

The Kingdom and the Church

by Stephen Kaung

The Kingdom of God and the Church are one, and believers must be born of the water and the Spirit to enter into the Kingdom and become living members of the Church.

Duration: 1:13:29

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Matthew 16:18-19, Matthew 28:19-20

Topics: "Discipleship", "The Kingdom"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of discipleship and the Great Commission. He explains that discipleship is not about making followers of ourselves, but rather leading people to Christ and helping them become transformed in His likeness. The Great Commission involves baptizing believers and teaching them to observe all that Jesus commanded. The preacher also highlights the significance of preaching the message of the kingdom and the authority given to Peter in building the church.

Transcript

Will you please turn to the Gospel according to Matthew? Matthew chapter 16. We'll read verse 18 and verse 19. Matthew chapter 16, verses 18 and 19.

This is the word of the Lord. And I also, I say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and Hades' gates shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of the heavens, and whatsoever thou mayest bind upon the earth shall be bound in the heavens, and whatsoever thou mayest loose on the earth shall be loose in the heavens.

Let's have a word of prayer. Dear Lord, we want to thank thee for thy precious promise, where two or three are gathered together unto thy name, there thou art in their midst. We do thank thee for thy presence with us.

And Lord, we pray that thy presence would become so living, so real to us, that we may hear thy voice, that we may do thy will. We do commit this time into thy loving hands, and trust thy Holy Spirit to reveal, open thy word to us. We ask in thy precious name.

These mornings, we gather together before the Lord to consider together on this very important, but most neglected subject in the word of God, and that is the kingdom. The first morning, we consider the kingdom

of God. From eternity to eternity is the kingdom of God, because he rules over all.

And thank God those who are redeemed by the precious blood of our Lord Jesus, they have been translated into the kingdom of God. Therefore, brothers and sisters, even though physically we are in the kingdom of this world, and yet, realistically, spiritually speaking, we do not belong to this world. We have been transferred out of this world and into the kingdom of God.

Now, because we are in the kingdom of God, therefore, it is but right for us to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. And then our Lord Jesus promises us all these things, that is the things that we need in this life, on this earth, shall be added unto us. I do not know, brothers and sisters, how many of us really believe what the Lord has said.

Mentally, we all accept it, but in actual living, do we really believe that if we seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, if we seek to do his will, to do what is right in his eyes, then all these things that we need will be added unto us. What a blessed life this will be, and this is the way that our Lord wants us to live. Then, the second morning, we consider together on this matter of the kingdom of the heavens.

It is a very special term used almost exclusively in the gospel according to Matthew. The kingdom of the heavens is a part of the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is from eternity to eternity, but the kingdom of the heavens is especially referred to that section in the kingdom of God, from the first coming of our Lord Jesus to the second coming of our Lord Jesus, when he shall come to set up his kingdom of the heavens upon this earth.

So, brothers and sisters, we understand that the kingdom of the heavens is especially related to us believers. Thank God we are in the kingdom of the heavens today, but whether we are really living in the kingdom of the heavens, that is another question. All who believe in the Lord are positionally already in the kingdom of the heavens, but when you come to real living, unfortunately, some are not living as sons and daughters of the kingdom of the heavens.

But thank God, there are those who do violence to themselves in order to seize on it. I understand that some brothers and sisters feel confused about the word violence, because ordinarily we relate the word violence to something evil, but actually the word violence is a neutral word. It depends to what you are associated with.

It can be very good, it can be very bad, just like love and hate. These are just expressions, neutral in themselves. It depends upon the way that you use it.

If you love the wrong thing, that's evil. If you hate the right thing, that's good. And so is the word violence.

We should never do violence to other people. In the world, in the kingdom of this world, there is enough violence everywhere. That's the sign of this world, and the sign of this hour.

But thank God, there is a violence that our Lord Jesus even encourages us to do. Not to do violence to other people, but to be violent to ourselves. We realize that in ourselves, there is no good.

