

The Kingdom is Within

by Steve Gallagher

This sermon delves into the theme of the kingdom of heaven in the book of Matthew, emphasizing the importance of understanding its significance. It explores the Sermon on the Mount as the Magna Carta of the kingdom, highlighting the radical transformation required to enter the kingdom. The sermon discusses the authority structure within the kingdom, the need for a complete surrender to God's will, and the distinct value system of the kingdom that surpasses worldly standards.

Scripture: Matthew 4:23, Matthew 5:3, Matthew 5:20, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 7:21, Matthew 13:44, Matthew 13:18

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Description

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Transcript

on the book I wrote and getting ready for the conference and stuff, but off and on studying in Matthew. And one of the main themes that stands out in Matthew is the kingdom of heaven. And Matthew called it the kingdom of heaven because that's the way the Jews called it.

They didn't call it the kingdom of God. You never said the name God or whatever, so they just called it the kingdom of heaven, and that book's written to Jews. So that's why it's called the kingdom of heaven in the book of Matthew.

And it starts off pretty early. In chapter 4, Matthew says that Jesus was going throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom. And the first teaching that we see from the Lord is the Sermon on the Mount, which has been called the Magna Carta of the kingdom.

I'm not sure if someone else made that up or if I did. It could have been me. Wow, what a great statement.

I mean, if you study the Sermon on the Mount, you cannot get away from the kingdom of God. It's mentioned nine times in there, but it's not so much how many times it's mentioned, it's the way that it's mentioned and where it's talked about. It's twice in the opening and once in the conclusion and six times in the body of the sermon.

And of course, how does it begin? The Sermon on the Mount. Blessed are the poor in spirit, right? For theirs is what? The kingdom. And those beatitudes are describing the character of people who are part of that kingdom.

And then you get down to verse 20 in chapter five. And Jesus said, for I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. Their righteousness was all, what? On their sleeve.

I mean, it was outward, it was image, it was what other people thought of them. And this is a very key verse in the Sermon on the Mount. Because throughout the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus is comparing the Torah, the Old Testament law, and the way that the traditions had taught it, the Pharisees down through the years and so on.

So he keeps saying, you have heard that it was said such and such, but I say unto you, and he takes it to a deeper level. He takes it into their heart. And, you know, by the way, in the Torah, it was always meant to go into the heart.

It was never meant to just be an outward thing of behavior. It was always meant to be something that consumed a person's inward life. You know, the greatest commandment is right there in the Torah.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind, as we heard last week. That comes out of the law and is that heart that God longed to see in his people. But they, as is so often the case today in the church, want to keep God at arm's length out of the inward life.

They wanted to keep it to just outward behavior. And Jesus is saying, if your righteousness is nothing but outward behavior, you won't even enter the kingdom of God. Now, the title of my message is The Kingdom is Within.

And, you know, there's one more word after that, right? Who knows what it is? And why didn't I say it? Huh? Say it loud like you mean it. Maybe not. And, you know, let me just paint this picture of what happened that day.

Jesus is hanging out with his disciples, right? And the Pharisees come up, and one of them, they were always looking for a way to discredit Jesus in front of other people. And so one of them, kind of in a sneering tone, probably, says, and when is this kingdom coming? And now, this is conjecture, okay? I'm not saying this is fact. I'm saying it could have happened this way.

I kind of think it did. Jesus says, and I think that when he answered, he turned to his disciples. He says, the kingdom of God does not come with observation.

In other words, it's not the outward. And I think he was probably like, it's not the outward. Looking at his disciples, pointing at these Pharisees, nor will they say, see here or see there.

And then looking right at his beloved, well, 11 of them anyway, disciples, he said, for indeed, the kingdom of God is within you. Let's say it could have happened that way. What do you think? Chance? The word kingdom in Greek is basilium, and the way it's used is just simply describing God's rule over man.

That's the way the word is used in the Bible, in the New Testament. And it is true that there is an outward kingdom. You know, it's true.

