

KINGDOM

FINDING YOUR TRUE SELF

DAVE NADLER

To my Kingdom Friends:

My faithful wife Burnadette,
Rachel and Eric, David and Katie, and John,
Kyle, Sam, Keira, Gabriel, Joseph, and David;
and my brothers and sisters who have shared our
stories, hearts, and our home over these many years.

The Kingdom is ours, my dear friends!

OUR TRUE SELVES

Our Creator wants us to succeed. He takes extreme measures to do all He can to make a way for us to *discover the great treasures of life*.

The Gospel of Matthew gives us great insight into what it means to live a life that counts. Along with the other pictures painted in the God Story, Matthew gives us up close and personal teaching and examples of how to achieve our goal of a satisfied mind.

While this picture is quite simple, it is also complex in the fact that there are a series of *paradigm shifts* which are key to the spiritual journey. By taking time to investigate and ruminate over the data found in Matthew, we can explore a foundational picture for personal success.

I certainly don't claim to be an expert on everything, but I have devoted much of my life to searching for the path to finding my true self, and I offer it here in the context of Jesus' teaching to the world - and particularly to His followers. I will refer often to the unfolding tapestry of *Kingdom teaching* which explodes with real clarity in this "good news" of Matthew.

I think you will find that the time you invest will lead you to sift through your spiritual world-view, and prepare you to land at your destination of a satisfied mind.

- Dave Nadler, *Fourthstream.com*

WHAT IS IT YOU WANT?

I have found this question to be the real starting point on the journey to a satisfied mind. What do you value? Monetary success? Personal security? Being respected? To be a good father or mother? To experience a happy marriage? To have good friends? To BE a good friend?

By searching our heart and defining our motivations and desires, we can be free to explore greater principles and purposes - which is incredibly key to living a life bigger than ourselves. I recommend you give this some significant reflection. *What is it that satisfies your mind? For what do you want to be known? What is, and what will be, your legacy to those around you?*

As our life unfolds we begin to develop what many would call our “world view.” This is impacted by our upbringing, our relational experiences, and our successes and failures. Each of us intrinsically has a picture of who we are and where we are going. Depending upon the person, this world view is given some level of attention - and reflects our perceptions of who we are, where we are going, and what brings meaning to our existence.

It is important to have an informed understanding of our world view as we pursue our own satisfied mind.

There are some pretty lofty and beautiful things that have been presented to us by the Living God in the God Story. Especially related to a life that counts. Together we will search the Gospel of Matthew and attempt to internalize some of the things we observe about our King, His Kingship, and our quest to find a satisfied mind.

So here we go!

DEFINING TRUE SUCCESS

Your quest for a satisfied mind is key to your personal success. In my opinion there are several challenges we must articulate and engage in order to be a true success. We will return to these at the end of the book, but I would like to discuss them briefly as we begin our process of defining our path to a satisfied mind. *I define a satisfied mind as living and finishing my days (however long they may be) at peace with my Creator and at rest concerning my life - AND the afterlife.*

Success Challenge #1: *Engage honest conversation* with yourself about what you want out of life. By reflecting upon what *you want* you will be better able to place it next to *what Jesus wants* for your journey. It takes effort to engage in honest personal evaluation. But it is well worth it!

Success Challenge #2: Find a *Source* you can trust to “self-mentor” your quest toward a satisfied mind. There are SO many life philosophies from which to choose - how can a person be sure he or she will achieve a satisfied mind? We must be guided by the Source in order to succeed.

Success Challenge # 3: *Invite the spiritual process* of interacting personally with *Jesus’ teaching* about His Kingship and His Kingdom. Once you have determined whether or not Jesus is the King over the entire earth, your end-game becomes much clearer. If this is a stretch for you, ask your Creator to meet you part-way on the road to personal connection.

Success Challenge #4: Find *other* men and women who are *courageous and willing to ask* penetrating questions as you engage the Kingdom process. Some people believe faith paradigms are lesser or nonintellectual. Find and engage friends who are open to faith. We certainly don’t have to check our intellect at the door in order to courageously face the deep questions about our destiny!

By the end of this book you should have all the data you need to define true success and determine if you can meet these four growth challenges - to result in your own satisfied mind.

Let's take a look at the KING OF THE EARTH as He "comes near" to humanity and defines assets for our personal success.

WHO IS MATTHEW?

A little bit about Matthew the Christ-follower...