Anything that comes out of the natural, of the flesh, of the whole creation in us, these are the things that are utterly rejected by God. And in like manner, he wants us to reject them. Naturally we all are kind, loving to ourselves.

We want to please ourselves, to gratify ourselves. But spiritually, the Lord calls us to deny ourselves. And deny again is a very strong word.

It all depends upon whom you deny. Simon Peter denied the wrong person. He should deny himself, instead of denying the Lord.

And how often, that is the way that we do. Our Lord Jesus said, if anyone comes to me, let him deny himself. Take up his cross and follow me.

If we do not do that, we are not worthy to be his disciples. So dear brothers and sisters, I hope we will take this word in the right way, and we will do the right thing. Now this morning, we would like to consider together, on this matter of the kingdom and the church.

Our Lord Jesus, at the border of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, what they will say about him, the Son of Man. And his disciples tried to give him all the good comments, even though they must have heard lots of damaging words. But they won't say that.

So they said, now you are like Elijah, that great prophet. You are like Jeremiah, the weeping one, because you are a man of sorrow and acquainted with grief. You are the prophet that Moses prophesied in Deuteronomy, that God will raise up one among them like him.

And whoever does not listen to him shall perish, or you are just one of the prophets. Thank God our Lord Jesus was not satisfied. So he turned to his disciples again and said, now what do you think that I am? You who have been with me for these years, you should know me, who I am.

Thank God Simon Peter said, you are the Christ, the Messiah, the anointed one, the one with a mission, sent by God to fulfill. And you are the Son of the Living God. That's what you are.

What a revelation. And our Lord Jesus said, Simon Peter, you are blessed. Because this is not something that the flesh and blood can tell you.

It is the Father who is in heaven, who has revealed it to you. Dear brothers and sisters, we do thank God. God has revealed his Son to us.

Just like the Apostle Paul said, it pleases God to reveal his Son in me. And God has done that to us. We are certainly a blessed people, a most happy people.

But immediately following it, our Lord Jesus began to give the disciples a new revelation. The Father has revealed the Son to them. Now the Son is to reveal something more.

A mystery that has been hidden throughout the ages. A mystery in the heart of God, from the very beginning, even before the foundation of the world. God has that mystery in him.

But it has never been revealed. And the Lord Jesus said, you are Peter. You are a little stone on this rock, on this massive rock, I will build my church.

And the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. Dear brothers and sisters, the greatest revelation is the revelation of the Father concerning his Son. And next to it is the revelation of the church revealed by the Son to us.

The Lord said, I will build my church. On this rock, he is the rock, there is no other foundation but the foundation of our Lord Jesus. But we are all as living stones built upon him, to be the church, the house of God, the body of Christ, the bride of the bridegroom.

And the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. The so-called church that we know today, Christianity, we have found that the gates of Hades has prevailed against it. But the church that our Lord Jesus himself built, the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

How glorious is that church. Then immediately following in the next verse, our Lord Jesus said, I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of the heavens. Whoever you shall bind shall be bound in heaven.

Whoever you shall loose shall be loosened in heaven. So dear brothers and sisters, immediately you see the connection between the church and the kingdom. There is a very close association between these two things, the kingdom and the church.

So by the mercy of God, this morning we would like to consider together, searching the scripture and see what are the relationship between the church and the kingdom, the kingdom and the church. This morning we would like to consider four viewpoints. Number one, the kingdom and the church are one.

Number two, the kingdom is bigger, greater than the church. Number three, the kingdom builds the church. Number four, the church brings in the kingdom.

When you think of the kingdom, especially in relation to the church, we are thinking mostly of the kingdom of the heavens, because this is the part in the kingdom of God that is especially related to us believers. We find there are similarities between these two. How do we enter into the kingdom? How do we enter into the kingdom of God? How do we become a part of the kingdom of the heavens? You remember in John chapter 3, in the conversation our Lord Jesus had with Nicodemus.

He came to our Lord at night. He was a Pharisee, a ruler of the people. Most likely an old man, a teacher, very moral, very religious and not like the other Pharisees, they are hypocritical.