I mean, there's multitudes down through the centuries of people who've come into the kingdom of God. And so in that sense, you've got all these human beings that make up that multitude. There's a multitude in the world today, not nearly what people think it is, but there is a multitude scattered around the world, every tribe, as we heard the other day.

So there is an outward kingdom. But primarily, when the Lord talks about it, it's something within people. You know, and you've heard the illustration, usually used in a different sense, but the bottle, you throw it into the sea, and the sea, it's in the sea, and the sea is in it.

Right? How many of you have heard that illustration? You guys need to listen to some more. Now, let me tell you this. When the kingdom of God comes within, something powerful happens.

Something powerful happens. And I hope by the time I'm done, you'll believe that. And when something powerful happens in a person, and something powerful happens into another person, and something powerful happens into another person, and another, and another, and another, and you start gathering those people together, I'm telling you, there is, well, I know what it is.

It's the life of God emanating from that group. It's the life of God, and for some reason, people are attracted to that. I mean, even demoniacs were attracted to it.

You ever notice that in the gospel, how often they would come? You would think they'd be running as far from Jesus as they could, but there was something in them that was attracted to what they were sensing there. And so, you know, take a typical good church. There are good churches in America.

There's some out there. And, you know, when you have a good church, you have a godly pastor, and you have a godly core of believers, right? And so there's something there that's real, and people come in because they're attracted to what they're hearing about, what they sense there, and so on. But here's the deal.

Not everybody who comes in actually comes into the kingdom. So some do. Some get so affected by what they see that they come all the way in.

Others stay outside of that core, that kingdom culture. They like the feel of it. That kingdom culture influences you.

It will affect your life. It will, yeah, affect the way that you live your life. But that doesn't mean you come all the way in.

And so what happens, now bear with me here, because this is kind of difficult to explain, all right? It'll make sense more as we go, but I'm going to try to explain this the way it came to me when I was studying the other day. You listening to me back there, Carla? Don't be sleeping, Carla, because I will call you out on it. The reality is there is a kingdom culture, and then there's a subculture.

Think of a city with suburbs, okay? That's a good way to think of it. But over time, and some cities, you know, if I was any kind of a preacher, I would have taken the time to find a city as an example, but I'm a so-so preacher, so you just have to bear with me. But some cities, you know, become very, you know, you have the population there, but the suburbs become enormous.

Los Angeles, see, there I came up with it. Los Angeles, miles. I mean, if you've never been to LA, let me tell you, to drive from one end to the other of the city area, I don't know how many miles that is.

A hundred miles, maybe, I don't know. It's enormous, but the actual city limits isn't that big, you know. But anyway, now I just did what you were talking about, Glenn.

Glenn was telling me last night he'll chase a rabbit trail and then forget what he was talking about. I said to him, that's just because you're old, Glenn. What am I talking about? All right.

There's a culture and there is a subculture, and what happens is the subculture becomes bigger than the culture. And then outsiders look at the subculture and they say, that's Christianity. And they look at the actual kingdom culture, and to them, it looks like some weird offshoot.

They turn the thing completely upside down, and that is not the way it is. See, I recovered, Glenn. Take note of how I did that.

You can use it in the future. Jesus talked about it with the parable of the wheat and the tares, for instance. He said, the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field.

All right. So, he talks about wheat and tares growing up together, right? And he says, don't mess with trying to get the tares out. We'll deal with that in Judgment Day.

And that is exactly what we see in our day and age. What we see is a subculture that has become the organized religion of the church. It has become one of the great religions of the world.

Put it right up there with Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, whatever-ism. Christianity, the subculture of Christianity. And it's got its own culture.

And I dare, or dare, that's not the right word. What's the word? I, huh? I venture, thank you. I venture to say, what was I saying? I don't know.

It was really good. This subculture, it has its own legal system, for instance. And what I mean by that is the kingdom has its legal system, its rules, its commandments, and so on.

Well, the subculture has its legal system. It's based off of this one. But what they do is they take this legal system in the real kingdom culture, and they bring it over here, and they explain away half of what's said in there.

They water it down. They pick out a few things, outward rules, commandments that they can obey. Don't get drunk.

