

Church Live Re-Visited: Session Six - Part 2

by Ron Bailey

Ron Bailey explores the distinctions between the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven, emphasizing internal transformation and the implications of habitual behaviors for believers.

Duration: 30:20

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 6:9

Topics: "Kingdom Of God", "Holy Spirit"

Description

This sermon delves into the distinctions between the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven, emphasizing the internal versus external aspects of these concepts. It explores the significance of being washed, sanctified, and justified in the context of priesthood and God's rule in the heart. The sermon highlights the transformative power of Jesus Christ's sacrifice and the Holy Spirit's work in salvation.

Transcript

Okay, let's move on to this next section, which I said is the Kingdom of God. Now, Gerry was speaking on the Kingdom of God a couple of Sundays ago, and I'm going to say something that's kind of somewhat different, but I'm just going to say it and we can sort it out afterwards if we want to. It's interesting how Paul moves from that kind of issue that he's just been dealing with, and then begins to think about the Kingdom of God.

Now, I think that itself is significant. If you look at chapter 6, this is what he says. In verse 8 he says, no, I'll paraphrase it, you yourself are doing wrong and defrauding, and that your brethren.

And then he says this, do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God? Do not be deceived, neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the Kingdom of God. So twice in that passage he refers to the Kingdom of God. I think there are four different references to the Kingdom of God in 1 Corinthians itself.

And I'm just going to say this, I'm not going to explain why I'm saying it by way of defense, but I'm just going to say it. There are two phrases in the Bible which sound as though they're similar, and if you read certain passages in the scripture you might think that in fact they are synonyms, and the two phrases are the Kingdom of Heaven and the Kingdom of God. It's only Matthew who uses the phrase Kingdom of Heaven.

And it is often said, and many, many evangelicals say this, that Matthew used the Kingdom of Heaven because Jewish people get very offended if you keep on saying God, so that this would kind of not offend them if they didn't say God. I don't know who first invented this idea. To me it's never been very likely.

There are five instances where Matthew actually uses the phrase Kingdom of God. So he's certainly not very consistent in not wanting to offend the Jews, if that is the case. And you'll find the word God scattered fairly plentifully through the rest of his Gospels, so I don't think that really kind of holds up.

These are Matthew's phrases in which he uses the phrase the Kingdom of God. But seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. There's another one.

But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the Kingdom of God has come upon you. Another one. And again I say to you it's easier for a camel to go through the eye of an eagle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God.

And then another one. Which of the two did the will of his father? They said to him, the first, Jesus said to them, Assuredly I say to you that tax collectors and hollers shall enter the Kingdom of God before you. And then finally, therefore I say to you the Kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it.

So what is the difference between the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven? I think it's one of emphasis. I think the Kingdom of Heaven is dealing more with the externals and that the Kingdom of God is dealing more with internal things. And I think they are two different pictures with different consequences.

And I'll try and kind of justify that a little bit as we go through in these few verses here. Let's see if we can define the Kingdom of God. I think the idea of the Kingdom of God actually begins in Exodus chapter 19.

And I think it's a very important beginning place. It's the account of Moses coming, bringing the people of Israel to Sinai and God entering into covenant with them. And God gives Moses these words to say to the people of Israel.

This is Exodus chapter 19. And Moses went up to God and the Lord called unto him out of the mountains saying, Thus shall you say to the house of Jacob and tell the children of Israel, You have seen what I did to the Egyptians and how I bear you on eagle's wings and brought you to myself. Now therefore, if you will obey my voice indeed and keep my covenant, then you shall be a special treasure unto me above all people, for all the earth is mine.

And you shall be unto me a kingdom. Listen to the phrase, you shall be unto me a kingdom. That's to say, these people will be God's kingdom.

And there will be a kingdom of priests. And I think the kingdom of God has much to do with the priesthood and hidden parts of our life in God. The kingdom of God is something, apparently according to John's Gospel, that you can't even see unless you're born again, let alone enter it.

And certainly you only enter it by being born again. So the kingdom of God is not something which is visible. It's not something that you can go and manifest.

About 15, 20 years ago, there was a great kind of move of Christians who used to kind of go around the streets and all sorts of things. And what they were doing, so they said, was manifesting the kingdom of

God. Well, if John chapter 3 and I think it's verse 3 is right, there's actually no point in manifesting the kingdom of God because you can't see it unless you're born again.

So it would not have been manifesting the kingdom of God for anyone. But they're actually using it as a sort of evangelism. So it has to do, in my mind, with the priesthood.