He was real. He was humble. He wanted to see the Lord and to be helped by the Lord.

He couldn't come at daytime because it was too obvious, but he came in the night. He respected the Lord. You are a teacher from heaven.

Your teaching is different. I come to you for you to teach me. Now our Lord Jesus knows the heart of man right away.

He said, verily, verily, I say unto you, except you are born from above, you cannot see the kingdom of God. The Lord knows what is in the heart of Nicodemus. He knew that Nicodemus was a seeker for the kingdom of God and most likely Nicodemus thought he was almost there.

He just needed a little more teaching, a little more help, then he will be in the kingdom of God. But how wrong he was. Our Lord Jesus said, except you are born from above, born again, you cannot even see the kingdom of God.

You haven't seen it. Nicodemus was puzzled. How can a man being old and be born again? Can he go back to mother's womb and come back out again? Even if you can do that, you are still born from beneath.

Nothing changed. So our Lord Jesus explained to him, said, verily, verily, I say unto you, unless you are born of the water and of the Spirit, you cannot enter into the kingdom of God. Why the water? We know we are born of the Spirit because immediately the Lord said, he that is born of the Spirit is spirit.

We are born of the Holy Spirit into a new spirit, a spirit that is in touch with God. But our Lord Jesus said to Nicodemus, you must be born of water and of Spirit, because there is a background there. John the Baptist was preaching, repent, for the kingdom of the heavens has drawn nigh, and he baptized people.

And this water of baptism that John baptized people with is the baptism of repentance, a preparation for the coming King. So our Lord Jesus said, you must be born of water and of Spirit. The Pharisees refused that water because they did not think they needed to repent.

But our Lord Jesus said, you do. You have to accept what John the Baptist preached, repent, and then the Spirit of God will give birth to your dead spirit. So we know that people who are coming into the kingdom of God is through new birth.

You are born into the kingdom of God, into the kingdom of the heavens. Now likewise, when you look at the church, in John chapter 1 verses 12 and 13, the light of life has already come into this world. If you receive Him, that is if you believe in His name, then you will be given authority to be the children of God, born not of flesh, not of man's will, not of flesh will, but of God.

Brothers and sisters, how do we become the children of God? How do we come into the household, the family of God? How we become a member of the body of Christ? There is only one way. You have to be born into it. The church has no way to be joined except by new birth.

You can join an association, a join an organization, a religious organization, even call a church. But the real church, the only way to enter into the church is by being born into it. So when you think of the way of entering into the kingdom and entering into the church, they are the same.

You must be born from above. When you come into the reality, how do you really live in the kingdom? Or how do you live in the church? A living member, a functioning member in the church, you'll find they are the same. Because so far as the kingdom is concerned, we have already mentioned that we must do violence to ourselves.

Then we are really living in the kingdom of the heavens. But when you come to this matter of really being a living member of the body of Christ, to really be united with your brothers and sisters in the body, and to really minister to one another, you'll find there is a condition. And the condition is you have to hold fast the head.

In Colossians chapter 2, hold fast the head. Then the whole body will be united together and minister one to another, and increase with the increase of God. In other words, if you're really living in the kingdom of the heavens today, you must be under the authority of the king.

Likewise, if you're really living as a member of the body of Christ, you must be under the headship of Christ. That's the only way you can live livingly, really in the church. So you'll find that they are the same.

Then you'll find in Ephesians chapter 2, we are told verse 19, so then you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but you are fellow citizens of the saints, and of the household of God. Here we are told, we who have believed in the Lord Jesus, we are no longer strangers and foreigners. So far as the world is

concerned, so far as the kingdom of this world is concerned, we are strangers and foreigners.

But so far as the kingdom of God, and the church of God is concerned, we are no longer strangers and foreigners. Strangers refer to we are the household. We are in the family, and because we are in the family, we are no longer strangers.

Even though we may meet the first time, immediately you'll find there's a bond within us. We are no longer strangers. We are of the household of God.

And the same thing is true. We are no longer foreigners, aliens in the kingdom of the heavens. We are fellow citizens.

