

Spiritual Gifts Training (Part 4)

by Jackie Pullinger

Jackie Pullinger's sermon emphasizes the significance of understanding the Kingdom of God, the necessity of forgiveness, and the anticipation of Jesus' return to restore justice and healing in the world.

Duration: 50:45

Scripture: Daniel 2:44, Malachi 4, Matthew 12:28, Mark 1:15, Luke 10:9, John 3:8, 1 Corinthians 4:20, Galatians 1:4, Ephesians 1:21, 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10

Topics: "Spiritual Gifts", "Kingdom Of God", "Healing and Forgiveness"

Description

Jackie Pullinger emphasizes the transformative power of the Kingdom of God, asserting that it is not merely about words but about divine power manifesting in healing and restoration. She reflects on the historical longing of Israel for their kingdom and how Jesus proclaimed the nearness of the Kingdom, urging believers to actively participate in its realization through acts of healing and forgiveness. Pullinger encourages the congregation to check the teachings against Scripture and to engage in the mission of spreading the Kingdom, highlighting the importance of forgiveness as a prerequisite for healing and spiritual freedom.

Transcript

1 Corinthians 14, sorry, 1 Corinthians 4.20. The kingdom of God is not a matter of talk, but of power. Now, several times during our three sessions together, there has been silence, and it's sure good to be in a place where nobody's trying to make anything happen. So, it's not a matter of talk, but of power.

So, I want to talk about the kingdom of God and see if we can understand what this is about. I first came across this phrase, as though it's sure in the gospels and in the epistles, but it really wasn't talked about until the early 1980s, with a couple of people like Colin Urquhart, John Wimber, and people rediscovering, if you like, what was always there, the kingdom of God. So, I'll try to give you an angle on this, because it really fully embraces all aspects of healing, which is what we are trying to receive over this weekend.

One, John 3, 8, says, the reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. So, you were very good this morning. You did bring your Bibles, and good, good, good.

That's right. The reason you need to put some of these things down or look at your Bible is that you should never believe your preachers. That's why there's such a dead church.

So, it doesn't matter whose talk this week, or pod you've downcast, or upcast, or download, or whatever, just don't take it lying down. Check it all with scripture. And if it doesn't sit well, then work some things out, work some things through.

Nobody's got a full handle on it. We're trying to understand, and the Lord very much wants us to, by His Spirit. So, make sure you check things out.

Okay, so, the reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. This is one of the places where it tells us why the Son of God appeared in the form of man. Now, to order the, to understand the kingdom of God, we might need to look at a little history, and I'll try to do this not in too much depth.

But right now, will you get into twos or threes, and with your neighbor, tell them what is your understanding of the kingdom of God? Right, just to do this briefly, as you know, and as we heard while we worshiped, man, mankind, lost his place with God in the creation garden, and was destined to die, though he didn't die immediately, physically. And God chose to reveal himself through a nation of Israel. And so, through the nation of Israel, the rule of God was to be seen, that God was in control, and that God was loving, God was mighty, and that probably God was jealous, meaning he didn't want his bride to have another lover.

So, the purpose, God's purpose was to so show himself to the people of Israel that they would have a blessed land, a blessed children, blessed crops, that they would not be defeated by their enemies, and that the other nations, upon seeing how blessed Israel was, would yearn for Israel's king, the king of kings, the God of gods, the Lord Almighty. And so, it wasn't that Israel was especially preferred, or even especially loved, just for that task, especially chosen. But God's purpose was never less for the other nations, and the other peoples.

However, as you've seen through scripture, this is a quick whisk through the Old Testament. Time and time again, Israel, like an adulteress, had other lovers, and sometimes at the same time, as the king of kings. And so, the Lord sent prophets, and told them, if you do not repent, if you do not turn to me, you will lose your land, and your people will be overcome, and you will be imprisoned and enslaved.

So, as you know, that's what happened to both Israel and Judah. So, after their kingdom had been divided, and they had a series of awful kings, they both lost their land, and either they were inhabited or exiled. So, throughout the Old Testament, you will begin to see a yearning in the people of Israel, a yearning for their kingdom back again.

They'd lost their birthright, they yearned for their king, they felt ashamed that they had been ashamed. And so, they began to yearn for what is called the day of the Lord. And it's interesting, I love talking about the Lord coming back.

I think it's something that completely brand new Christians ought to be aware of, says that if they get saved on Monday, they've got something to do before Friday, which may never come, because he's coming back. So, I think it gets people quickened. If they, one in every five Bible verses is talking about the coming back of the Lord in one way or another.

