

The Kingdom of God

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of seeking the kingdom of God first, which means seeking righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit, and having a heart that rejoices in the Lord always.

Duration: 17:14

Scripture: Isaiah 54:17, Matthew 16:3, Romans 5:1, Romans 14:17, Philippians 4:4, 1 John 2:28

Topics: "Kingdom Living", "Righteousness"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of seeking the kingdom of God first, focusing on righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. It traces the restoration of truth throughout history, highlighting the need for inner peace, freedom from anxiety, and reconciliation with others. The speaker encourages pursuing a life of righteousness with peace and joy, trusting in God's provision for all earthly needs, and being prepared for the return of Christ.

Transcript

We read that Jesus once spoke to the Pharisees, saying in Matthew 16, verse 3, you can predict the rain and whether it's going to be threatening a storm. When there is a storm today, the sky is red and threatening. You know how to discern the appearance of the sky, but you cannot discern the signs of the times.

We need to understand the time in which we are living. We are moving towards the end of time, very rapidly. And personally, I believe that this is the last generation before Jesus comes again.

And something similar to the last generation and the first generation. The first generation was a very privileged generation. They walked with Jesus, the Holy Spirit came, and the church began.

But as we heard, the church went into decline. Worldliness came, and within 300 years, the whole thing had gone right into darkness, and it remained in darkness. History says that a long period of the Dark Ages, right up until the 1500s, when the church was persecuted, it was powerful.

But then the devil found persecution is not killing the church, so he made the church prosperous. And it sank to death. Finally, God began to raise up, as we heard, Martin Luther, and then began a revival from the 1500s, little by little.

Truths that had been buried for years, which are in the Bible, slowly began to be recovered. And one of the things that brought the recovery was the invention of the printing press. The printing press.

The first book that was printed was the Bible. So then people began to get a copy of the Bible. And as people read it, truths that the Roman Catholic Church and the popes had hidden for so long began to be recovered.

That's how Martin Luther brought forth the truth of justification by faith, and got it from Scripture. And that's how John Wesley, you heard of, recovered. And that's how the truth of the baptism of the Holy Spirit and all came up.

And God has gradually been recovering truth, and has brought us now, I believe, to the full understanding of the whole purpose of God, which had been buried for so many centuries, but little by little by little by recovered understanding of the church, the body of Christ. And the importance of being broken. And what the kingdom of God really is.

What does it mean when it says you must seek the kingdom of God first? For many years I used to think that means going out and do missionary work. Seek the kingdom of God first and go out and bring souls to Christ. But that's because, you know, I was using my own understanding of what kingdom of God meant.

But when I studied Scripture, I found the kingdom of God was defined in Romans 14, verse 17. So this is what I'm supposed to seek first. Romans 14, 17.

The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking. It's not evangelism. It's not any of these things.

It is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. In the Old Testament they had righteousness, but it was not accompanied by peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. It was a stern, serious righteousness.

But the righteousness in the kingdom of God brings peace. First of all, peace with God. Perfect peace.

That means I have no fear when I come to God. I'm absolutely at peace because the blood of Jesus has brought peace between me and God. And secondly, peace in my heart from all the turmoils, the problems of earth.

Freedom, complete freedom from anxiety. This is the kingdom of God. And third, peace with people.

That I don't have a fight with anybody. I don't hate anyone. I've forgiven everyone.

I don't have a conflict with anyone. I mean, they may hate me. I can't do anything about that.

But I have peace. This is the kingdom of God. Jesus said, seek the kingdom of God first.

Then all these other earthly things you need will be added to you according to your need. So you need to understand what the Lord is restoring in our time. He's teaching us what the kingdom of God is.

That righteousness which brings peace in our heart. Perfect peace with God with zero condemnation. Zero discouragement.

I never lived like that for many years. I used to be so discouraged sometimes. After being born again, condemning myself.

I want to tell you it's gone. I can't remember how many years ago last I got discouraged. Was it 20 years ago? I don't know.

It's gone. It's gone completely. I stand as a testimony to it.

It can be yours. If that's what you're seeking first. If you're seeking advancement in the world and money and the honor of men.

Well, I hope God can bless you in some way. But you're missing the main thing. I would urge all of you.

God has restored truth as we heard. Has brought us to the place of the kingdom of God. Righteousness with perfect peace.

That I can walk into God's presence anytime. Anytime. There's never a cloud between me and God.

Perfect peace with God. Being justified by faith we have peace with God. It says in Romans 5.1. We preach that.

That I'm clothed with Christ. What does it mean to be clothed with Christ? That when I come before God. Listen to this.

It's absolutely amazing. That I come before God. I stand before him as Jesus Christ is standing.

Same way. You don't believe it? According to your faith be it unto you. I believe it.

According to my faith be it unto me. Because the Bible says so. I'm clothed with the righteousness of Christ.

That's why I have peace with God. Peace in my heart. Because he cares for all my needs.

He's making everything work for my good. Why should I worry then? He will never allow me to be tested beyond my ability. Every no weapon formed against me will prosper.

Isaiah 54 verse 17 Amazing promises. Perfect peace. About life on this earth.

I don't know what lies tomorrow. But God has already known and planned it. For me.

