

The Kingdom of God (2 of 2)

by Paul Ravenhill

The kingdom of God is a realm of spiritual authority that comes before anything else, a realm of communion and worship where we see God and experience his presence.

Duration: 35:41

Scripture: Psalm 47:8, Matthew 5:3-6, 1 Corinthians 2:14, 2 Corinthians 3:18

Topics: "Surrender To God", "Kingdom Living"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of recognizing that man is not in control of his own path, as stated in Jeremiah. The speaker highlights the inability of flesh and blood to understand the things of God and inherit His kingdom. The sermon emphasizes the need for believers to fully surrender to God and not play around with spiritual matters. The speaker also discusses the darkness that exists in the world and the need for believers to be a part of God's purpose and fulfill His plan.

Transcript

Theirs is, it belongs to them. It's theirs for the taking. It's a blessed revelation.

That's why we need to be in this earth. That's why we need to dwell down here. That's why we need to be surrounded with problems.

That's why sickness needs to come. That's why our minds seem to grapple and try and cannot understand. Because God wants to lead us into something which is beyond the mind.

Beyond the grappling, beyond the human ability, beyond any capacity of earthly things. Beyond anything we can mechanize. Beyond anything which is human.

It's bothered me to see people, you know, talk about what the government's doing and what this is doing, and it's true. But ultimately, God calls me to a spiritual inheritance. And through that spiritual inheritance, somehow it's going to overflow.

Somebody was talking the other day about Christians in politics, you know. Get them all in politics and get them all, yeah. Unknown.

You know what I mean? Unknown. Live in a tent. Live in a tent.

Have no part here. Theirs is the kingdom of heaven. I'm sure you've heard God tell about Reese Howells, how through prayer, changed the course of battles, together with others there in the Second World War.

I was telling the other day of a missionary in Uruguay who was at death's door. He didn't mention it, but I think they'd even bought his coffin. It was waiting there for him to give his last breath.

There's no way back. And all of a sudden he sits up. And years later meets somebody who had prayed and said, what was happening there in Uruguay on such and such a day that, let me see, it would be this time in the United States.

And what time would it be in Uruguay? It was the moment that he sat up from his sickness. Because God had got somebody to pray for that man that told somebody that the devil wants to take his life, pray for him. This is the realm of our authority.

We want to influence this earth. We can't influence this earth. We will influence this earth.

But it won't be from down below, it'll be from up above. Theirs is the kingdom of heaven. He's talking about a realm of spiritual authority that comes before anything else is the very first thing he says to them.

He said, don't try and affect the earth through the earth. First, get up above the earth. You get a totally different view from an airplane than from walking among the forests, right? Get up above the earth.

Theirs is the kingdom of heaven. There's going to be an opening. You remember when Jesus came up from the waters what's the first thing it said? And the heavens, the spirit descended and the heavens were open.

They were open. He walked beneath those open heavens till the day left this earth. God desires for us nothing less, nothing less than this.

Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. That kingdom, that authority which is above every authority. His name, when John saw him there at the end of the book of Revelation, his name is Lord of Lords and King of Kings.

Over, above and beyond everything else. And he calls us unto himself. He calls us to live over and above and beyond everything else.

Calls us to be participants of the kingdom of God. Calls us to dwell in heavenly places. The battles of life are not a battle once again with the things of the valley.

The battles he wants his people to be involved with are spiritual battles. The battle against principalities, as Paul says, and against powers, against the kingdoms and the rulers of the darkness of this earth. This is a sad fact on the mission fields of the world.

We've got so many people involved in that. Once again, for lack of a better word, the mechanics of missionary activity. We've got the administrators and we've got the educators and we've got the doctors and we've got the people who decide how they're going to do and the visitation programs and the campaigns and this and that and the other.

You know, and we've tried to bring the kingdom of God down and work it out down here and it won't work because this earth is given over to the power of the enemy. We have to get up above it. We have to get up

above it.

Somehow I believe there's a calling of the spirit of God to the spirits of his people are calling. We know, we know we're not to be entangled. We know we belong up there.