That's a huge subject. So, actually, to change our perspective from, I'm on earth, I've got a life, and in mercy, Jesus came and died for me so I can go to heaven. That's a view without perspective.

But most people live it. If I can get through this life, I'm going to heaven where it's harps and wines and feasts and fun, or rest or sleep. But that's actually not the picture that scripture gives.

It's a picture, but it's incomplete. So, the fact is that God wants to restore his kingdom. I have no idea what this is going to look like.

There are very strange promises, like we're going to take rule over various cities as a reward for doing well. Well, I'm not a bit thrilled by that. I'd much rather die and just go to heaven.

I'm not interested in ruling cities because I've done well or not done well. However, it's all in scripture, whatever that means. So, it isn't really, let's get out of here and get to the other place.

No, not at all. We are supposed to be longing for the rule and reign of God on this earth, which, and whatever it means, the new heaven and a new earth is a new heaven and a new earth, but it's not escape from earth to heaven because I've had a tough time here, though that is certainly true. So, I don't, but this longing of God's people was, you might say, in the Old Testament, a fairly temporal longing, meaning that they were ashamed of their status and their heads were not lifted.

So, you've got a few verses, so you could just, only very quickly to check this out, like in Malachi, chapter four, verses one to six. This is the last book in the Old Bit. So, it's called the day of the Lord and there's this longing for the people of God.

Verse two, but for you who revere my name, the son of righteousness will rise with healing and you'll go out and leap like calves released from the stall, then you'll trample down the wicked. There'll be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day when I do these things, says the Lord Almighty. Verse six, he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and to the hearts of the children to their fathers.

So, it's talking about a day, a day. You'll find that groups of people who, in our recent history, who've suffered, you think about the slaves in America, a lot of their songs were about the day. If you look at the Psalms, there are a lot of Psalms about the day.

When those who have suffered unjustly, it will be at the end of their sufferings. It's not as if we have been born with a bad throw of the dice and some people get to live in nice families and go to school and other people have no option but to be enslaved. Where I come from, we can see it.

You ought to be seeing it in this country. They're being sold into your country. I suppose you know that, don't you? Even, I'm not talking about the Christian social workers.

All social workers are being told what to look out for. For the children that have been sent from other countries under some guise or another, or the women who've been sent under some guise or another. And they're not free.

Think of all those poor Muslim girls here who can't say anything and who are subject to an alternative law, which is cruel, especially when they're allowed to be married at nine in this country under their law and cannot speak up. You know, when we're living in times where it looks as if because of an accident of birth or you landed on the wrong square, there are people who long for escape from this life and long for something better, as did the slaves in America. So many of their wonderful songs are about the day of the Lord.

So it was for the people of God that they were not so much looking for escape from this life, but a return of the king. Now, when Israel insisted on having a king, Samuel had said to them, this isn't God's best. He is your king.

And they said, after all, we do want one because we want to be like the others. We want to have one we can see. That's exactly what they'd said to Aaron when they erected a golden calf.

We want to be like other people, want to have one we can see. And so God relented, even though Samuel had told them, he'll take your best young men and women and tax you, which is what happened. Now, prior to the kings, it was that the civil and the government and the spiritual governing were similar for God's people.

So it wasn't that the government took your taxes and the priests looked after your spiritual wellbeing. It was one nation, okay, because there wasn't a government apart from the people of God. So what it was always meant to be was that the people of God looked after the poor, not the government.

It was the people of God because they had the heart of God or the king. So they lost their kingdom and they longed for it back. Here is another scripture that is very prophetic in Daniel.

Chapter two. So you may know this picture. It was a dream that the king had and the king wanted to execute all his wise men who neither could tell him what the dream was nor interpret it, Nebuchadnezzar.

But they said that Daniel was known to be able to interpret dreams. So he tells the king his dream and then interprets it. So in verse 31, he tells them the dream, which is this large statue, awesome in appearance, made of pure gold, chest and arms of silver, belly and thighs of bronze, legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay.

And then while the king's watching, there was a rock cut out, but not by human hands. It struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and smashed them. And then all of the parts of the statue were destroyed and the wind swept them away without leaving a trace.

But the rock that struck the statue became a huge mountain and filled the whole earth. Then he interprets the dream. Now, it doesn't really matter.

I think Bible scholars try to do this. They try to say the gold bit represents this age when the Persians were ruling and this represents this age when this bunch of people were ruling. I have no idea about that.

They may be right or wrong, I have no idea. But what's important is what, in verse 44, in the time of those kings who are known for conquering other nations and having for some time dominance on the earth, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it itself will endure forever.