Matthew was a tax collector (Matthew 10:3). He was an official of Herod Antipas (the puppet Jewish governor) and was a servant of the Roman government as a first century I.R.S. agent. Tax collectors were among the most hated people in Jewish society.

To begin with, they were traitors to their own nation because they 'sold themselves to the Romans to work for the government. Each tax collector purchased from Rome the right to gather taxes, and the more he gathered, the more he could keep. They were considered thieves as well as traitors.

When Jesus invaded Matthew's life, he had already chosen his path. It would literally take a *miracle* to get him on track to a Kingdom life. And this is exactly the process Jesus brought about in this Jewish tax-collectors life. He turned his world upside down, but He also turned Matthew's heart inside-out. This is the beauty of the Kingdom. God is in the business of making us a success to the core of who we are. He has vision far beyond what we can become in this world, and moves us toward the values of the world yet to come.

Matthew is a Gospel written by a Jew, to Jews, about a Jew. The book was written sometime in the 60's, close to 25 years after the death and resurrection of Jesus. Matthew the disciple was probably the final addition to the "twelve" followers closest to Jesus.

A KEY POINT

For all that is made of "church" in the Bible and in history, Jesus

Himself only mentions church a few times. He speaks about the *Kingdom* many times. This complicates things when we attempt to get to the core of what Jesus' birth, teachings and miracles, death, burial, and resurrection bring to us for our satisfied mind. When the King comes first, followed by His Kingdom, then His "church" will flow powerfully into the world - in any age.

When the message of King and Kingdom gets out of synch with the historic and current view of church, people become confused over what is prominent. Quite simply, the God Story makes it clear that *everything is about the King*. This in turn focuses His explanation of His work to bring the Kingdom of heaven near to us. Any "church" becomes an outworking of this in any culture and any age.

There are a lot of people with many different feelings about "church." Some feel let down. There are those who are angry. Some even use church experiences to justify un-engagement and even laziness. And there are others who place their church experience in the place of their King. All of these things, while not desirable, are understandable.

I am not anti-church. I have served as a pastor in the local church for 40 years. But I would like to challenge your view of how King, Kingdom, and church interface. Perhaps it will help with your clarity as you put together the elements that make you a success in your search for a satisfied mind.

So, let's take a look at the Good News account in Matthew, where we will see a clear and vibrant picture of King and Kingdom as well as keys to our personal success in achieving a satisfied mind.

I have chosen a dozen or so Kingdom passages. You can read the reference, think it through, and I will provide some comment and explanation concerning the Kingdom nature of each particular story or teaching. We will be looking for specific ways we can experience our goal of a satisfied mind - *and finding deep peace*. Understanding Who the King IS and what He WANTS is key to our personal success.

#1 A TIME FOR TURNING

Matthew 4.17

From that time Jesus began to preach and say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

The word *repent* carries all sorts of negative stereotypes. It is, at its core, a change of mind and change of direction. This is important because the Good News of Jesus isn't merely pointing out the bad news about the shortcomings of our lives, it is calling us to turn *away* from our self-lives and *turn toward* our God-lives.

To truly achieve a successful life we must deal with the question of *ownership*. The God Story (Bible) is filled with many lives who addressed this in a variety of circumstances. For each man and woman in the God Story, the question of ownership was asked and answered. Even Jesus the Son (Who was perfect) had to deal with the bad news of death that is woven into the human race.

This concept of repentance or "turning" is mentioned in the books of Moses, the Hebrew Prophets, King David (and all the kings), John the Baptist, Jesus, and the disciples - and those who would become apostles. *It becomes a key part of what it means to enter the door to a successful life.*

#2 SOME CRITICAL CONTEXT

Before we hear about "turning" because the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand, we are given one of many key prophesies which occurred hundreds of years before Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

"Jesus withdrew into Galilee; and leaving Nazareth, He came and settled in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali. This was to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet (in Isaiah 61):

"The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, by the way of the sea,

*beyond the Jordan (river), Galilee of the Gentiles - the people who were sitting in darkness **saw a great light**, and those who were sitting in the land and shadow of death, upon them a Light dawned.”*

- Matthew 4:13-16

We don't have time here to consider all of the prophecies that were fulfilled by the coming of Christ. It is important, however, that we weigh the evidence that the One Who SPOKE of the Kingdom is precisely the King of the earth, because He is unique among every religious system and figure in all of human history. This GREAT LIGHT theme is carried throughout the God Story, so let's take a couple of moments to consider it.