We know that once we get up there, all this will work. You know, how many times, how many people have said the kingdom of the, the, the, the sermon on the Mount, these words of Jesus, if only it could be brought into reality. You know, we look at it, we look at it, we look, look at the parts further on thou shalt do this and do that and careful with this.

And you know, here's where it starts with the Beatitudes. If we could get these in the right place, we could start getting ourselves there. Then the rest of the sermon on the Mount would just be the outworking of a life, which is filled with the spirit of God and the life of God.

We'd be dwelling in the kingdom, the fruits of the kingdom, the graces and the virtue of the kingdom will be flowing through us. Theirs is the heavenly kingdom. It's a realm of communion.

It's a realm of worship. It's a realm of not being so taken up with the earthly things that I forget about heavenly things. It's a realm where we see him.

It's a realm where the spirit of man is renewed by the spirit of God. Paul talks about beholding him. We are changed from glory to glory, even unto the same image, the same image.

And it's a realm of revelation. It's not only our communion. It's not only our seeing in there.

It's a realm of revelation. Believe me, there's very little revelation in the church. There's so many churches.

They don't know where they're going. So many peoples and pastors don't know where they're going. We just kind of continue, and the life defines itself through a process of inertia.

We did something yesterday. We do a little more today, and then, well, a little bit here and a little bit there, and it's like a stream going downhill. It finds the point of lowest resistance, and it goes flowing up.

It wasn't meant to be that way. It isn't that way in God. Theirs is the kingdom of God.

God has a purpose from all eternity and the Bible talks about that purpose. God has a people. God has something he's fulfilling.

He wants a people that can hear his voice, wants people that can come before him. You can't come before him when you've got the world in your heart and the world before your eyes. Somebody was talking to me, where was it, Louisiana the other day, about the worship in the church, saying, in our church, I believe the weakest area is our praise and our worship.

Well, we can only praise and worship in the measure in which the life of God and the kingdom of God is within us. We can't just say, oh, praise and worship, yeah, right, let's get some new hymns, let's get some new choruses, let's do it a little different. It's not what you do.

It's not how you do it. It's not the chorus. It's not the hymn.

Something inside. Austin Sparks, an English preacher of a generation ago, he said, we say, brethren, let's sing hymn number 100. He said, what we should say is, brethren, let's put God where he belongs on his

throne.

Let's put the enemy where he belongs through the singing of this hymn. And the proclamation and the words and the faith and the anointing that was in the person that took the pen and put it to paper to write that hymn, be present with us. If we sing, Jesus shall reign wherever, son, that it be a proclamation, God, I believe.

Though all earth and all the voices of humanity can combine to tell us that it isn't, though everything earthly and devilish says no, Lord, I believe Jesus shall reign. It's a proclamation. It's the people of God joining together in faith and a flow.

It's got a meaning. The hymn has a meaning. The song service has a meaning.

But it can only be as we live under an open heaven. It can only be as the spirit of God is in each one of us enlarging our capacities. We come and the church starts to possess its inheritance.

Because when I come and as a church, as we come and as we sing it, Jesus shall reign wherever, son, there's such a faith that the church starts to grow and it starts to push out the darkness in Oylton. It starts to influence the life of Oylton. There can't be two kingdoms in the same place.

Darkness and light cannot dwell together. And as we come into our inheritance, and believe me, this is the battle. This is what God has put before me there in Paraguay.

Thank God for His working. Thank God for His sovereign touch in life. Thank God for that which comes from within a life by the spirit of God.

And yet beyond that, there's the formation of a group and a power and something which is a dwelling place. One of the old writers on missions, he said a church should be a fountain. He called it a fountain room, an old German writer, a fountain room from which the streams of life go forth.

You know what I'm talking about? That's what God wants to bring us into. And there's a yearning, there's an insistence, and many times it seems like the same thing time after time after time after time after time. Because time after time after time, the discord and the dissonance of this world is penetrating our ears.

And once again, we can't combat the power of an atmosphere unless the spirit of God constantly is renewing within us. He calls us back and he calls us back and he calls us back. He says, blessed.

Blessed is the people. Blessed is the people. The grace and the glory and the power of God is upon them when they start to understand this.

Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. And this is the realm of our own personal life. And I think in the twentieth century, it's been so much reduced, this whole Christianity.