This is the meaning of the vision of the rock cut out of a mountain, but not by human hands. A rock that break the iron and the bronze and the clay and the silver and the gold to pieces. And we believe that that picture that Daniel reminded the king that he dreamed and interpreted was a picture of the kingdom of God where during various eras, there were mighty ruling or people who held sway and enslaved other nations, but that there would be a rock not made by human hands that smashes them all and lasts forever.

And this is really a picture of the rock Jesus Christ, not made by human hands, whose kingdom is greater than all those men kingdoms and will never cease. So that's a sort of quick overview of the Old Testament, which also includes in the Old Testament, the idea that there's going to be a final clash between good and evil, Armageddon, if you like. And if you go to Israel, they'll show you where people say the last battle will be.

So let's look now at the New Testament because the Old Testament, which we just read, has ended with this longing for the kingdom, like calves that are pent up just waiting to leap out. I've been staying with Hugh and Susie, and they have this sweet little dog. Mine, my cat's very similar, you know, they're waiting by the door, just can't wait to get out, you know, once you open the door.

This is what God has put into the heart of man who is longing for the return of the kingdom. When is it that there will be justice on the earth? When is it when we will be set free from our enslavement and the rule of the evil one, if you like, except that when Jesus arrived 400 years after Malachi, not many people understood exactly what that kingdom was. And if you were here, goodness, we've only been here one day, I can't believe that.

Seems like a fortnight. We heard that John the Baptist, although he from time to time recognized who Jesus was, he had no understanding of the kingdom of God. So here's Jesus in Mark 1 announcing in verse 15 that time has come, the kingdom of God is near, repent and believe the good news.

Now in Mark's gospel, this is nearly the first thing he's saying. Now what an extraordinary thing to say, the kingdom of God is near, as if people would understand what he's saying. So why say it otherwise? So he was expecting that some people were waiting for the kingdom of God.

And he said, it's near, repent quick, good news. And in Luke's gospel, you've got these wonderful people in when Jesus is presented at the temple you've got in verse 38 in chapter two of Luke, coming up to them at that very moment, Anna gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem. I mean, this lady had spent most of her life in the temple waiting.

So when she met him, she knew it was the time. And there was another man who, when he met Jesus said, good, now I can die, I've been waiting. So there were a number of people.

And if you look throughout the gospels, when Jesus, the words are not always the same. Sometimes it's the kingdom of God is here. Sometimes the kingdom of God is upon you.

Sometimes the kingdom of God is within you. But he's speaking to those that will hear. And some understood, though most didn't.

And as we saw this morning, his disciples, even though he spent 40 days instructing them after he rose from the dead, they didn't get it either. So it's one of the things I'm gonna ask him when he comes back, you know, what did you say during those 40 days? It can't have been a waste of time, but they clearly didn't get it because they were still asking for the date. Let's have a look.

So in 2 Thessalonians 1, seven to 10, it says, our God is going to pay back trust to those who trouble you and give relief to those who trouble you and to us as well. When the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with blazing fire, with powerful angels. So in the New Testament, we've got from time to time pictures of how they see the righteous, almost vengeance, perhaps it is vengeance.

Because I think I believe in vengeance, not in man taking any part of it, but certainly I think I do believe in vengeance. Yeah, because I read Isaiah. And God is not pleased with injustice, unfairness, with oppression.

God is not pleased with men who use little children. Anne here has looked after a number of girls in the Philipines who've been enslaved. We've been asked recently if we would look after children.

We actually couldn't at that time. Little boys have been used. You know, the youngest three months.

Now some adult is involved. Of course God is not pleased. This was not accident.

This is, so I'll do it with you another time if your leaders let me. But I love to, I love to talk about a God of vengeance because the scripture teaches it. An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.

This is why people want vengeance. Because they want someone else to feel as bad as their raped daughter or their murdered child. They want someone else to feel the pain and they want someone to pay the price.

It's just that all vengeance is met in Jesus who felt the pain of every raped girl or murdered child and bore the sin of us who offend one another. Out of crossness. So all is met in Christ Jesus.

But the day of the Lord is when we are expecting this God of vengeance and of mercy all wrapped up in one cloak to come and those who've got away with it, so to speak, on this earth, there isn't a getting away with it. It just looks like it. So as we proceed in praying for the sick, some of you must do some forgiving.

Forgiving people is in the end not an option. It absolutely is not. It doesn't matter if you feel like doing it.

If you don't forgive, you're not forgiven. That's it. It actually is it.

If you do not forgive, you're not forgiven. Sorry, and you haven't got a week to get around to it. And it doesn't happen when the person who you think has offended you says sorry or puts things right.

