

## **KINGDOM BREAKTHROUGH**

### **SERMON NINE**

#### **KINGDOM PEOPLE**

This morning as we continue on our journey of looking at the kingdom of God breaking through into this world and into our lives, I want to become very practical by asking the following question. If the Kingdom has come albeit not completely, what do Kingdom people look like? In other words how does the Kingdom of God impact our lives on a daily basis? Derek Morphey describes Kingdom people as the “Already – not yet people”. I want to pick up on this description because it is indeed a very accurate description of who you and I are, kids of the kingdom who have been saved out of the Kingdom of darkness and brought into the Kingdom of light, “already, but not yet people” at the same time. It is important to emphasise both elements of the character of Kingdom people for when we

focus on the one to the exclusion of the other, we fall into error and develop a biased view of Kingdom people. Join with me this morning as we consider this unusual description of Kingdom people. Let us begin by looking at the “already” element of what it means to be a kid of the kingdom.

#### **1. THE “ALREADY” PEOPLE**

This element of being as child of the kingdom emphasises the fact that the kingdom of God had broken though with the coming firstly of Jesus and then the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. As a consequence of the Kingdom has come already there has been a radical transformation of who we are in Christ Jesus. The following are just some of the verses that highlight this element. Paul tells us in 2 Cor 5:17, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new

has come”. There is a sense of a radical new beginning with God in which we are transformed from our old sinful selves and released into being a new and different creation in Christ Jesus. The Kingdom has broken through in our lives and we are changed. There are many texts that speak of the wonderful victory we are to experience as Kingdom kids. Paul praises God in 2 Cor 2:14 and notes, “Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ”. What a picture of victory and triumph over sin, death and the devil. The kingdom life is indeed a life of power and victory acknowledging that on the cross Christ once for all won for us victory over sin and death and with the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost we have received power to live in this victory. We are the “already” people because of the victory we have received with the coming of the Kingdom.

Having noted this however, if we are really honest about our lives and the spiritual journeys we are on, we would have to admit that our lives are not always about power, joy and victory. Many who focus exclusively on this dimension would criticise us for not always experiencing this in our lives even to the point where we begin to feel like second rate Christian for not constantly living in the victory. We are encouraged to claim our victory each moment of the day. I want to suggest to you this morning that this is just one element of who we are.

If we focus on this element to the exclusion of the other we run into a number of false teachings and errors. Let’s take a brief look at some of these.

Some may firstly suggest that we are to find ourselves at a place of sinless perfection. In Christ we are a new creation and therefore the old sinful man has died and we should not longer experience sin in our lives.

Secondly there is a denial that Christians should experience trials and difficulties but should rather live in a state of perpetual joy and spiritual bliss.

Any form of weakness and doubt is criticised as due to a lack of faith. When we pray for healing it must come and if it doesn't it is due to our lack of faith. The Kid of the Kingdom should live in prosperity and not know any material need in his life. The kid of the Kingdom is able to rise above the influence of the Kingdom of this world and not be affected by it. All of the above "kingdom now" statements or perspectives are unbalanced due to the fact that the second dimension of being a Kingdom Kid has not been brought into the picture.

In order to have a balanced view we need to consider that we are also "not -yet" people.

## **2. THE "NOT-YET" PEOPLE**

The second dimension of being a kid of the Kingdom is the not-yet element which recognises that the even though the Kingdom has already come with great victory and blessing, the kingdom has "not-yet" come in its fullness and hence we are not yet people. Those who focus exclusively on this dimension emphasise the future hope and glory of the kingdom still to come whilst enduring the trials and difficulties of this present life. There are many Scriptures that highlight our experience of this.

Paul again writes in 2 Cor 5:2,4, "Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling. For while we are in this tent we groan and are burdened" and in 2 Cor 7:5 Paul speaks of "Conflicts on the outside, fear within" and in 2 Cor 4:11, "we are always being given over to death for Jesus sake". These verses paint a picture of our present life being a life of difficulty and struggle

and that our only hope is to be found in the future coming of the glorious kingdom at the end of the age. Many choose to focus on this groaning element of the not-yet to the exclusion of the triumph of the already and as a consequence fall into the following errors.

Firstly they fall into the trap of concluding that all of life here on earth is sinful and is not to be enjoyed. Hence there is an emphasis on legalistic righteousness and an emphasis of just hanging in there for the new that will come at the end of the age.

There is an understanding that this present life has no hope and therefore there is no understanding of God's blessing that can be experienced right now. There is no victory, joy or healing to be found in this present age, just a deep frustration knowing that the Kingdom has not yet fully come. In this world we are called to suffer so that we can really enjoy the blessing that one day will come in eternity.

It is this type of understanding that leaves one defeated and frustrated with life in general.

The reality is that when we emphasise one of these two elements to the exclusion of the other. Kingdom people are both "already and not-yet" people. Let us look at what this means for us.

### **3. THE ALREADY NOT-YET PEOPLE**

You may be asking yourself if there is not a huge contradiction in the verses we have quoted from Paul which both highlight the present victory in a present kingdom, whilst at the same time emphasise a future hope in a coming kingdom. You would be justified in asking this question as there exists a huge tension in Scripture between these two types of texts. In essence Kingdom life is all about living in the tension between the kingdom having come, the already people, and the kingdom still to

come, the not-yet people. Paul again in 2 Cor puts these two elements in tension with each other and gives to us a good picture of what kingdom people experience. Let us look at two passages.

2 Cor 4:8-9. “We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down but not destroyed” and then in 2 Cor 6:8-10 Paul describes kingdom life in the following way,

“through glory and dishonour, bad report and good report; genuine yet regarded as impostors; known yet regarded as unknown; dying and yet we live on; beaten, and yet not killed; sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything”. What insight do these two passages give to us about kingdom people.

They tell us firstly that we are not immune to suffering and disappointment in this life and that indeed we are impacted by the sinful kingdom of this world. We cannot avoid this and hence at times we may experience defeat. Secondly we are told that in the midst of this, the Kingdom of God which has come may break through and overcome the kingdom of the world and set us free from the defeat and frustration of this world. In the midst of great trial we may experience joy, victory and abundant life. Our lives are the battleground and the interface between the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of this world. Praise God the Kingdom of God is advancing against the kingdom of this world and as we take hold and rely on the kingdom of God in our lives, we are more and more able to live in victory over the kingdom of this world. Paul highlights this battle so well in Roms 7:15 when he cries out in frustration, “I

do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do”.

Kingdom life is about unspeakable joy and victory but at the same time disappointing defeat and frustration. This is the reality of living within the tension of the already and the not-yet.

This tension is found in passages about how perfect and imperfect a Christian can be. In 1 John 3:6 we are told of the believer, “No one who lives in Him keeps on sinning...” and yet in 1 John 1:8 we are told, “If we claim to be without sin we deceive ourselves...”. This highlights the tension between the already and the not-yet. When we come into the Kingdom our sin is justified once and for all. This is the already. However we then begin a journey of sanctification in which God begins to shape us into the people he desires us to be and this continues to the end of the age. Paul highlights this in Phil 1:6 when he notes of

God, “he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus” and in Jude 24 we are told of God that he will “present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy”.

## **CONCLUSION**

Kingdom people are those who experience the blessing, victory, power and joy of the Kingdom of God that has already come. At the same time they experience and are not immune from the struggles, frustrations and even defeat. As we allow the Kingdom of God to break through more and more in our lives, as we look to God for power and blessings, we will experience the advance of the Kingdom in our lives and we will experience moiré of the joy and the victory that the Kingdom of God brings into our lives.