We've put all the emphasis here, by and large. I think the church, to a large degree, has forgotten about the heavenly kingdom and forgotten about the earthly kingdom, and it's just me. I hurt here, I hurt here.

I've got problems with him or with her. And there's so much teaching on how to get problems, how to live with my brother. He's going to New Zealand soon.

How to hang together till I leave. It'd be a terrible situation if it was like that one. And yet it is many times.

And I get these shadows which are projected, and then somebody comes to the seminar, how to get rid of the projections which come from your childhood. And to a certain degree, fine. And yet there's so much, and so much, and we hear so little about God.

You know, I'm all messed up here, and I'm all messed up there, and I got hang-ups here, and I got doubts there, and I got fears in the other direction. And we live in a world where, you know, it's like an atom bomb has fallen. We're the only ones around who are shaking and shivering, and every leaf that moves, we're terrified, spiritually speaking.

It's a world without substance, spiritually speaking. It's a world where the only things that inhabit it are our fears, you know, and God demands, and I can't measure up. And I'm supposed to believe, and my faith is mixed with unbelief, and my peace is mixed with doubt, and I'm condemned and frustrated.

Do I need to explain all of this? Or do we know it? And yet there's so much teaching, and, but believe me, this is what I want to say, you won't get out through the teaching. You won't get out through mechanics. You'll pile the pennies up, but there's coming a time when it'll all fall down.

You'll pile them up again, and it'll all fall down. Heard Dad say, I think it was Toynbee, the historian, talks about the man's attempt to build a permanent civilization, the fact that 19 times, man has said, now we've got a permanent civilization. You remember the first, well you don't remember, but anyway, the people say the first world war was the war to end all wars.

It did, didn't it? I think we've had more wars in this 20th century than any time in history, and worse wars than any time in history. It'll fall down. You know, when we look at the governments, and nobody believes in the governments of the nations anymore, and yet somehow, you know, just saw this new book, Realize Your Potential, in the Christian bookstore, and I get that, and wow, or how to live with your wife, or your mother-in-law, and now we got the secret.

You know, you live with your wife, telling her every morning, before you do anything else, I love you, and the last thing at night, I love you, and so that takes care of all the rest of the sandpaper during the day. Well, it doesn't. It doesn't, you know, and yet, once again, I repeat, because this is the area which the church has emphasized.

It's all right to tell your wife you love her to it. I mean, that's, we're not discounting that. You better do it, but there's so much, there's so much emphasis here.

It's become a man-centered world. That's the problem. It's not God-centered anymore.

We're not taking the first step. We want to take the second step. You know, I can't take the second step.

There is no second step until I take the first step. Somebody count. Was that the first? It's got to be.

It always is. You know what I mean? And spiritually speaking, the same thing. There is no second step until there's a first step, and so it says, they that mourn, they'll be comforted.

I repeat, we can never see the positive until we see the negative. We can never see that which is God's until we've seen the disaster which is ours. You read the story of some of the saints of bygone ages, some of the men of God, how they fought to find God, how they fought to find deliverance from their sins, how they sought, read of John Wesley, 15 years till he found salvation.

Martin Luther, his tremendous soul-searching and agony and sacrifice until he found a place of rest and faith in God. And on down through the ages, and yet today, I was talking with a friend of mine a few days ago, his father was a real man of God, and he died when this boy was about 10 or 11 years of age. The boy was brought up by his uncle, and he kind of rebelled apparently against the things of God.

When he came 16, 17 years of age, he wanted to repent. He wanted God to let him into the kingdom. And he came and knocked on the door, and he busted his knuckles, and God wouldn't let him in.

And he came up front, and he did everything he had to do, and he couldn't get in. He went to another church, and he did everything they told him to do, and he couldn't get in. And he tried again and again and again and again, and he knew.

And he said he had four pastors trying to tell him, you're all right, it's all right, you're saved. He said, thank God I had enough sense to know that I wasn't. But when he did get in, then he knew he got in too.

He knew he got in too. And it's not just salvation, and that's the sad thing. God calls his own to live a life of faith, and every step is taken by faith.