One huge misconception about Jesus is that He is the founder of a 2000 year old religion - one of many in human history. The Bible tells a different story. When LIGHT was separated from darkness, before the sun and moon were created (Genesis 1), the Son of God was the creating agent of all that has been made (Hebrews 1/John 1). Because “God coming near” was an *incarnation* rather than a chance appearance of a great religious leader, it is easy to miss the point of the earth having a King.

It is also a huge error to miscast Jesus in the Story - our story. He not only brought Light, He IS Light. This should be the starting point for all world-view formulation. If you and I want to succeed and enjoy the peaceful benefits of a satisfied mind, we need to back up our convictions with solid foundations.

In this sense, much of historic religion has done a poor job of communicating the facts concerning Jesus' Sonship, and often mingled the Kingdom Message with a desire for influence or profit, and thus diminished the King and Kingdom part of the Story. The church is not THE Kingdom of Heaven, it is the OUTWORKING or the expression of it.

Why is this important on your journey toward a satisfied mind? *If you and I embrace Jesus as King of the earth, then He is King over our lives.* And this is what is articulated in the remainder of the book of Matthew.

Now it is time for Jesus to call His followers into His Kingdom. He does this by explaining three basic foundations for spiritual success. He 1) invites us through the door of *humility*, 2) explains how the Story is *woven* seamlessly, and 3) articulates our Kingdom *connection* with Him.

Let's engage!

#3 THE DOOR TO THE KINGDOM

Matthew 5:3-9

*"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be **comforted**.*

*"Blessed are the gentle, for they shall **inherit** the earth.*

*"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they shall be **satisfied**.*

*"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall **receive mercy**.*

*"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall **see God**.*

*"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be **called sons of God**.*

To find satisfying outcomes in life we must experience *interior success*. This is the story of the so-called "be-attitudes" listed above. Jesus knows that if our interior world heads in the right direction, our lives will be in harmony with our Creator Father's purposes, and we will find a satisfied mind *during* and at the *end* of our journey.

It is not as though God wants to withhold things from us, He just wants our lives to be in harmony with what will ultimately result in a *peaceful destination*. Jesus has called us to "turn" from the vanity of having things, being somebody, and doing great things - toward humility of heart. We are then free to invest ourselves carefully in a Kingdom life. Let's take a deeper look at Jesus' premise.

Note the highlighted words above. **Comfort. Inheritance. Satisfaction. Mercy recipient. See God. Called sons of God.** Think about

this from the perspective of a satisfied mind. Does each one have value to you when you think it through? Many people never think this deeply about their interior lives. Some reject the concepts out of hand as too lofty, irrelevant, or of little value. *What about you?*

And yet this is Jesus' clear snapshot of a rich, full life. It is interesting that Jesus begins His teaching about the Kingdom by explaining the fact that we are *spiritual beggars*. This is what it means to mourn. We take a look at life and have the courage to face our utter inability to find peace apart from God. If we can face the plight we are in - our total inability to deliver our souls from certain futility and death - we can enter the door to the Kingdom. As Jesus also says in Matthew 16.26 "*For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?*" My answer? I will give anything for the sake of my soul. *Anything.*

Once we *mourn* over our inability to deliver ourselves in this life and the one to come, we are free to make an incredible exchange on behalf of our interior lives. Now we can receive *comfort* for our shortcomings and the deficiencies of life. We are ready to embrace a life of *gentleness* rather than bravado or "look at me." Our quest for temporary things is eclipsed by our *hunger and thirst* for something greater. We begin to see *relationships* through a whole new prism of *giving* and *receiving mercy*. This results in *seeing God* as our hearts exchange earthly values for Kingdom ones. Rather than striving, we begin to become peacemakers, and as such are **called sons of God**. Wow.

As a heart-shepherd and teacher for over many years I have experienced and shared the reality of most aspects of life, sometimes with people I know well and others I didn't. *Few want to dwell on it, but you and I are on a collision course with limited days.*

Life can be rich and full or it can be painful and consuming - and everything in between. But one thing is sure - our lives are going to end. Jesus wants to prepare us for a satisfying outcome to our journey. He wants us to enter the door of humility into His Kingdom

where *success is measured one heart at a time.*

Some people think to embrace this Kingdom value system makes you some sort of a chump. I have become convinced otherwise. I believe Jesus is inviting everyone who will listen to engage in a life that ensures an *alive interior heart*, and opens the door to success *beyond our wildest dreams.*

Jesus then follows with His appeal to live a Kingdom life that counts. He uses the metaphors of salt and light.