We belong to our King. We obey our King. So brothers and sisters, if you look from such viewpoint, you can see that the kingdom and the church, they are one.

They are one thing of two sides. When you think of the kingdom, you think of authority, of government, of kingship, of rule, because He is our King. When you think of the church, you think of life, of love, of fellowship, of unity.

These are the things, the two sides of the one thing. So brothers and sisters, you are both in the church, and you're both in the kingdom of the heavens. They are one.

Number two, the kingdom is bigger than the church. When you think of the kingdom of God, it is from eternity to eternity. There is the kingdom of God.

Not only in the beginning when God created the universe and the angels, there was harmony then. Not only after God created man in the garden of Eden, there is the kingdom of God. Even after man rebelled, we find that God began to look upon certain persons, and in these particular persons, the kingdom of God rests.

And then, out of the family of Abraham, race of a nation, representing the kingdom of God upon this earth. And then also in the church age, the church represents the kingdom of God on this earth in our age. And this will continue on to eternity.

But the church began on the day of Pentecost. It is not from eternity. In the mind of God, yes.

It began with a time. Even though it continues on to eternity. When you think even of the kingdom of the heavens in comparison with the church, you will find they are different in certain areas.

Why? Because the kingdom of the heavens today has an outward appearance, which you find in Matthew chapter 13. We mentioned that yesterday. It is a mystery to the world.

But the world does know there is something there. But they are confused, because it is a confused picture. What they can see is the outward appearance.

Like a big tree. Huge institution. Powerful.

Influential in this world. But the evil comes and dwells in it. Like the leaven.

Leaven up. Puff up. Corrupt it.

But the church cannot be like that. You know, sometimes people apply the parables in Matthew 13 to the church. You will find great difficulty.

Because in the church there can be no leaven. The bible said purge out the old leaven. Because it is a new meal of flour.

Offer to God. There should be no leaven in it. The church is like a little flock.

The hidden ones on this earth. Not like a big, huge organization, institution. So brothers and sisters, in the kingdom of the heavens today, so far as an outward appearance is concerned, you find that there can be mixture.

But in the church, no mixture. The leaven must be purged out. Sin must be judged.

It is pure and holy to God. So you find that there are differences. Even though there are similarities.

Now, we mention these things just to clear up maybe some confusion. But these are not the things we want to dwell upon. What we would really like to consider very carefully is how does the kingdom build the church? And how does the church bring in the kingdom? Brothers and sisters, we know that the church is built with two essential things.

One is life. The other is authority. If there is no life, there is no material, raw material for the building of the church.

But if there is life and no authority, no discipline, life can never grow into maturity or be built up together. Therefore you find the kingdom builds the church. Our Lord Jesus said, you are Peter, a stone.

He was Simon before. He was made of dust and will return to dust. But because of his confession of our Lord Jesus, you are the Christ, the son of the living God.

A change come into his life. A new life has entered into him. He is changed from Simon to Peter, a stone.

A different element has come into his life. It is the life of Christ in him. But he is still a raw stone.

You remember Peter himself in 1 Peter chapter 2. Say when we come to Christ, we are all become living stones. Thank God we are living stones, not dead stones. We have that life of Christ in us.

We are living stones. And all these living stones are being built up together into a spiritual house. But for the living stones to really be built into the spiritual house, that living stone has to be transformed into a precious stone.

All the dirt, all the other things has to be purified. You know as something that is hidden under the earth, in darkness, with fire, with heat, with pressure. After many many years, it becomes precious stone.

All the natural elements in Simon Peter has to be purified. Only Peter can be a material for the building of the house of God. Thank God the Lord said you are Peter.

But we find that Simon is still there. You remember our Lord Jesus said, Simon, Simon, Satan wants to seek you, but I pray for you. When your faith is recovered, help your brethren.

So brothers and sisters, this is the way we are. We have the life of Christ in us. But unfortunately, our old nature, our flesh is still there.

There are so much in us that are foreign to the body of Christ. That cannot be built into the body of Christ. All these things need to be purified, tested.