And that's one of the reasons why it has to do with behaviour. And that's why it flows on from what Paul has been saying. That having put his finger upon what's wrong in the behaviour of the individuals in the Church of Corinth, he then begins to go on and he has this whole list of behaviours.

Not just individual actions. I'll try and explain this. I actually mentioned this, I think it was on Sunday night.

One dance does not make somebody a dancer. If I dance once, that doesn't mean that from now on people will refer to me as a dancer. If I dance habitually, then you would call me a dancer.

If I drive a lorry, and I've done that from time to time, I love it, but you would not call me a lorry driver unless I do this, unless this is characteristic of me. Now, if you look at 1 Corinthians 6, where Paul is talking about the Kingdom of God, he says this, this is verse 9, he says, Don't be deceived. And then he doesn't say fornication, he says fornicators.

That's to say, people whose pattern of life is that they are fornicators. Actually the word fornicator doesn't mean technically what your dictionary definition might tell you it means now. It almost certainly means sexual immorality of any kind.

So what he's talking about is not an individual who has committed one sexual sin. He's talking about someone whose pattern of life is that they are fornicating, to use the old English language, or that they are continuing in immorality. And if you look at this list, you'll see that these are not so much events as almost kind of states of heart.

Let me read the list again to end this now. Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate. These two things put together here, effeminate nor abusers of themselves and mankind.

The word effeminate almost certainly means what's known as a ketamine, which is actually a male prostitute. And the word abusers of themselves and mankind, that's actually all one word. And technically it means a man who shares a bed with a man for sexual purposes.

In other words, homosexuals. But the reason I'm saying this is because some very strange things are happening in some parts of the church in certain places where you've now actually got so-called evangelicals who are saying that you can be a practicing homosexual and still be a Christian. Because they say what it's talking about mostly in the Bible is not homosexuality but homosexual prostitution is what it's talking about.

But this particular phrase here just kind of takes the foundation out from all that. Because Paul says quite categorically he's talking about one man who shares a bed with another man for sexual purposes. Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkenness, nor revilers, nor extortioners.

Did I miss out covetous? It's an interesting one, isn't it? Nor thieves, nor covetous. People who are constantly wanting something that belongs to somebody else for themselves. Now this is interesting because this is almost kind of the prevailing sin.

It's almost the definition sin of the age in which we live. That everyone is wanting more. And a bigger one, and a newer one, and one that's better than the neighbours and all the rest of it.

And here he says that this kind of behaviour, this kind of disposition, actually people who have this disposition will not inherit the Kingdom of God. That's strong stuff. People who have this disposition will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

I'll come back to that in just a moment or two. But let me just show you what I think the Kingdom of Heaven signifies. If you go to Deuteronomy chapter 11, consider that phrase that we looked at where it said, You'll be to me a kingdom of priests.

That's the first time in the Bible the kingdom is used in that kind of way. You've got a couple of foreign, heathen kingdoms, but there's obviously no hint of Israel in the kingdom. And Israel was going to be a different kind of kingdom.

It wasn't going to have, in God's initial plan, it wasn't going to have a human king. It was going to have God as its king. And they were going to be God-orientated people.

They were going to be towards God, a kingdom of priests. But this is Deuteronomy chapter 11, and in verse 21, you'll see where another picture begins to come through. I'll read from verse 20.

And you shall write them, that's the laws of God, you shall write them upon the doorposts of your house and upon your gates, so that your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon earth. Now, if you're using another version, it might say heaven above earth, and I can't find any reason at all why they should have opted for that particular thing to say upon earth. And I think the natural thrust of this is it's the days of heaven upon earth.

In other words, this is heaven's will, it's heaven's kingdom being worked out on earth. And it has to do with physical reality, it has to do with territory, it has to do with the spreading out of authority. When the Lord Jesus was upon the earth in his own ministry, he really almost kind of reenacted what Joshua did.

And he, as the new Joshua, went into the promised land and subdued it, and began to bring it under the rule of the kingdom of heaven, so that heaven's will was being done, so that the animal kingdom came under heaven's kingdom, heaven's rule, and nature itself, the wind and the waves came under heaven's rule, and demons came under heaven's rule. And what he was really doing was establishing, excuse me, almost the kingdom of heaven on earth at that time. And the other thing is I think this whole picture of the kingdom of heaven, or heaven's kingdom, heaven's authority coming to earth, is one of the key pictures of the Messiah in the New Testament.