Matthew 5:13-16

“You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men.”

“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lamp stand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.

“Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”

A steak without the right seasoning is bland. A room with inadequate light is dark and uncomfortable. The goal of a Kingdom life is to flavor and preserve true life all around us. It is His intention and hope that our lives would shine His light into the dark and weary world in which we find ourselves.

This is one of the keys to a satisfied mind. Do we define our lives by what we accumulate, how much we are esteemed, what kind of security we have attained? Or do we consider the preserving qualities and experiences of our lives? Where have we found Light, and where have we spread that Light around? A saltless life is a bust. A life not impacted by Light is a life of groping in the dark.

#4 THE POINT OF HISTORY

Matthew 5:17-20

“Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. “For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished.

“Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

“For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.”

Do you know that nowhere in the so-called old and new testaments are they called the old and new testaments? This is a man-made distinction. *The real question is whether or not God has spoken.* And IF He has, we should devote ourselves to *hearing* the true words of God. And *all* religion should stay out of the way!

The Bible or God Story is unique in the world because it accounts from day one and continues to the end of time and beyond. It occurs over thousands of years and has many authors, but an incredible, other-worldly harmony of message and purpose. It is also very unflattering about the human race - and completely God-centric. It has one goal in mind: to reveal God's Deliverer, Who will invite people to find life through the door of humility.

What God is saying in this Kingdom passage from Matthew above is two-fold.

#1. I have spoken.

#2. Your religious leaders have twisted what I have spoken.

#3. I will help you find what is True.

This is important because most people are confused about and/or misled by religion. There is nothing religious about Jesus. He is all about relationship. With His Father. With His children. With His world. And this also begins Jesus' open conflict with the religious leaders of the Jews, which will ultimately result in being crucified at their hands.

“For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.”

Even the most zealous and religious follower cannot ensure success before God. It takes a work of God in our lives in order to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. *But this in no way means we spend our lives sitting on our hands, immobile for the purposes of God.* Jesus has plenty to say about the inferior aspects of religion, but He also has much to say about His life-changing Kingship over our lives.

#5 THE KINGDOM CONNECTION

Matthew 6:9-15

“Pray, then, in this way: ‘Our Father who is in heaven, Holy is Your name. ‘Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. ‘Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. [For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.]’

“For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. “But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.”

Once we have entered through the door of embraced humility we become free to hunger and thirst to *know God*. This is really the point of the so-called “Lord’s prayer.” It is not about form or formula, Jesus’ prayer is all about satisfied *connection* with our Father. He invites His followers to engage His Father the way He does.

In my attempts to personalize this iconic prayer I spent some time tracing the words back to their original language. The so-called Old Testament is written in Hebrew (the language of the Jews) and the so-called New Testament is written in Greek (the language of the Gentiles/or everybody other than Jews).

This prayer is my Kingdom heart *connecting* with Jesus' Kingdom heart via His direction on "how" to pray as opposed to merely "what" to pray.

Try to immerse yourself in the word-pictures that are here as well as the personal nature of Jesus' prayer!

Father, You are in heaven - and I am earthbound.
Your majesty is unsurpassed.
Your Name is revered above any and above all.
May Your sovereignty arise.
May Your desire come into being on our thirsty, hungry earth - just as it is in heaven.
Like a faithful time-piece You provide all I need day after day - just like clockwork.

Cover my sin and help me forgive the indebted culprits in my life.
Forgive my heart debts and give me grace to forgive those who hurt me.
Don't lead me into temptation, but deliver me from evil.
The Kingdom is Yours!
All power and authority are Yours!
And Your shining goodness has no end.
Pour out Your Spirit's reign upon our weary world, O God.
Open my eyes today!

Together with fasting, talking to God is Jesus' formula for interior success. He encourages us to cultivate quiet, private, personal connection with our Father-Creator - just as Jesus did - often at the end of long days filled with hard work and challenging issues and draining relationships.

It isn't so much a question of setting myself to "say prayers" as it is to 1) engage my daily conversation with myself - and 2) inviting the Lord of my life into the bitter and the sweet, the ugly and the beautiful.

There are so many voices in my own self as well as in the world

around me, all vying for my attention. Some shout. Some sing softly. In essence, it is my goal to share my interior life with my Master King, even though my life commands my attention. This is one huge key to living with a satisfied mind. *The Spirit's ability to help me sort through preoccupation and distraction is huge to my quest for true success.*

But before we move on we must consider the cornerstone of all that the King teaches.