Don't murder. Yeah, I can do that. They pick out a few that they can obey, and they just minimize and whitewash the rest of them.

I mean, you just take a look at what Jesus said about lust. It would be better to pluck out your eye than to go to hell. How many times have you heard that explained away? I'll tell you one thing.

I will never explain away the words of my savior. He said what he meant, and he meant what he said, and we better take it seriously. So it has its own legal system, but it's not quite the same as the legal system in the real kingdom.

It has its own ethics, you know. Oh, we don't believe in homosexuality. We don't believe in pornography.

We stand against abortion. We stand for, you know, it's basically just social conservatism, really, with a Christian veneer over the face of it. That's really all it is.

Sean Hannity could be the leading preacher of this. People like that. It has its own advocates, preachers, writers, radio hosts, publishing houses, radio stations, all part of this grand subculture that has become enormous with millions in it.

Jesus said, but only a few will find their way onto the narrow path. How different is the true kingdom of God? So different. When the kingdom of God penetrates your heart, it overthrows your own kingdom, and it completely changes your life.

So I want to consider the true kingdom here for a little bit, and as I want to do, I'm going to give three points. I do this just because it irritates Glenn, you know. He doesn't like my three-point sermons, so I make sure I come up with one every time I preach.

I'm just kidding. All right, number one. This is the first aspect.

You know, there's many things, actually, I could bring out. I've studied this a lot over the years, but I'll just pull three out because we only have time for three. So let me give three of these that I think are important.

Number one, the kingdom has an entrance. In fact, Peter talked about an abundant entrance into the kingdom. Wow, I would like that, an abundant entrance into the kingdom.

And so we see it right there in the first time it's mentioned in the book of Matthew. Jesus' first recorded words as a preacher, repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. You know, the kingdom is around, you know.

It's like you come to a church where there's kingdom people there. What's the first thing you should do? I just explained it. Why can't you guys figure this out, huh? Repent.

Okay, come on, repent. I know you knew what I was... In other words, you know, the word repentance in the Greek is metanoia, and it means a change of mind, a change of thinking. In the Old Testament, it's a different word, and it means more of change in your behavior, like doing a 180 in your behavior.

You return to the Lord. That's how repentance is described in the Old Testament. You put the two together, and that's it.

That's what a conversion looks like. But anyway, Jesus is talking about something has to happen. When you come into the kingdom, there is going to be a completely different mindset inside you.

It's not a slight little alteration in your life, you know, just kind of an add-on. No, it is a complete change. Instead of living for self, you start meeting the needs of others.

Instead of seeing yourself as the center of the entire universe, you start seeing God as the center. Instead of being all concerned about your ego and your rights and protecting yourself, you start actually thinking about the rights of other people. And the Beatitudes describe, actually, the Beatitudes describe the entrance into the kingdom, you know.

It begins with poverty, which describes coming to an end of the self-life, coming to the place of throwing up the white flag. I mean, you know, it's not like you are suddenly sinless and perfection or something. Not that.

But it is like you come to a place where you've had it. I'm done being in control of my own life. All I've done is make a wreck of myself.

And the next is mourning. Mourning describes deep remorse that you experience, that you feel over the sin, the rebellion, how many people you've hurt, how you've hurt God, how you've offended God, the remorse. Have you ever experienced that kind of deep remorse, man? But if you do, then you come into meekness.

And meekness is describing true submission to God's authority. That's what it's describing. And when that happens, that's the revolution right there.

That's where you get saved, right there. I mean, it's through those steps. And then come out of that is a hunger and a thirst for righteousness.

How many of you ever had a hunger and a thirst for righteousness before you came here? A hunger and thirst for righteousness is just a way of describing a powerful desire inside you to please God. And then also what comes out of it is mercy. Mercy.

Instead of living for yourself, you start wanting. Something comes up, welling up from within that makes you want to go out and help people, do good deeds to people, help others, and do stuff for other people. You know, why is that? Because Jesus is inside.

And he's just doing what he does, goes about doing good. That's what it said about Jesus. If he's inside you, he's going to come out of you.