We'll be tempted until all these things will fall away. And at the same time, positively, the Holy Spirit will build within us the character of Christ. Making us living precious stones.

Worthy to be built into that spiritual house. Now in that process, you need authority. The authority of God.

The authority of the Holy Spirit. The discipline from above. And with these two things going on, you'll find the house will be built.

This will go on not only in our personal, individual lives. It will go on corporately, together. How can we fit in one with another? Even the gold has to be beaten into the form of the lampstand.

Brothers and sisters, of course this is the work of the Holy Spirit. But it is based on the authority of God. And working in that life from above.

We are all familiar with the Great Commission. Matthew chapter 28. Our Lord Jesus gave to his disciples a Great Commission.

But brothers and sisters, I'm afraid our understanding of that Great Commission is not complete. Yes, we take the Great Commission to evangelize the world. Sure, we need to evangelize the world.

But that is not all the Great Commission says. You remember when our Lord Jesus gave the Great Commission? He began with all power, all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go.

In other words, the Great Commission is based upon the authority and the power of our Lord Jesus. Without that authority, without that power, that Great Commission cannot be accomplished. But with that power, the Lord said you go.

Go in my authority, in my power. Now what are you going to do when you go? The Lord does not say evangelize the nation. The Lord said disciple the nations.

There is a great difference here. Often times we make evangelism as the end of the Commission. But it actually is only the beginning.

What the Lord is after is the church. Not just bringing people out of hell into heaven. He wants the church.

And in order to have the church built, He said disciple all nations. You go out to disciple all nations. As you are disciplined to me in like manner, help other people to be disciplined to me.

To come under my kingship, under my authority. Allow me to work out my purpose in your life, disciplining you, completing you. That is the Great Commission.

Some people ask our dear brother Watchman Lee, how many disciples do you have? Our Lord, our brother said, none. We are not to disciple people to ourselves. We are to disciple people to Christ.

That they may learn Christ. That they may be transformed, changed into His likeness. Not our likeness.

We are but an instrument. Not the end. So the Great Commission is, go, disciple all nations.

When will that discipleship begin? It begins with baptism. Baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. And then teach them to observe, to keep, to do all the things that I have enjoined you.

And I will be with you to the end of the age. Brothers and sisters, some people said, if I believe in the Lord Jesus, isn't that enough? Why should I be baptized? The water cannot wash away my sins. It is the blood of our Lord Jesus that washes my sin away.

So why should I be baptized? There is a reason. Because baptism is the door to discipleship. You know what baptism is? Going into the water.

Death. Death to the world. Death to the past.

Dead to yourself. To the flesh. The old life.

Dead. Dead. Under the water.

Buried. Not only dead but out of sight. Out of the water.

Resurrection. Raised together with Christ. No longer I. Christ who lives in me.

Brothers and sisters, that is baptism. Unless we deny ourselves. Unless we look ourselves as dead and we don't want to see Him anymore and we begin to live in newness of life.

That's the time when our Lord Jesus is able to disciple us. Otherwise we won't listen. We are not in the position to learn.

Baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Then they are ready to be taught. All that the Lord has enjoined us.

Not just to learn mentally but to observe. To do them. Then the Lord said, I will be with you to the end of the age.

So brothers and sisters, why? Why? Because the Lord is building His church. He said, I will build my church. And this is the way He will build His church.

Dear brothers and sisters, the church has existed for over two thousand years and sadly so little is really built. It is not finished yet. Why? Because we haven't found the secret to the building of the church.

The keys to the building of the church. We say Peter was given the keys of the kingdom of the heavens. And we say he used that key once on the day of Pentecost to the Jews.

And the second time in the house of Cornelius to the Gentiles. Because the church is one. Baptized in the Spirit into one body.

Whether Jews or Gentiles. And the drink of one Spirit. Peter used that key of the kingdom of the heavens to build the church.

When you look at the message Peter gave on the day of Pentecost. And also at the message he gave in the house of Cornelius. It is a full gospel.