“For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. “But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.”

Sobering, is it not? There are so many obstacles and challenges to forgiveness, and yet forgiveness is the direct result of success in knowing God. God understands that if we see ourselves as having been forgiven much, it will be easier for us to forgive others. Even those who have hurt or violated us deeply.

Understanding forgiveness is one huge key to understanding the Kingdom and ultimately experiencing a satisfied mind!

In God's mind, forgiveness is a deep part of all He has created - and Who He is.

#6 TRUE AUTHORITY

Matthew 7:24-29

“Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. “And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been built and established on the rock.

“Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. “The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell — and great was its fall.”

When Jesus had finished these words, the crowds were amazed at His teaching; for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.

How could Jesus be any more clear?! There are two options in life as we attempt to make our journeys rich and full. We can build on SAND or we can build upon ROCK. Every life has it's share of wind, rain, and floods. Suffering, death, personal disappointment, and emptiness; often when we feel we should be living rich and full. When Jesus is the King of our lives we have someone to talk with, appeal to, and find solace in His promises.

And while a simple concept - ROCK or SAND - the entire God Story is given to us so we may complete the picture of an entire life built upon a strong and enduring foundation. Of course, our exterior lives are important. They are certainly a reflection of what is going on inside of us. It is why I love God's law - His commandments. They are clear. They are specific. If I wish to live a life built upon a rock, I must take His “ten commandments” and implement them in how I love God, and how I treat people.

But much deeper and more significant is the place within my interior life, my heart, where my true intentions lie. This is where God desires to live. He wants to make His home at the root of who we are. He seeks to direct us in what it means to be a true success. To be free. And to build a life that will endure even the final challenge.

So - we view the human crossroads. Believe God when He says to build our house upon a rock, or actively (or by default) build it upon sand. Like all building projects this requires significant planning and effort, but a house built upon rock will endure the rains and winds of life. This is what intentionality is all about.

Note how this passage ends.

When Jesus had finished these words, the crowds were amazed at His teaching; for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.

Search the writings of all human history and religious antiquity - is there anyone - ANYONE - Who has exhibited this kind of authority - this kind of power - this level of understanding? Make this search for your own welfare, and build your house - your heart - upon the true Rock. Jesus is a teacher like no other because He is more than one Who teaches. He is King over every living soul.

#7 WHO IS THIS MAN? Matthew 8:5-16

Matthew now turns to a healing which occurs for some very specific purposes. Notice who was involved: Jesus, a centurion, a paralysed servant, and apparently His close follower-disciples, including Peter. This story unfolds as the group is headed for Peter's home.

A centurion wielded authority over 80-100 soldiers, and in a remote place like Capernaum, would have been a formidable presence. He and his men were the face of Rome, and Rome was not kind.

And when Jesus entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, imploring Him, and saying, "Lord, my servant is lying paralysed at home, fearfully tormented." Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him."

But the centurion said, "Lord, I am not worthy for You to come under my roof, but just say the word, and my servant will be healed. "For I also am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, 'Go!' and he goes, and to another, 'Come!' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this!' and he does it."

Now when Jesus heard this, He marvelled and said to those who were following, **“Truly I say to you, I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel.**

“I say to you that many will come from east and west, and recline at the table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven; but the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

And Jesus said to the centurion, “Go; it shall be done for you as you have believed.” And the servant was healed that very moment. When Jesus came into Peter’s home, He saw his mother-in-law lying sick in bed with a fever.

He touched her hand, and the fever left her; and she got up and waited on Him. When evening came, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed; and He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were ill.

This account is key as we attempt to contemplate the King and His Kingdom in light of our quest for a satisfied mind. Think about Jesus’ astonishing statement. *“I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel.”* Why does He say this? Because this centurion understood authority. He was under the authority of Rome. He commanded and exercised authority. He had heard and encountered Jesus’ authority from His Father, and as a caring master of his servant, wanted Jesus to do something he (nor Rome) simply did not have the authority to accomplish.

But this soldier understood something else: he was “not worthy” for Jesus to even enter his home. Wow. This is why Jesus was so astonished. This centurion grasped something few human beings ever understand. It is not merely WHAT Jesus was capable of doing, it was WHO He was that made Him unique. And He was rewarded with a healed servant. Boom.