And as Paul said to the Galatians, having started in the spirit, are you going to finish in the flesh? And yet it's the temptation which is in front of me every day of my life. I understood, I read, yeah, okay, Lord, and I think I've done it. And do I possess it? No, I did it.

I believe it. Somebody said faith is a gift of God. He said you can believe all you want, but if God doesn't give you the gift.

Hmm? I can throw the baseball all I want, but if I don't have any baseball to throw. Right? You know, we forget that the kingdom of God is the kingdom of God. God.

And he releases it to whom he will in the measure that he will in the timing of God. We can't just say I do this and I've got it. You've got it.

If God gives me everything, every single thing that God gives is given by God. And it sounds ridiculous when you come out and say it in words, it sounds ridiculous that we think it would be any other way. And yet unconsciously we tend to believe it.

It's, it's, it's just not that way. You know, I go to church. I've got it.

We point the finger and we laugh at people. They say he thinks he's saved because he goes to church. God help us because I know it's possible for me and it's possible for all of us.

And I don't know to what extent, even in some things, do I have it or don't I have it? The Bible talks about examining ourselves and knowing if I got it or I just heard the pastor preach about it or the evangelist talk about it. Do I have it? I got salvation. Okay.

I know that. Now what else do I have? Do I have the faith that I think I have? I've seen young missionaries down there in Latin America. You think you're surrendered.

When you get in that place where the powers of the devil are turned loose, where all your guidelines, your parameters of judgment are taken away. When I feel this way in the States, it means this. Yeah.

But down here it's different. It's different. Remember reading of the Jewish soldiers that occupied the Sinai Peninsula after the war in 1967.

It said there's a place there and apparently climatic condition. It said it produced a kind of a lethargy and they had a word for it. They said that nothing seemed to matter to them anymore.

Discipline and cleaning your rifle. Forget it. No, it's just a lethargy.

They called it Bedouinism after the Bedouins, the Arabs that wander around the desert. They called it Bedouinism. It was something they had to fight against and it was written up, I remember, in Time magazine.

This place, right, I think it was right at the tip there. Everything seems irrelevant. It seems cut off from the rest of the world.

The pressure, the heat, the whatever it was about that place, the humidity or lack of humidity. I don't know what it was, but somehow it's just enervating. You know, and the soldiers say, okay, six o'clock change guard and the guy in bed and he doesn't want to get up because it just seems like he's floating.

There are countries which are like that spiritually speaking. If you get down there and I'm floating, I'm floating. You got to fight against it.

You got to get hold of God. God hold me because I can't hold myself against this thing. Can't keep myself against this thing.

There are places where the enemy has ruled for centuries. There are other places where his kingdom has been to a large extent destroyed. And even in the United States where we're living in the blessing of bygone generations.

There have been breakthroughs. There's a grace which is closer to us than it is to somebody in Africa and much closer than it is to somebody in a Muslim country. It's just a spiritual fact.

Yet here he says, they that mourn. You want to find the key, this is the key. There's things we buy in heaven with our tears.

You hear me? There's things we buy in heaven with our tears and no other way. And we're not into the introvert and we're not into tears. It's kind of like, you know, God's on the throne.

Everything's all right. You've heard people say it. Everything's all right.

Take it easy. Don't get upset. God will take care of it.

No, there are things we buy. He says it will be given. It'll be given.

No doubt about it. To whom? To those who mourn. To those who weep.

To those who cry. God, I want to feel all right, so I never need to cry again. God says, child, you need to learn to cry again and again and again and again.

They that mourn, they that see the negative, those that cry out, God, without you, I can't take one more step. Without you, I can't hold on to faith. Without you, there's no perspective.

Without you, there's no peace. That which I have today becomes invaded by the things around me. But he says, they that mourn.

I don't know if this process goes on through life. I think it does, to a degree, all through life. The Bible talks about the whole creation groaning, seeking for the manifestation of the children of God.

And if creation, inanimate creation, is groaning, how much more the children of God that have the Spirit of God, that feel the yearning of the Spirit of God, that feel the drawing of the Spirit of God, that feel the intensity of God's desire, how much more should they be a channel for the groaning? Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. Once again, let's not read it in a narrow sense. Think of this comfort as the application of the fullness of God's salvation for every area that I need.