It's in the book of Daniel, where on a couple of different occasions it talks about God's will in heaven, he comes with the clouds of heaven, and he comes as the son of man, and he comes to establish God's reign upon the earth. And it's God's reign upon physical things that seems to be most in focus when the scriptures speak about the kingdom of heaven. But the kingdom of God is something which is more inwards.

It's something which has to do with disposition, and it's the rule of God in the heart, not in the external physical realities, not in the external physical realities, but inwardly in the spirit. I won't turn you to those passages in Deuteronomy. But I just want you to draw your attention back in 1 Corinthians chapter 6 to

what it goes on to say there.

Having said this again, that they shall not inherit the kingdom of God, he then makes this wonderful statement. He says, and such were some of you. Notice there's not, and such are some of you, and such were some of you.

Now if you just let your mind, your eye kind of just drift back over that terrible list of conditions of men and women, it really is amazing that Paul should say some of you are like this, some of you were covetous, some of you were effeminate, some of you were catamite, some of you were homosexual, some of you were thieves, some of you were insectual, some of you were like this, this is how you used to be, he says. And such were some of you, and then he says this, but you are washed, and you are sanctified, but you are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God. Now this verse intrigues me, verse 11.

And such were some of you, but you are washed, you are sanctified, you are justified. I don't know whether you're like me, but you expect things to be in some sort of order. You expect things to be kind of fairly neat and tidy.

And if that's the case, I would have expected this verse to have said you are justified, you are sanctified, you are washed. That's the order I would have put these things in. But it puts justification at the end.

And maybe this isn't a puzzle to anybody else here, and nobody else has even kind of noticed it. But to me, the order of this, the build-up, isn't what I would expect, and I'm going to give you one of my kind of explanations for it. But we'll take the first two first.

He says, such were some of you, but you are washed. Now I don't think it's an accident that when priests were consecrated in the time of Israel and Moses, this is Leviticus chapter 8, the first thing that had to happen to the people who were going to become priests, the people who were going to become representative of Israel as a kingdom of priests sent to God, the first thing that happens to them is this. This is Leviticus chapter 8, verse 6 or verse 5. And Moses said to the congregation, this is the thing which the Lord commands to be done.

And Moses brought Aaron and his sons and washed them with water, bathed them. In other words, this is a very thorough washing. The first thing that happened to the priests was that they were bathed.

Well, I suppose if we can read between the lines, probably the first thing that happens to the priests is that their old garments were stripped off. How many teenagers bathe with all their clothes on? This was going to be a very thorough washing. And by implication, all the old things would have been stripped off.

And if you follow on, of course, you'll see that new garments are added to them. The old is stripped away. Now there's this very thorough bathing.

And while we're here in Leviticus so that we don't lose it, if you look at the same chapter in verse 8 and verse 30, you'll see that there were certain rituals that they had to enact. But then this is kind of the next thing that actually happens to the priests. In verse 30, Moses took of the anointing oil and of the blood which was upon the altar and sprinkled it upon Aaron and upon his garments and upon his sons and upon his sons' garments with him and sanctified Aaron.

Now again, in some modern versions, they'd like to say consecrated. That's a pity, really, because consecrated is at the end of this story. This is not consecration, this is sanctification.

Sanctification is when someone is entirely set apart from another purpose, where they're not going to divide their attention. The only purpose they will have is actually to be priests unto God. And to sanctify literally means to cut out of a section and put that section on one side for a particular use.

So the second thing that happened to these priests, in their becoming a kingdom of priests unto God as their representatives for the whole of Israel, the second thing was that they were sanctified. So first they were washed, secondly they were sanctified. The wood consecration is in verse 33.

You shall not go out of the door of the tabernacle of the congregation in seven days until the days of your consecration be at an end. But the Bible word for consecration means something quite different. It actually has to do with filling their hands with bread.

So it has to do with equipping the priests to break the bread of life to people, if you can see the pattern. But the point I want to make is this. The order of washing followed by sanctification is actually the order that Paul uses here in 1 Corinthians.

In chapter 6 and verse 11. And such were some of you. Think in terms of priesthood.

I think priesthood was never very far from Paul's mind actually. When he wrote to the Romans he referred to his evangelism as actually the act of a priest in bringing sacrifices to God. And the idea of being a priest is never very far from the surface of the New Testament.

It's in lots of things that Paul has to say. It's in things that Peter has to say as well. This idea of having become the new people of God, who were set apart to God to be a kingdom of priests unto God, is right the way through the New Testament.

And here you've got this pattern developing again. That first of all, they were washed. Secondly, they were sanctified.