But Jesus was not finished displaying His Kingship. He enters Peter’s home and finds Peter’s mother-in-law sick with a fever. And what did He do? *He took it away!* His authority extended over Rome, paralysis, a feverish woman - and now many who were

demon-possessed - and He healed them ALL. Without a word. No show. No drama. Just the raw power of God.

Understanding the humble faith of this centurion is massively instructive. Our response to the King of the earth's authority is completely key to our faith, and our Kingdom faith is what delivers our soul.

This can be a challenge for the modern American mind. Authority under kings and dictators in history was absolute. Most (then and today) do not have the luxury of the covering of law or God's morality. Giving extra thought to the authority that Jesus' exercises is worth our time. It is at the root of WHY we bend our will before the King of the earth.

#8 KINGDOM CLARITY

WHAT THE KING WANTS/Matthew 10.24 -39

Jesus' explanation of His Kingdom intensifies as He heals, teaches, and confronts the absolute monster of unbelief. And in all of this, His followers *see* His works, *hear* His words, and *respond* in great faith (Peter) or destructive unbelief (Judas).

He begins their journey asking them to "follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." As the process unfolds, He deepens their understanding, and gets more specific about what He wants.

"A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master."

This is the goal of a Christ-follower, and the key to a satisfied mind. While humanity is consumed with fame, recognition, security, comfort, and personal success - the King's Kingdom presents another way. To become "like" our Master is the ultimate success!

"It is enough for the disciple that he become like his teacher, and the

servant like his master. If they have called the head of the house Satan, how much more will they malign the members of his household! "Therefore do not fear them, for there is nothing concealed that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known.

It appears that following Jesus and becoming like Him will have inevitable consequences. We become a threat to the Kingdom of darkness the more we become like our Master. But this should not deter us! God - and God alone is to be feared. Why? He is the ONLY Sovereign King! This is so much more than becoming practiced at religion.

"What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the housetops. "Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

"Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. "But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. "So do not fear; you are more valuable than many sparrows.

Apparently the very nature of the Kingdom produces relational conflict. This should neither surprise us or cause us to fear. Jesus tells His followers to recognize our worth to Him, His protection and plans for us, and to press forward with courage in the midst of opposition. Any earthly sacrifice we make here holds promise for the Life to come!

"Therefore everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. "But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven.

"Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. "For I came to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's enemies will be the members of his household."

“He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. “And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.

“He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it.”

This is heavy duty stuff, my friend. Jesus has challenged us to build our house upon rock rather than sand, and now He gives us the very core to success and a satisfied mind. Take the risk. Let go. Lose your life for My sake. Find true life by allowing yourself to submit your will to the King's will.

It is that simple :)

#9 HARD WORDS OF COMFORT **Matthew 11:25-30**

Jesus counted on his relationship with his Father for *everything*.

Check this out:

“In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His reverent submission.” - Hebrews 5:7

Jesus extends the *same invitation* to us that He has received from His Father. While the Gospel is complicated on so many levels, it is crystal in its' simple clarity. God has chosen the unsophisticated to receive His Kingdom. It is a Kingdom of heart and soul - and it is pleasing to God to have made it so.

At that time Jesus said, “I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants. “Yes, Father, for this way was well-pleasing in Your sight.

“All things have been handed over to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.

It is impossible to know God apart from knowing His Son. To have insight into our Creator Father we must access Him through the eternal relationship between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The theos of this is deep, but look at the result. Freedom. **Rest.** *And this, friends, is the key to a satisfied mind.*

“Come to Me, all who are weary and weighed down, and I will give you rest. “Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

“For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”

Three Kingdom questions come to mind.

#1 What does it mean to be weary and weighed down?

#2 What is His yoke?

#3 What does it mean to be at rest?

These words are *difficult* because one must come to them as a child would. Life by its' nature is rigorous and challenging. How does a person sort through apparent complexity and access simplicity? We become *weary* as we encounter the trying experience of living in a fallen world. We are *weighed down* one burden at a time, and the cumulative effect can be crushing. And there are so many human ways to shoulder our load. But many of these self-mechanisms cause us to avoid rescue by our King.

When Jesus uses the word “yoke” it is easy to think of an apparatus to pull a load. But the word here is much better interpreted a “pair of scales.” It is all about weighing and discerning - the very thing Jesus appears to want to do for His children. Through His example

and His words He wants to give us the grace to navigate our journeys. His Spirit allows us to weigh our lives based upon truth, and to find a path of rest.

