.

And the very same Word of God tells us that all other kingdoms, like building your house in sand, the house collapses.

Don't seek what has no ultimate eternal value. Yes, of course, these other things are important. They're necessary. They're God's gifts to you.

But above all, first and foremost, surely, to seek that true fulfillment in your life. That seek in that kingdom that never falls, never fails.

And seek to live under the reign of King Jesus. And you'll never lose in that kingdom. And seek in that kingdom. Yes, there are other things that you have in life that God's gifted you.

[ 29 : 33 ] Even the very basics of life. That's what God's Word instructs us. Seek, above all, seek and seek diligently those things that will last eternally.

And yes, even these things that even now you enjoy in your trust in our King, in our Savior.

Because even now you're enjoying, you who are in Christ, you're enjoying His, well, His protection.

Your soul's protection. You've been fed and you've been nourished by His Word. You're surely living in that devotion to Him and His kingdom. And yes, I'm sure the disciples at times, like ourselves, might feel, well, a very small entity in relation to, you know, the world's kingdoms.

Don't be afraid, says Jesus. Don't be afraid of any kind of weakness in the face of the enemies of the kingdom of God. Because as Jesus says there at the end, towards the end of that passage, He promises to give you the kingdom.

To give you the blessings of the kingdom. You who are within the kingdom. You who are within the flock of Christ, you know the blessings of the kingdom. The blessing of being in the kingdom of God now.

[ 30 : 54 ] And therefore having that radical overhaul of your life. Your priorities transformed. Your desires transformed. You've been loosed from the world and the values of the kingdoms of the world.

You've been loosed from your heart set on the treasury of material things. Your heart loosed from anything that has no eternal value. And instead your heart latched onto that treasure in heaven that never fades.

That treasure that has eternal worth and the eternal kingdom of God. But as Jesus says, in that kingdom you will reign eternally. Is that the direction of your heart?

Is that your heart's desire? To live for the Lord? To seek His kingdom? To know the blessings of the kingdom of God? To know that transformation in your life? To rid you from that self-centered pride? And to live your life for the Savior? Do you want to see the kingdom of God advance in the world? Do you want others to know the same blessings that you have in the kingdom of God?

[ 32 : 03 ] Three days ago, Peter Churnside, formerly of Tear Fund and of the Scottish Bible Society, died. Some of you knew him. Just a little over ten years ago, Peter addressed the Scottish Parliament.

And he spoke to the Parliament regarding his life as a Christian. And he closed his short account, his short address to the Parliament with these words of prayer.

He said these words. Our loving Father in heaven, we come before you acknowledging you as King of kings and Lord of lords. We ask that today we might know your guidance, your strength and your wisdom in the decisions we make.

And that we might build your kingdom here on earth. And that our lives might be consistent with our beliefs and our values. And let's change one word.

And let's change one repeating word in that prayer from we to I. Our loving Father in heaven. I come before you acknowledging you as the King of kings and Lord of lords.

[ 33 : 12 ] I ask that today I might know your guidance, your strength and your wisdom in the decisions I make. That I might build your kingdom here on earth.

And that my life be consistent with my beliefs and my values. May that be your prayer for today and always. Amen. Let us pray.

Lord, may it be that truly it is our desire to build your kingdom here on earth. It truly is our desire that others might know the Lord of lords and King of kings.

And that others might see in the hearts of your people that truly the Lord reigns. May they see the difference that the Lord Jesus has made. May they see that difference in those who are living in the kingdom.

And show forth kingdom values even as they exalt the Lord of lords and King of kings. And so Lord, we pray that truly you will bless us as your people.

[ 34 : 12 ] That you will go before us as Lord, as King. And that we will delight to serve you in all humility. So hear us Lord, as again we sing from your word.

And we ask your pardon for our many sins. In Jesus name we pray. Amen. Let's close in Psalm 93 on page 123.

Page 123, Psalm 93 and we'll sing the whole psalm. The Lord is King. His throne endures. Majestic in His height. The Lord is robed in majesty.

And armed with strength and might. Psalm 93. Let's stand. And I wait to see you. The Lord is ■■■. Podcast τὸν, beginning of Jesus Christ.

In His hands. Qu pelo man eternal life. Did you? The Lord is drinking? And the Lord is drinking? Or is there not? The Lord is drinking? The Lord is drinking? I will know you will be in our house. It's not the man who died.