You have to do the forgiving long before that. Otherwise, you get put in prison. That's how it works.

That's what forgiveness is. We have to deal with this. Otherwise, we're expecting that people owe us when we owe everything to the Savior.

And the debt is, you cannot compare one with another. All my sins have been forgiven, and I should withhold the offense I perceive that you have committed against me. So we must, forgiveness is not an option.

When I pray with people who've been hurt, and I mean, what's wrong with being, what's worse than being imprisoned and raped? I don't know if you know that something like one out of every three women in the world has been raped or had aggressive sex unwillingly. So if you haven't, and I haven't, we're almost in a minority. So we understand that forgiving is actually an awful thing, but we must do it.

We must do it. The reason we must do it is that we must allow the Lord to deal with the offense and to deal with the person whom we perceive, and it may be true or it may not, but if we feel they've offended us, that is our perception. And we just must let the Lord deal with them.

Let the Lord deal with them. Let the Lord deal with them. And that's what David did when the Lord said, well, you've done some counting that I didn't ask you to do.

Whose hands do you want to fall into, man, devil, or God? He says, God. So hand the person over, let the Lord deal with them. Thank you very much.

As we go on practicing healing models, forgiveness is important. When I first received prayer, this was in California, I told you I had a really bad back pain. And when John Wimber and his friends prayed for me,

they said, he said, there's a curse on her.

And I can see it like a band around her head. And I had no frame to put those words into. I didn't understand them, but I knew they were true.

And I hadn't heard anybody talking like that. So I don't need to tell you what the curse was, but there was a curse. And anyway, so they prayed for me and I told you it felt worse.

In fact, every group that prayed for me, I felt worse and was mightily encouraged. Because when you're hitting something, you know there's something to be dealt with, though I didn't know what it was. And on the first day I had team A, on the second day I had team B, on the third day I had the beginners.

And they all asked me the same questions. Do you need to forgive anyone? And I was thinking to myself, I did that on Monday, you know. And then after a bit, because what we're trying to do when we receive prayer is I said to the Lord, okay, I'll be a good sport because they are trying, you know.

And I was quite impressed that they were trying and that they understood that have you forgiven someone could be an element in somebody's final healing. It isn't always it. It isn't even often.

It is sometimes. So thank you, Marcus, for your testimony. So the world is in the hands of the enemy.

And this is, we gave our authority to the enemy. So God gave us, Adam and Eve, the authority over his earth. We were to look after the earth and the animals and his creation.

And we gave it to the enemy in exchange for knowledge which we got. Knowledge he did not mean us to have because it was the knowledge of evil. When before that we had but the presence of God and the knowledge of him.

So the Lord wants to restore what went wrong and that he tried to do this through his nation Israel, who are now yearning for the kingdom of God. And in the New Testament, we begin to have what we call a dualistic timeframe. That means there's something happening now and there's something that we are still waiting for.

And I'm sorry that the new ages have stolen scripture, but it was in scripture first. So Galatians 1,4 says this, it talks about the present evil age and then the age to come. This is not all that it is, that it was meant to be.

There is the age to come. Galatians 1,4, Jesus who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age according to the will of God our father. And also Ephesians 1,21, the Lord far above all rule and authority, power and dominion and every title that can be given, not only in the present age, but also in the one to come.

So it's talking about a new age. I don't know about you, but I'm never sure if I want the Lord back or not. I think I mostly do.

But I also, he says, may your kingdom come, may your will be done. And I'm looking forward to him coming back. But also, would you mind holding off a bit because some of the people I love haven't met you yet.

Would you mind holding off? There are whole mountains, there are whole areas of Asia who are dying, and Africa now, two countries in particular, who are dying of physical hunger and thirst. There's enough water in the earth. There's enough food in the earth.

It's just that some people have got most of it. And it's the same with the gospel. The same people who don't have food to eat and water to drink are the ones that haven't heard of a God who loves them.

So I pray, Lord, come quickly because who wants to hear of a three-month baby being filmed for pornographic reasons? It's disgusting. Lord, come quickly, that one of your little ones should be used and abused and gazed upon in this way. But Lord, hold off.

But Lord, hold off because there are those that you love and I love who don't yet have a knowledge of your love and your saving grace. So I'm torn. I hope you are.

But we are living in a time where we can say the kingdom of God has come as Jesus did. And yet the kingdom of God has not come fully. In Matthew 12, 28, Jesus says, when demons are driven out by the spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

So when you look at Jesus announcing the kingdom, he didn't heal everyone in Israel. He left his disciples to do the rest, but it wasn't that the kingdom came fully. Let's look at a couple of places where he told his disciples to do this.