Purity of heart is just describing the cleansing of all the idols out of your inward life. This is the character of a kingdom citizen. And when that person has encounters the world, the people of the world, the world's response is persecution.

Persecution. Because there's something in your life, something emanating from you, something about, you don't have to say a word, people come under conviction. I can't tell you how many times, just, well, I won't go into it, but people just think that I'm, like, judging them or something.

I'm like, I'm just sitting here. Nothing. Not having a single thought like that, but they just, you know, there's something about the life of God in a person that just affects other people.

You know, and throughout scripture, the entrance into the kingdom is depicted as a radical departure from the old lifestyle, a radical embracing of God's laws and principles, a radical transformation of character. Now, the subculture of American Christianity does not expect any such radical transformation. It doesn't expect that.

In fact, if you have that happen to you and you go in a typical American church, you are going to be persecuted because most of the people in that church don't know the Lord and they don't like that kind of what? Conviction. So let me just take a second and describe the conversion experience, okay? Because there's actually steps to it or different aspects to it. This will be just quick.

It begins with conviction of sin and the fear of God. That's usually where it begins. You start, you know, like, okay, so you've got a church, a good church, good core of kingdom citizens.

Joe Blow comes in from outside, you know, he comes to that church and he starts feeling conviction about sin, like he never felt this before, you know? And fear starts, you know, coming up inside him a little bit about displeasing God or whatever. And as he is around that kingdom, his eyes start becoming open to what's really happening, you know? He's seeing the light, as they say. I saw the light.

And then, now I'm describing now a person who comes all the way in, who really gets saved, comes into poverty of spirit, as I've just described, repentance. And this is important, a transference of faith, okay? We go through life with faith in ourselves. And every human being has that.

The only person they really believe and believe in is themselves. I mean, they can call themselves Christian, but that doesn't mean that they really have that kind of faith in God. Their faith is in themselves and they go to church, and they believe the Bible stories.

You know, they believe in some sort of academic way that, yeah, that happened, Jesus was really there, and there's a God, and they believe that stuff in their heads. But faith is something much deeper and much more powerful than that. Faith is dependence.

And if you look, study the word pisteo in the Greek, and you'll see what I mean. You cannot get away from the fact that it is more than head knowledge. It's more than just a belief in something.

There's a transference of faith from self to God, a dependence on the Lord, and that's the rebirth. And then, of course, out of that comes sanctification and the fruit that will definitely come forth when you get saved. But the problem is, okay, so here's all those steps.

The problem is many people experience the first two things, well, three things, conviction of sin, fear of the Lord, and spiritual enlightenment. Their eyes become open to the kingdom, and they become aware of things, and that's where most people think they got saved. But that's not salvation.

That's not conversion. That's having your eyes open. They start seeing that God is trying to work in their lives.

They think they're saved, but they're not saved. They're not converted until they come into poverty of spirit, until they lay down their arms, until they surrender to God and submit themselves to his authority. That's what conversion is.

Now, those are just people who hang around the kingdom. You could say their minds have been converted, but their souls have not. Their hearts haven't.

All right, number two, the kingdom has an authority structure. Okay, we know that God is on his throne in heaven, but it's not just there. He's also enthroned in the hearts of people who belong to him, and there's a little picture of it in Isaiah where the Lord says, heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool.

Where then is a house you could build for me? And then he says this, but to this one I will look, and that word look in the Hebrew means to pay close attention to, to esteem whatever is being looked at. It's being looked at in a special sort of way. It's not like just a glance at something or whatever.

It's really admiring, looking at something. This one I will look to him who is humble and contrite of spirit and who trembles at my word. That is poverty of spirit, and that is a picture of the almighty becoming enthroned in the heart of someone who really does come to a conversion.

There's an authority structure, and you know, everyone has a throne in their heart, and whoever is on that throne is going to call the shots in your life, and whoever's on that throne is going to direct your thoughts, your words, and your actions, and whoever's on that throne is going to be the one that is going to lead you into the hereafter. You know, to enter into the kingdom of God, there must be a renouncing, a renunciation of self-determination. We think we have the right to decide for ourselves what we're going to do with our lives, how, you know, decisions we're going to make, and oh yeah, we go to church on Sunday, and we'll obey a few of these outward rules, but that's not the kingdom of God.