Maybe we could put another word there, they shall be healed. Or use the word there in Psalm 23, he restoreth my soul. They'll be restored.

Those who mourn. I'm sure someday, I don't know how it'll work, but someday when we get to heaven, every lost thing will be found. Every lost thing of our lives will be found in God.

It was lost to us, it wasn't lost to him. It cannot be lost to him. Somehow in that day, in the transformation, in the glorification, we're going to see that everything that was lost to us in his faithfulness somehow was not lost, and every lost thing will be restored.

Yet God desires us to know it here, to possess it here, that this life have meaning. I think one of the things the enemy did at the beginning when he came into this earth and tempted Adam and Eve, not only took away their innocence, but he took away meaning from life. Adam, that Adam who had authority over all the face of the earth, that Adam who under God was above everything else, that Adam who was put there to keep the earth, lost his place as keeper, lost his place as authority, was reduced to a poor little naked man trembling behind a tree.

He said, I feared and I hid myself. Have any idea how much fear there is in the world? How much fear there is in the church? I think one of the most beautiful things is to see the life that has walked with God throughout the years and gets to the old age and is free from fear, is untouched by the things that touch everybody else in this earth. They shall be comforted.

They shall be comforted. They'll possess this. There is a rest for the people of God.

There is a rest for the people of God. It's a place where all the striving, all the tears are taken away. There's a rest.

And even as life goes on, as I said, there'll be tears right to the end, but there are realms which have been restored. And one after another, there are realms which are restored. There are places where the tears are taken away.

There are places where life is complete. There is no fear. And God rules there and not the enemy.

Remember the words of Jesus, said the enemy cometh and shall find nothing in me. It's a terrible thing to think that sometimes the enemy might come and he might go to a life and say, I'm going to enter in there. And I'm going to destroy in this area.

And we say, no, we try and rebuke him. We try to cry out to God and he says, I'm coming because it's mine. It's mine.

You've opened it up to me. You know, I think somehow there are things we want to do in an instant you can't do in an instant. If through a life we built the other way.

There's a friend of mine, the missionary now in South America. He worked with the FBI for a number of years, all kinds of experiences. Very, very intelligent, very practical man.

He was talking with a girl in a Bible school, Bible house down there. And she was rebellious. And yet in her heart, there was a desire for God.

And she, her thinking was that, well, when it comes to the end, I'm going to say yes to God. But in the meanwhile, I'm going to do my own thing. You know what he said to her? He said, when you play checkers, he said, you can play and play.

And at the end, you're not going to let him take you. But if you keep losing pieces, there's going to come a point where it's going to be impossible for you to win. There's going to come a point where you've got two pieces left.

And then you're going to say, wait a minute. No, no, no. He's got too many pieces by that time.

You know, that's, that's the sad thing about life. We only think that we're in control. Jeremiah says, no man is Lord of his own way.

Man is not Lord of his own way. I'm not sure how it goes in the English translation, but in Spanish, it says to that effect, man is not Lord of his own path. We need God.

We need to take hold. We cannot, if we see a thing as light, if we see, see a thing as truth and let it go, one truth, one light, we cannot be responsible for the consequences. Maybe like we see a big switchboard with a hundred switches and one of them's connected with a bomb right beneath our feet.

We don't know which one it is. You know, we can play around with the things of God, but man cannot see into that kingdom. Flesh and blood, the apostle says, cannot.

The human mind cannot understand the things of God. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. That which is of the spirit is spiritually discerned.

And that is why we've got to come to God with a cry in our hearts, Lord, teach me. Lord, teach me. Once again, who are the disciples? The disciples are the ones that are able to be taught.

And believe me, the multitudes outside of the church and multitudes within the church that are incapable of receiving guidance, receiving teaching, of receiving something which would make them do something in a different way than what they've been doing it. We come to the end here, he said, blessed are they that, blessed are the meek rather, for they shall inherit the earth. This is what God wants us to inherit.

There is a physical earth. There are nations, there are nations which now today, 2000 years after the death of Jesus, are as yet in total darkness. There are places where the fortress is practically unchallenged.