We'll look at Matthew at the end of chapter nine after he's healed people. In verse 35, he teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. But he said, wherever he went, whoever he touched or whoever touched him were healed.

But he said, there are still many more who he could see in the distance as I can. Harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd, verse 37. Then he said, the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few.

Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. And I pray that your reaching out to West Molesey would be a step to reaching the world. One thing I'm certain of, you will not do it there unless you've done it here.

So when people write to me and say, we want to come and experience what you're doing, you know, I say, you know, I feel quite cross sometimes. Why should you use our poor to move you? They're living next door to you. You've got battered wives crying and unable to tell anyone.

You've got neglected grandmothers whose sons punch them or don't look after them. They're everywhere. But we do relent from time to time.

Of course, we want to share what God's shown us. But one thing is certain, if you don't start here, you won't do it there. So that's just true.

So you don't necessarily have to do Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, the ends of the earth, but you do have to do Jerusalem and get ready for Samaria. And then you might find yourself at the ends of the earth. That's how I got to Hong Kong.

You know, I was waiting and waiting and waiting. Where am I supposed to go? And the Lord said, go and I'll lead you, go and I'll lead you. You know what made the difference? I went with some people from the church.

I didn't like much, you know, the unhappy looking ones. And they said, we're going to do a Saturday mission. And you live not far from Croydon where I grew up.

Our Saturday mission was to be in a place called Mitcham Common. Now, you know, I lived in South Croydon. And, you know, Mitcham Common.

Anyway, one Saturday, there we were. And we were to take knock on doors and give invitations to people to a sausage sizzle at a local church hall. This was before they invented barbecues, I think.

And it was the wrong day of the year to knock on doors because there were two things happening. One was the cup final on TV. This is a Saturday afternoon, I'm knocking on doors.

And the other was the rugby international. And I got relations playing in it. And, you know, that's where I ought to be.

And when I was knocking on doors in Mitcham Common, by the way, no one came to the sausage sizzle. We ate them ourselves. But I knew I was saved in the middle of that.

I thought, God, I know I'm saved. Mitcham Common on a Saturday afternoon instead of Twickenham, you know, I mean, really. There you are.

But I got to Hong Kong very soon after that. So, you know, if you're young and you're praying about where to go, you better start here. Because there's plenty of people longing for the kingdom of God.

They will not use those words. They may not know them. So in chapter 10, Jesus having said pray for workers, calls his 12 disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and heal every disease and sickness.

Now, this is very interesting. He's sending his 12 out on this commission. What is their commission? Verse six.

Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. As you go, preach this message. The kingdom of heaven is near.

Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Says nothing about forgiveness of sins. Isn't that strange? Yeah, let's look at Luke.

So Luke, we have chapter nine. Jesus had called the 12 together. He gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases.

He sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. So they set out, verse six, they went from village to village, preaching the gospel and healing people everywhere. Then we get chapter 10 of Luke.

He sends out the 72, very similar. Verse two, the harvest is plentiful, the workers are few. Verse eight.

When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is set before you. Heal the sick who are there. Tell them the kingdom of God is near you.

Be sure of this, verse 11. The kingdom of God is near. So I'm not suggesting that you leave out forgiveness of sins.

It's just that in these particular kingdom commissions, they're not mentioned. That's all. Note this.

The gospel of the kingdom, of course it includes forgiveness of sins. That might not be where you start. It has to be part of the message at some time.

I'll tell you about a great friend of mine. He's my favorite missionary. He's called Vic.

And Vic lives in Birmingham. He's an amazing man. He's got tattoos of his arms.

He went to Bombay, it was then. Now it's called Mumbai in India. Either the same month or the next month that I went to Hong Kong, on the same shipping line.

So he's just wonderful. He hasn't stopped since then. He's still, he's a similar age to myself.

He's still walking from village to village in Kenya. He's planting wells. He's finding unreached tribes in the middle of the mountains.

Wherever he goes, he plants wells. They pray to know. You know, by planting a well, 20 villages with thousands of people who spend six hours a day walking to fetch dirty water can be watered.

Does he go in saying, let me tell you about Jesus? No, he doesn't. He's told me about one tribe in Africa. And he says it's a royal tribe.

So they're the royal family. So he showed us pictures of their huts, which is slightly better than the mud huts of the other people. But they're still very simple mud huts.

And he goes into those places. When he writes to me, he says, first contact peoples. This is his phrase, first contact peoples, meaning nobody's ever met them.

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