Ensured that it will never be too much for me. That if there's a Lord there. He'll give me grace to equal it.

That's why we have peace. In relation to circumstances. And peace in relation to people.

Bible says pursue peace with all men. That means you must. I can say this.

Never for a single moment. To have a bitterness against any human being. You think in my 76 years.

Nobody's done harm to me. By the time you're 5 years old. Itself people have done harm to you.

But I can stand before God and say this. Not a single human being. Has ever been able to harm me.

In my life. Everything they did. Did work for my good.

What shall I say to people who work for my good? Thank you. To people who did harm for me. Thank you.

Somebody who tried to do evil to me. Thank you. People who tried to send me to jail.

Thank you. Peace with all men. I have nothing.

I go to bed with a clear conscience. With no bitterness against anybody in the whole wide world. Forgiving everybody.

The way God's forgiven me. Righteousness with peace. Through the power of the Holy Spirit.

And the other thing is. Joy. It's not a grim, serious righteousness.

It's a joy. All the time in our heart. There may be trials.

Jesus was called a man of sorrows. We have trials. We have problems.

We weep when we go through bereavement. Or people die. But the joy in the heart never goes.

All the time. If you want this. You can have it.

But you must seek it. Seek and you shall find. Like we heard.

Brother was saying. In that Feast of Tribunals. They were supposed to rejoice.

That is the kingdom of God. Righteousness with joy. Delighted.

To do what's right. Even if it means. Financial loss.

Or any other earthly loss. Joy. If you have a righteousness.

We preach righteousness in the church. And there are people who are pursuing righteousness. But I want to say to you in Jesus name.

If you have a righteousness. Without peace in your heart. Without peace with other men.

Righteousness with anxiety. It is the righteousness of the old covenant. You haven't got the real thing.

You're fooling yourself. Because you're righteous. You're not telling lies.

You're paying your taxes. And you set things right. No.

But is it with peace in your heart? You have peace with all men. Are you free from anxiety? That's the righteousness of the new covenant. And secondly.

Do you have a joy? Can you rejoice in the Lord 24-7? 24 hours a day. 7 days a week. That's the meaning of always.

Philippians 4.4 There are two things you must look up. Philippians 4.4 Rejoice in the Lord always. Second is you must look up a dictionary.

To see the meaning of always. What does it mean? Some people don't understand the meaning of always. It means 24 hours a day.

7 days a week. That is the righteousness of the new covenant. You say it's impossible.

According to your faith. It will be impossible for you. Because you don't believe God's word.

It's not a question of what you can accomplish. It's a question of whether you believe the Holy Spirit can do it in you. That's what it says here.

Righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. That is the kingdom of God. Seek this kingdom of God first.

It's not evangelism. It's no use going to the long face of somebody and telling him about Christ. Like that man who went to the long face and said to somebody, do you want to accept Christ? He said, no, thank you.

I've got enough problems already. Looking at this person's face, he says, what's the use of accepting this Christ? Righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. That's how it must be.

Pursue it, my brothers and sisters. Pursue it with all your heart. Seek it first.

All the other things. You have earthly needs. We all have earthly needs.

We need a job. We need a house. We need food.

We need to educate our children. I want to say to you, after 57 years of being a believer, after raising a family, after trusting the Lord for 50 years as a full-time worker, never sending a report of my need to anybody, never asking a human being for my need, not having a regular monthly income, God has taken care of me all these years. He will never let you down if you seek the Kingdom of God first.

And you must have a testimony in your life. At the end of your life, you must have a testimony like this. I spent my life seeking the Kingdom of God and all my earthly needs and the needs of my family were met.

That should be our testimony. So that when people examine our life closely, they should be able to say there is no explanation for this man's life except that he must be having a father in heaven. I hope they'll be able to say that about you and me at the end of our life.

It's not a question of what impression we give to other people. It's nothing. My testimony is to Satan first.

That he looks at my life and I say, Satan, you can look at my life. I'm going to be a testimony to you, your devil, that I sought God's Kingdom first and His righteousness and every need of mine was met. And my family's need.

And you know that better than everybody else. And that's the testimony we are to glorify God. I pray it will be true of all of us.

And if you're not that, that is what God is restoring in our time. The message of brokenness, the message of taking up the cross, the message of dying to self is also that we might live in this new covenant righteousness. The Lord is restoring the full truth that the apostles had slowly from the time of Martin Lutheran.

We are living now in the time when everything has been recovered and we are in the last generation and Christ will come. The Lord says, behold I come quickly blessed is he who keeps his garments so that no one can see his shame. There are two types of people.

Let me close with this. When Christ comes again there are going to be two types of believers. One written in 1 John chapter 2 and verse 28 little children abide in him because when he appears there will be two types of believers.

One who will have boldness. Yes Lord. And the other who will shrink away in shame because there are things in their life that were not settled.

We have an opportunity, there's a whole purpose of conferences like this, to get people to be ready for the coming of Jesus Christ so that when he comes we say, Lord I'm ready and don't have to shrink away. Let's bow our heads in prayer. Our heavenly Father we pray that our pursuit of the kingdom of God and your righteousness will not be just in words but in reality.

Everyone here bring us into that kingdom of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. We pray in Jesus name. Amen.

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