The kingdom of God, when he sets up his throne in a person's heart, there is a new king. The old king has been booted out, and there's a new king in control. Let me read this Adam Clark quote.

Jesus Christ never saved a soul which he did not govern. He never saved a soul which he did not govern, and he went on to say, but why is it called the kingdom of heaven? Because God designed that his kingdom of grace here should resemble the kingdom of glory above, and hence, our Lord teaches us to pray, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. It's a great prayer for yourself even.

Thy will be done in my heart. Thy will be done in my life as it is in heaven, Lord. All right, you know, we're still talking somewhat out of the Sermon on the Mount, and getting to the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount, and by the way, you know, in there also is, we all know Matthew 6 33, right? Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you, but there in the last, as he's wrapping it up, and he has those vignettes at the end, one of them, he says this in chapter 7 21, not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter, what? The kingdom of heaven, right? But he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven will enter.

And then, what's he say? Those people respond to him, right? This is a judgment day scenario being painted here. So Jesus makes this statement, he's talking about something that's happening on judgment day, and he's telling you what people are going to say on judgment day. There could be people in here that are going to be saying these very types of things.

Didn't we, what? Do all these outward things, speak in tongues, preach mighty sermons, do wonders, and then I will declare to them, I never knew you. Depart from me, you who practice lawlessness. What is lawlessness? It's defined in verse 21.

Lawlessness is defined right there in verse 21. He who does the will of my Father, or doesn't do it. He who does not do the will of my Father.

Whose will were you guys obeying when you came here? Your own, right? Me too. Hey, you're no worse than what I once was, all right? So, you know, obeying God's will. Now, the standard way in this subculture of thinking of obeying God's will is those little, you know, laws and watered down commandments and stuff, that's obeying God's will.

Well, let me say, first of all, that yes, part of obeying God's will is to obey the commandments in the scripture. That's right. That is true.

As the commandments stand, not as they, you know, this watered down version that they present. So, obeying the commandments, but secondly, the specific will of God. God has a plan for your life.

Any of you hear that when someone tried to lead you to the Lord or whatever? I mean, you've heard that saying, right? It's a trite little saying, which is really sad because it is the truth. It is the truth. It's just not the way they think of it.

You know, evangelists who don't know what they're talking about, and will make that statement. I'm not saying all evangelists who say that don't know what they're talking about because some do, but I do. I know what I'm talking about.

Just ask me. There is a plan. There is a plan.

Every one of you, if I could call you out by name, okay, I know probably two. Landon, I just met. Landon still thinks I'm the custodian here.

I met him the other day and he said, so are you on staff? And I said, yeah, I'm the janitor. I should have just left it at that. You know, I wish I would have.

And I said, I'm just kidding. I'm the guy who founded the place. He walked away laughing.

Um, where was I going, Glenn? Plan for your life. Yeah. I don't know how Landon got in the middle of my plan.

I really did lose the place. Okay, let's get back on track here. Landon, don't ever do that to me again.

You won't last here if you keep pulling that up. Paul said, for all who are being led by the spirit of God are the sons of God. You know what it means to be led by the Lord? Do you know what that means? I mean, you know, I'm asking you experientially.

You know, the Lord speaks. The Lord is still speaking. If you have ears to hear.

Now, sad to say there is a whole section of the church out there that are being taught that God doesn't speak. So sad to me, man. I don't know how I would make it in life if I didn't know how to hear from the Lord.

How do you think this ministry came into being if I wasn't, if God wasn't speaking to me 34 years ago? If God didn't lead us to Kentucky 30 years ago? If God didn't tell us to build that building and that building? To hire different ones? How could this place be? I don't know how they answer that. But according to them, God does not speak anymore. I'm going to just read to you A. W. Tozer quote, because he really nails it.