There are places where the enemy takes his captive, tortures them, destroys them as he will. You know, we get indignant if we'd see a boxer or a wrestler with a three or four year old kid, picking him up, throwing him down, hitting him, banging him. We'd say that's atrocious, it's terrible.

That's what the devil does. That's what the devil does. Isaiah talks about the captive being taken away from the terrible world.

He said, God will do it. Yet he wants to do it through his people. He wants people to be conscious of that.

He wants people that can feel for others. I've got out of this second realm once again of the subjective, of being delivered within themselves to the point where they can reach out and say, God, now my battle is to see you come, to see your kingdom come, to see your will be done out there and out there and out there. There is an earthly kingdom.

I don't know how to explain it. I wish I could impress it upon you as it was impressed upon my own heart. There's a physical thing.

Maybe this isn't the best illustration in the world, but remember, well, let's take, I pray for somebody who's sick and I have such a feeling of faith and they're not healed. Did I possess or didn't I possess? I reached through, I touched something, but I didn't get the whole thing. I didn't possess it.

And I think 99.9% of the things that we pray about, we do not possess. We have a need. There is a challenge.

We're praying for somebody unsaved. We're praying about a situation which is physical. It takes a lot of heaven to possess earth.

What did Jesus say? No man can, how is it there, take the goods from the strong man except he first bind the strong man. That's not child's play. That's not just, you know, raising my voice.

That's not just saying, okay, I didn't get it, so this time I'm really going to say God, you know, and I've said it and I feel, oh my, I really prayed. Yeah. And was it, did it happen? No, because there's a lot of other things back of that.

There's these first two steps that we talked about. There, there's, there's my coming through to a position of faith. Now God has said that he would give us the desires of our hearts.

So that much is sure. And here he says, the meek shall inherit the earth. The result is sure.

Maybe we should say what meek is. Meek is a person. Maybe this isn't the dictionary definition, but it'll do for us tonight.

Person that doesn't take for himself. You know, we kind of think a meek person is a Christian, like this. No, no.

A meek person is a person who does not take for himself. Moses was meek. Yet for God, he took, God was able to use Moses because he was meek.

In other words, Moses was not self-seeking would be our phrase in the 20th century. He was not self-seeking. God said, blessed are they who are not self-seeking.

I won't talk about anybody here. I don't know the people here, but I know in South America, think of a certain person has the tendency to minister as though they own the kingdom of God. You know, and that's easy to do.

God has given me a revelation. It's mine. I'll teach everybody, poor people.

They don't know about that. It's mine. No, it's his kingdom.

I got to be meek. Think of another person. Always wanted a ministry.

Always wanted that, you know, to be able to give that little extra, that would really touch the people. And every time they go in and hit the floor right in front of them, the more they try to, you know, and it turned people off. Why? God could not give because they did not want the kingdom of God.

They wanted the ministry of God for me. You see what I mean? And in so many areas, in so many areas, God will give us the kingdom, the earthly kingdom, when we don't care about it for ourselves. And I'm not preaching about prosperity, but it's true of money.

It's true of so many things that God would give us certain things if, you know, if we need it. And if we don't care about it, when I've got through, when it's just the same for me to have or not to have, when it's the same for me to be or not to be, when it's the same for me to stand up behind a pulpit or never ever in my life stand up behind a pulpit, it doesn't matter. Then God will give.

Then God will give. Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth. You hear it? They shall inherit the earth.

And I repeat again, all God's kingdom is, all God's people are called to be part of his kingdom. All God's people are called to express this. There are different administrations, but there is one Spirit, the Spirit of God, that same virtue, that same power.

Just as the electricity can light a lamp or turn a ventilator, a fan, it's the same electricity. It's a different manifestation. Yet God calls us, calls us to possess, once again, calls us to possess a heavenly realm, calls us to possess all that which is within us, that which runs us round and round in so many frustrations and condemnations, and then calls us to reach out beyond and see that that which he's given us within is powerful.

And the dominion that was lost in the beginning to Adam is given again to his children. And they're above this earth, and they're above the things of this earth. We pray thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven, and see it become a fact as we bring our lives into the place where we live for God.

Live and attend, possess his riches, leave our own desires, let him heal, let him restore, then reach forth, say, Lord, thy kingdom come. Amen.

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