

Two Kingdoms - 3

by Anton Bosch

The Kingdom of God operates on the principle of serving others, rather than seeking power and authority, and this is the essence of being born again.

Scripture: Matthew 18:3, Matthew 20:25, Mark 10:43, Luke 22:27, Philippians 2:8

Topics: "Kingdom Of God", "Humility And Service"

Description

Anton Bosch preaches on the radical differences between the Kingdom of God and the kingdoms of the world, emphasizing that God's Kingdom operates on the principle of serving others rather than lusting for power and authority. Jesus taught that greatness in His Kingdom comes from being a servant and being willing to serve others, contrasting the worldly mindset of seeking power and status. The essence of being born again lies in embracing humility, brokenness, and simplicity, following the example of Jesus who humbly served others and sacrificed Himself for all.

Transcript

Not only does the Kingdom of God have a different King to the kingdoms of the world, but it has different citizens, has a different future and it operates by different principles. One of the principles that makes God's Kingdom radically different to that of the world is the lust for power as opposed to the willingness to serve.

Jesus said: "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. "Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. "And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave "just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:25-28).

Worldly governments and organizations are all about power, authority and greatness. This is true at every level, from the lowest government official who uses (abuses) his authority to mess you around, just because he can - to the highest official who uses his power to force the entire country to do his will. Government officials are supposed to be there to serve the public and in some countries they are even called "civil servants", yet we all know they do not really serve the public but the citizens become servants of the officials.

The centrality of power to the mindset of worldly organizations is visible in their structures and hierarchies. These hierarchies consist of many levels and are very clearly defined. Everyone in the organization knows his rank and bows before his colleague who may be one step higher than himself. Everyone is aware of the pecking order and the organizational chart clearly shows where each one is located.

This ranking is evidenced in the title and salary but also in the size of the desk, office and carpet. Every one in those organizations jealously guards his position and the accouterments and trappings that signal their status. This kind of pecking order is essential to keep order in any worldly organization. But the existence of such a pyramid clearly defines an organization as a worldly one.

This kind of hierarchical structure supports an environment where dog eats dog and everyone scrambles and fights to get as high up in the tree as possible. A person's worth is measured by his ability to climb the corporate ladder and by the rung he occupies on that ladder. It is all about power, status, position and authority.

Jesus' disciples had learnt these principles from the world as well as from the religious leaders of Israel. Thus you find this attitude in many of their questions and actions. The question about who is the greatest is at the forefront of their thinking. At least twice some of them lobbied for the left and right seats of Jesus' throne. At the last supper they refused to wash each others' feet as that would be conceding rank and even as they sat down at that last meal, they made sure that each one sat in the appropriate order, relative to their perceived superiority.

However, on many occasions Jesus tried to teach them that the Kingdom of God is opposite to the world. In Matthew 18 the disciples again asked the question about who is the greatest. Jesus responded by showing them a little child. Two chapters later (Matthew 20) the question arises again, except that this time James and John got their mother to canvass Jesus on their behalf.

Jesus' response is very clear and very specific that His followers should not be about being masters and wielding authority. On the contrary, His Kingdom operates very differently to the world. Instead of trying to be the greatest, His followers should strive to be the least and instead of aiming at being bosses and chiefs, they should become servants and slaves. Instead of pride, pomp and circumstance, humility, brokenness and simplicity should be the prevailing attitude.

These were not idealist statements by Jesus. This is what He Himself did. He washed the disciples' feet when none of them would. Although He was the King of Glory, he humbled himself and became obedient even to the death of the cross (Philippians 2:8). Jesus shunned popularity and fame. And while it was essential to perform miracles in order to prove His Divinity, He never did them to put on a show. In the end, the multitude called for His crucifixion because He would not rise up and become their political King. Israel wanted a powerful ruler who had authority and they would not follow the One Who was meek and lowly and who had made Himself their servant.

This difference between the two kingdoms is not insignificant or academic. It runs to the heart of the matter. Neither is this a "nice to have" option for Christians, it is the essence of being born again. Jesus said "unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3).

Obviously the next question has to be "what about churches and leaders who operate on the principles of authority, hierarchies and power?" The answer I think is obvious. Of this I am certain; there is no room in

the church for those with a lust for power and who are more concerned about their status than finding opportunities to serve others. The phrase "servant leaders" is often bandied about these days. In many respects these two words are mutually exclusive. Servants are not leaders and leaders are not servants. This is a personal choice every believer and "leader" needs to make. Is your aim to see how high you can go, or is it how low you can go? Is it about being a leader or being a servant?

Sadly many people are able to turn every small act of service into a power play. By this they clearly state that they are unfit for Christian service. Even sadder is the fact that most of Christianity has been fooled into believing that those preachers with the most attitude, authority, status and titles are the great ones in God's Kingdom. According to Jesus they are the least and last, if they are even in the Kingdom!

Hopefully, you can see that no worldly government can run on these principles, especially since even the church has failed at it. The only way this can work is if there has been a powerful and dramatic change of heart in every individual who would participate in such a Kingdom. For that reason any attempt at establishing God's Kingdom at a political level will fail. And any attempt to establish the Kingdom of God by means of popularity, power, authority, coercion and the sword will not establish the Kingdom of God, but yet another kingdom of man.

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