It is the gospel of the kingdom. The one whom you have slain, God has raised him up. And he is now seated in the above.

Anointed to be Lord and Christ. That's the kingdom message. And when he spoke in the house of Cornelius, even though he didn't finish, he was not able to finish his long-winged servant.

He was cut up by the Holy Spirit. But when he began to say, God has raised Jesus up to be the judge of all nations. That's the kingdom message.

The reason why the church is not built today is because we do not preach and emphasize the kingdom. People reject authority. When you mention the word authority, people's heads get big.

But brothers and sisters, because authority has been abused. We greatly suffer under wrong authorities. But there is authority.

That comes from God. And that is the key to the building of the house. And finally, the church brings in the kingdom.

Isn't that wonderful? The church is the vessel of God. To bring in the kingdom. How does the church bring in the kingdom? We already said.

In the very beginning, we should proclaim, preach the gospel of the kingdoms to the nations as a witness to all the people. And then the end will come. More than that, we also mention, we need to pray, thy kingdom come.

We must stand with God. God's heart is that his kingdom will come. And if you know God's heart, you want to stand with him and pray together with him.

May thy kingdom come. Let thy kingdom come. But not only that, the church itself has to be built until it becomes a glorious church without spot or wrinkle of any sort, fit to be the bride.

Then the bridegroom will come and receive the bride and set up his kingdom upon this earth. One day, Brother Sparks asked Watchman Lee, what do you think is the hardest thing in the Bible to be fulfilled? And our brother's answer is Ephesians chapter 5. Until the church becomes a glorious church, fit for the bridegroom, then the end will come. Brothers and sisters, it is not the bridegroom who does not want to come and claim his bride.

It is the bride not ready. This is our responsibility. We who have received so much, we have a great responsibility.

If we do not grow, if we do not take up the character of Christ, if we do not take up the cross and follow the Lord, if our spiritual condition is not matured, until we come to the measure of the fullness of the statue of Christ, then brothers and sisters, the kingdom will be delayed. That is the way to bring in the kingdom. But unfortunately, from what we can see, it seems as if it is further and further.

But thank God, He has a way. And that is the way of the overcomers. In Revelation chapter 2 and 3, when the church is defeated, when the church degenerated, departed, the Lord calls for overcomers.

He who has ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit said to the churches. He that overcomes. In other words, when there is general declination, God's purpose cannot be defeated.

He is calling a remnant, overcomers, to overcome the degeneration, the departure, and be faithful to what the Spirit says. And to them, the kingdom will be brought in. You remember Romans chapter 8. The whole creation is groaning.

The whole creation is under corruption, under bondage. They are not happy about it. They are groaning.

Why? It is because of man. The fall of man caused our universe to fall into corruption. Everything is decaying.

Everything has lost its purpose. It is because of the fall of man. They are groaning, waiting for liberation.

When? They are waiting for the manifestations of the sons. In other words, God's people are no longer babes. They become sons and daughters, grown up.

And when the sons of God are manifested, the whole universe will be restored. The kingdom come upon this earth. So, you remember our Lord Jesus? He is to lead many sons into glory.

He is the captain of the host. He is the courser of our eternal salvation. So, dear brothers and sisters, we have a great responsibility.

In the beginning, God gave that to man to have dominion over all things, subdue all things. But man failed. Now Christ has come.

He has overcome. God has put all things under his feet to the church, which is his body. The fullness of him who fills all and in all.

The victory of Christ over all things is to the church, that the church may also subdue all things. Subdue in what way? Not by converting the world, but by overcoming. When God's people overcome the world, then the world will become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ.

So, dear brothers and sisters, it is important. We cannot afford not to be diligent. We have to seek and press on.

Because our Lord has great hope. Oh Lord, how thou long to come back to claim thy bride. How thou long to come back and get thy kingdom.

Pray Lord, that thou will give us the same longing and the same willingness to lay down ourselves and allow thee to work out thy salvation. We ask in thy precious name.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/8/SID8437.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/stephen-kaung/the-kingdom-and-the-church/>

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