Concerning God speaking to men, there is an erroneous view that God spoke the holy scriptures into being, and then he lapsed into silence, and that the Bible is a deposit of embalmed truth, which scribe and theologian must decipher as best they can. This view is injurious. You get what that means? Causing great injury.

Thank you. This view causes great injury because it contains two false notions. One, that God is no longer speaking.

And the other, that we are shut up to our intellects for the understanding and apprehension of truth. According to this view, God is far away and wholly non-communicative, and we are forced into a kind of evangelical rationalism, since according to this notion, the human mind becomes the final arbiter of truth. Now, the blessed fact is that God is not silent and has never been silent.

It is the still voice of God in the heart of every human being that renders everyone culpable before the bar of God's judgment and convicts of sin even those who have never been exposed to the written word. The Bible is not, as some appear to think, God's last will and testament. It is, rather, the written expression of the mind of the living God, inactive until the same breath that first inspired it breathes on it again.

Yeah, God's got a specific will for your life, and you are either going to say yes to it or you're going to reject it. If you're going to be in the kingdom, I suggest you figure out how to say yes. Amen? All right, number three.

The kingdom has a value system. You know, every culture does have a value system. The things that are considered important, the things that are considered unimportant.

You know, in the American culture back in the 50s, which probably none of you or very few of you remember this, maybe, but back in those days, do you know a man's character was actually considered something of importance in the American culture? It really was, but today character means zip, nothing. What's important today is image, how you present yourself, success, you know, a great sports star or movie star or whatever. You've made it to the top, business, whatever.

It's all about image, personality, looks, and so on. Those are the things that are considered important in the American culture, but the kingdom of God has a different value system. It's right in Matthew 13, the great chapter of parables Jesus gave one day in verse 44.

He said, the kingdom of heaven, okay, is like a treasure. This whole chapter is about the kingdom of God, if you didn't know that. The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field which a man found and hid again, and from joy over it, he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls, and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it. Seek ye first the kingdom of God, right? That is describing people who encounter something that once they get a sight of it, everything else pales. Everything else pales.

That does not describe the mindset in the American church. I'm sorry. It just doesn't.

This is Matthew who walked away from everything. This is Zacchaeus who repented and gave away half of his fortune. This is Paul who said, I count it all, but all loss for the sake of Christ.

These are examples of what Jesus said when he said, from the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and violent men take it by force. Now, how is it possible that you reconcile violent men with poverty of spirit and meekness? I don't know how to logically do that for you. I'm just telling you they're one in the same.

They are one in the same, because once it gets into you, once that passion for that kingdom, once you see the value of it, there ain't nobody gonna stop you from laying hold of that kingdom. It becomes everything to you. Your job, I mean in a good way, I mean this in a wrong way, but your family, everything

else becomes secondary, and God and his kingdom becomes everything.

Jesus said count the cost. You know, and some of you young guys, I'm going to say this, I felt, I had this come to me in the quiet time. Some of you young guys, you've got something the enemy has planted in the back of your mind, and this is it.

I haven't experienced all that I want to experience. I'm not ready to give up what I want, what's in my heart to experience. I'm not ready to give that up yet.

That's in some of your hearts. Now, you guys who have been in, how many of you have been in sexual sin 30 years? You guys, what would you say to those young guys? Huh? Was it worth it? Do you wish that you would have gave your heart to the Lord 30 years ago? This thing reminds me of the sower and the seed, another parable out of this chapter. Jesus describes four men, right, and they all hear what? The word of the kingdom.

They all hear the word of the kingdom. These are all church people, and the fourth one has been so impacted by that word that it completely transformed his life, and out of his transformed life, different examples Jesus gives of people like this, some of them over the course of the rest of their days will have that same impact on 30 more people, 30 more transformed lives. I don't know, it's enough to make you throw your Bible down, isn't it? I think this guy's getting it figured out.

Another one, 60, 60 transformed lives come forth out of his life, and the last one's 100, 100 people who are radically saved, but not everyone is affected like that by the word of the kingdom. Sad to say, and so he gives three other people. The first one gets the word, but he's not even affected enough to really respond to it, and the enemy just comes in and steals it away, or even really gives it any thought, and the second one, he gets excited at first.