And now then, what about this thirdly, this justified thing? Why should this be here? Well, this is my suggestion. Sometimes in the New Testament, usually when we talk about justification, we're thinking of Paul's language in Romans, when he says things like we're justified by faith. And in that context, it actually is the declaration of the judge that someone is right before him, that the case against them has failed.

My little illustration that I've used often is this phrase from the Pidgin English, which says God, him say me, all right. And although that seems very crude, it really is a perfect illustration of what justification by faith means. That God, the judge, declares someone to be right with him because of their faith in Jesus Christ.

But there's another way that the Bible uses the word justify. And in fact, all the way through the Gospels, and at one place I'll show you in a moment, in the New Testament as well, you'll find that justify is sometimes used in the way that we use it. When we say, well, was I justified in doing this? And we don't mean, was I declared legally righteous in doing this.

We mean, is what I've done, is it genuine? Has it been authenticated? Has it been endorsed? Let me show you what I mean. If you turn to 1 Timothy, chapter 3, 1 Timothy, chapter 3, and verse 69, there are a

few sentences here, a few phrases. And many people think that this was perhaps a very early Christian hymn.

And it may well have been. There's certainly a kind of a rhythm in the words as they're in the original. And this is what it says in verse 16.

And without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness. Then in the King James Version it says this. God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit.

Now what does that mean in this context? Do think about it, brothers and sisters. You know what it means when it says that God was manifested in the flesh. It's talking about the incarnation.

But what does it mean when it says that God was justified in the spirit? It doesn't mean that he was declared righteous by the judge, does it? Is that likely? No, it's usually justified in this other word, in other sense. In other words, it was by the work of the spirit that who he was was authenticated. It was by his works of miracles, by his anointing, that he was declared, he was revealed plainly to be who he said he was.

In other words, his claim to be who he was, the son of God, was not only because he was born in the flesh, that is to say in the incarnation, but because of the work of the spirit which endorsed this truth and made it plain. Now keep that idea in your mind and we'll just go back to it, 1 Corinthians Chapter 6. Okay, verse 11. And such were some of you, but you were washed, and you were sanctified, but you were endorsed, you were authenticated.

In other words, you were acknowledged to be who you were by God. I don't think this is using justification in the Roman sense. I think this is using justification in the other sense.

And then it says this, In or by the name of the Lord Jesus, and in or by the spirit of our God. I just want to kind of draw your attention to the way in which this so great salvation is effected. It's effected by two persons of the Godhead.

I'm not eliminating the Father when I say that. I'm just simply saying that this is, there's a wonderful old hymn we haven't sung for ages now, which has a line in it which says that we are now able to be in God's presence as a result of an advocate divine and the Holy Spirit's energies. In other words, it's as a result of what Jesus Christ did on the cross, and the energizing, the dynamic of the Holy Spirit that salvation is effected.

It's not just a technical thing. What Jesus Christ did has to be made real. It's this old, one of the old Puritans wrote this book called Redemption Accomplished and Applied, and I've never read it because I just enjoy the title.

It's Jesus Christ accomplished redemption, and the Holy Spirit applied redemption. And it's this present tense redemption which is the beginning of the Kingdom of God in a sense, and it has to do with the way they live their lives. They have been washed, they have been sanctified, they have been endorsed as God's people, God's priests, and it's been accomplished by the death of Jesus Christ and by the gift of the Holy Spirit.

I'll read you one more verse of scripture which brings that idea together, and it's in Paul's letter to Titus, Paul's letter to Titus and chapter 3, and I'll read from verse 4. But after that the kindness and love of God

our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us. This is a long sentence, so just let me remind you what it's about. This sentence is about him saving us.

I can manage until the next one. This phrase is all about him saving us, and then it tells us how this salvation is effective, this is what it says. According to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, which he poured upon us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Can you see that in that phrase you've got almost Peter's sermon in the Acts of the Apostles on the day of Pentecost, when he said that what was happening, he said, it's proof that Jesus Christ has accomplished what he came to do, that the Father has exalted him to his own right hand, and that he has now received the Spirit and poured out the Spirit, which you now see and hear. So this double agency of the effective work of Christ, if you like this double work of two advocates, the advocate that we have at the Father's right hand, and the advocate that Jesus promised would come when he said, I will send another advocate, another capital. And our salvation is made real because we have two advocates.

We have one at the Father's right hand, and we have one who continues to make what he did real in our lives.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/Ja144VFo0Hg.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/ron-bailey/church-live-re-visited-session-six-part-2/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net