Wow, this is a pearl of great price, it really is, but then he starts counting the cost. Wait a minute, you mean not everyone's going to love me? You mean people might be angry? You mean people may not like me because I follow this way? You know, and so he dampens down, or however you want to figure it in your theological system, backslides, or never got saved, whatever, but he's gone, and the third one, he looks at it, he sees the value in it, but then he looks at all that he has in the world. It isn't worth that much to me.

J. C. Ryles says, such people are what they are because they are not fully persuaded that it's worthwhile to be different. They flinch from decision, they shrink from taking up the cross, they halt between two opinions, they won't commit themselves, they won't come forward boldly on the Lord's side, and why? Because they're not convinced that it will compensate them. They're not sure that the treasure is before them.

They're not satisfied that the pearl is worth so great a price. They can't yet make up their minds to sell all that they may win Christ, and so too often they perish everlastingly. I want to give you an exercise.

I'm wrapping it up now. I want to give you an exercise, and I leave it totally up to you whether or not you actually do this. Take a piece of paper, a blank piece of paper, and on the top of it put my life, and at the bottom of it, sign it, and take that piece of paper, and as it were, give it to the Lord, and say, Lord, you write on this piece of paper anything you desire.

I am going to follow you all the way. I don't care what it costs me, and don't do it lightly, and don't do it to please man. If you do that, and maybe some of you will actually physically do that, then give it to your counselor and talk to him about it in your next counseling session, because that's really what it's all about.

That's what you came here to learn, not a few little tidbits on how to keep your life in this world, how to stay a carnal, selfish man, oh yeah, and get rid of the sexual sins so no one, you know, my wife won't be mad at me or whatever. No, that's not what you came here for. That's the other place, the place that charges you \$50,000.

That's the place you want to go to if that's what you're after. This is for a place of men who want a radical transformation. If that's you, maybe today's your day.

Maybe you've already had your day. Maybe you had it last Sunday. Maybe you had it Friday night, or maybe you haven't yet had it.

I'm not going to really have so much of an article. In fact, I'm going to pray and dismiss you, but you can stay in here, and we probably should not do a lot of chattering in here today. Let's take it outside or whatever, because today could be the day.

Maybe this little message this morning, somehow the light came on. Wow, now I see why I thought I was saved, but I never really entered in. No wonder I've lived in defeat all these years.

No wonder sin has taken me wherever it wanted to take me. No wonder my life has been a wreck. No wonder God's Word doesn't really impact me and affect me.

If that's you today, then come down to this altar. Just come down. Why don't we all stand up? Skip, come up and get on the keyboard, because maybe today is the day some people are going to do that.

I just want you to slip out now if that describes you. If it doesn't, it's okay. You're going to be affected by things for your whole stay here, accepting or rejecting the Lord's offer.

If this is your day, come forward right now. Just slip out, come down. I don't need everybody to come down, but if it's your day, I want you to respond to the Lord.

That's all I care about. Is there anyone else? Any of you young guys? You've been toying. The Lord put that in my heart for someone.

You've had this in your mind that you're missing out. You haven't yet experienced all those luscious pleasures you fantasized about. Lay it down.

It is not worth pursuing. Trust me, it will do nothing but ruin your life and ruin your soul. The devil is a liar.

He's a liar. He's been lying to you, and God has been calling you in his mercy. My dear God, I just pray for these men.

I pray for them, Lord. I pray that you will just bring them in. Sweep them into your kingdom, Lord.

Sweep them into your kingdom. Help them to come to an end of that self-life, to lay down those fantasies, to repent, yes, of sexual sin, but more than that, of self-will. Help them to surrender to you, to submit to you.

God, do a great work inside them. Help them to see the tremendous value of your kingdom, what you are offering to them for free, at least in one sense, for free. In another sense, it means giving up all for it.

God, help them to see the value of this kingdom. Meet them here this morning, I pray. In Jesus' name, just consider yourself dismissed.

Feel free to go or stay and seek the Lord, whatever you wish. God bless you all.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/JuV5mLesgoU.mp4>

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