When we are at *rest* we receive refreshment. Such “upward refreshing” lifts us to places we do not naturally go. That’s why Jesus’ words here are hard words of comfort. We literally must find peace in life through the portal of personal faith. Everything else will let us down.

#10 RELIGIOUS BS Matthew 12

The collision was inevitable. Implanted within the human pride cortex is the reality of religious identity. This takes many forms, but in its essence, is idolatry.

This particular conflict is epic. The greatest religious system in the world’s history had metastasized into yet one more predator of the human soul. It is almost as if human pride makes us blind. Seriously.

*At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath, and His disciples became hungry and began to pick the heads of grain and eat. But when the Pharisees saw this, they said to Him, “Look, Your disciples do what is **not lawful** to do on a Sabbath.”*

But He said to them, “Have you not read what David did when he became hungry, he and his companions, how he entered the house of God, and they ate the consecrated bread, which was not lawful for him to eat nor for those with him, but for the priests alone? Or have you not read in the Law, that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple break the Sabbath and are innocent? “But I say to you that something greater than the temple is here.

“But if you had known what this means, ‘I desire compassion, and not sacrifice,’ you would not have condemned the innocent. “For the

Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.”

Jesus cuts through the religious BS to the core of it all. We simply cannot be changed or delivered from the outside. It must happen from within. It is not as if Judaism had not experienced deep connection with Truth. But like all human religions, it had begun to feed upon itself - and exercised its' own brand of control - one human over another.

Within the multi-pronged Law of Moses there is a deep core. Jesus described this as the “great” commandments. They are at the root of everything. “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. And you shall love your neighbor as you love yourself.”

This is why Jesus said that “something greater than the temple is here.” He firmly places compassion above sacrifice. This is something the religious mind rejects out of hand. Their pride and their arrogance is breathtaking...

*Departing from there, He went into their synagogue. And **a man was there whose hand was withered**. And they questioned Jesus, asking, “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?” — so that they might accuse Him. And He said to them, “What man is there among you who has a sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will he not take hold of it and lift it out?*

“How much more valuable then is a man than a sheep! So then, it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.” Then He said to the man, “Stretch out your hand!” He stretched it out, and it was restored to normal, like the other. But the Pharisees went out and conspired against Him, as to how they might destroy Him.”

This kind of courage is other-worldly. Jesus knew that confronting the deep hypocrisy of the world's greatest religionists would result in deadly conflict. And yet He walked right to it. Just like a true King would do. He would not shrink back. He would not protect Himself. He would honor His Father no matter the cost.

But Jesus, aware of this, withdrew from there. Many followed Him, and He healed them all, and warned them not to tell who He was, to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet:

“Behold, my Servant Whom I have chosen; my beloved in Whom my soul is well-pleased; I will put my Spirit upon Him, and He shall proclaim justice to the Gentiles, He will not quarrel or cry out, nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets. A battered reed He will not break off, and a smouldering wick He will not put out, until He leads justice to victory.” And in His Name the Gentiles will hope.”

This Isaiah prophecy came hundreds of years before Jesus arrival. God's Servant is also the earth's King. His Kingdom is one of hope. His Kingdom IS justice and leads to true victory.

*Then **a demon-possessed man** who was blind and could not speak was brought to Jesus, and He healed him, so that the man spoke and saw.*

All the crowds were amazed, and were saying, “This man cannot be the Son of David, can he?” But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, “This man casts out demons only by Satan the ruler of the demons.”

This was the best these hypocrites had to offer. You see this tactic in human history. You see it in our modern world view and socio-political discourse. When you cannot defeat someone with truth or reason, accuse them of the very thing they are confronting. “Of course we cannot accept that this Man is turning lives upside down by healing the sick. We cannot deny WHAT He is doing, so we will discredit HOW He is doing it. He is, in a word, evil.” NICE.

And knowing their thoughts Jesus said to them, “Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste; and any city or house divided against itself will not stand. “If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then will his kingdom stand? “If by Satan I cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? For this reason they will be your judges.

“But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. “Or how can anyone enter the strong man’s house and carry off his property, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house.

“He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me scatters. “Therefore I say to you, any sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven people, but blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven. “Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.”

So it doesn’t pay in any way to be opposed to the purposes of Jesus. It is not so much that Jesus is defending His own authority, but He is strongly clarifying that to not recognize the work of God’s Spirit is a fatal error of the soul. We are either in His court or we are not. There is really no middle ground. Trees or poisonous snakes - the point is the same. Good is good and evil is evil. Plain and simple. A stark message for such a grey world.

“Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit. “You brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak what is good? For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart.

“The good man brings out of his good treasure what is good; and the evil man brings out of his evil treasure what is evil. “But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment. “For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”

Apparently this did not deter these religious leaders one bit. Instead of feeling the weight of what was being spoken to them, they insist on another sign from Jesus. Remember, He has just cast out a demon. He has explained what is spiritual and what is not in the clearest of ways. The hardness of their hearts screams out in the face of their Sovereign King.

Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to Him, “Teacher, we

want to see a sign from You.” But He answered and said to them, “An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and yet no sign will be given to it but the sign of **Jonah** the prophet; for just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

“The men of **Nineveh** will stand up with this generation at the judgment, and will condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.”

“The Queen of the South will rise up with this generation at the judgment and will condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of **Solomon**; and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.”

Why Nineveh and Jonah? Why Solomon and the Queen of the South? Jonah reluctantly spoke the true words of God. Solomon was blessed by God with supernatural wisdom. Yet these Pharisees understood neither the authority of God or the wisdom of God.

So Jesus returns to His casting out of an unclean spirit that had launched this entire conversation. He now summarizes the emptiness of the religious heart. Self-reformation is a sham. Becoming self-righteous is a murderous trap. God shows no partiality when it comes to His view of Kingdom spirituality.

“Now when the unclean spirit goes out of a man, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, and does not find it. “Then it says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came’; and when it comes, it finds it unoccupied, swept, and put in order. “Then it goes and takes along with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there; and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first. That is the way it will also be with this evil generation.”

So once again Jesus explains that the heart of the matter is the heart.

In the midst of this spirited conflict Jesus’ family shows up. Jesus loved His family, but He understood and taught that His true family

were those human brothers and sisters who chose to do the will of the Father.

While He was still speaking to the crowds, behold, His mother and brothers were standing outside, seeking to speak to Him. Someone said to Him, "Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside seeking to speak to You."

But Jesus answered the one who was telling Him and said, "Who is My mother and who are My brothers?" And stretching out His hand toward His disciples, He said, "Behold My mother and My brothers!"

"For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother."

Do you want to be a part of Jesus' family? This is where it begins and ends. Believe in Jesus' authority. Follow Him. Hear the Father's voice. Crave to give your life to do the Father's will. This is what it means to be a *true son or daughter* in the family of Jesus.

#11 THE KING EXPLAINS HIS KINGDOM/Matthew 13

That day Jesus went out of the house and was sitting by the sea. And large crowds gathered to Him, so He got into a boat and sat down, and the whole crowd was standing on the beach.

This beautiful event probably occurred dozens of times over Jesus' 3-4 year "public" ministry. The crowds were hungry in heart, often desperately so. Jesus' words were like rain on dry, thirsty ground. Jesus used "parables" to connect deep truth in everyday language. A parable is a story device that allows us to present things side by side.

The words of God needed to be recast for the people, because human nature - and the religious leaders - had co-opted the truth of the Law for self-serving purposes. This is why neither religion

or obsession with self (two extremes) will ever bring any man or woman a truly satisfied, peaceful heart and mind.

THE SOWER

And He spoke many things to them in parables, saying, "Behold, the sower went out to sow; and as he sowed, some seeds fell beside the road, and the birds came and ate them up. "Others fell on the rocky places, where they did not have much soil; and immediately they sprang up, because they had no depth of soil.

"But when the sun had risen, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. "Others fell among the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked them out.

"And others fell on the good soil and yielded a crop, some a hundred-fold, some sixty, and some thirty.

"He who has ears, let him hear."

Not everyone was able to hear the meaning of the parables. The parable of the sower is very broad and very specific at the same time. Jesus speaks with sweeping clarity about the nature of the work of God in the world. *It takes an open, hungry heart to contemplate and receive the meaning of each parable.* They are filled with power to *unlock* spiritual truth.

Notice several things about the parable of the sower:

God is sowing Kingdom seeds in the world

- some seeds are consumed by birds at the side of the road
- others sprung up quickly but died for lack of a root system
- others were choked by the thorns around them
- others sent down roots into good soil, and produced various abundance of crops

Now Jesus makes a breath-taking explanation about people and parables:

And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?" Jesus answered them, "To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted. "For whoever has, to him more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him.

"Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. "In their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, 'You will keep hearing, but will not understand; you will keep on seeing, but will not perceive; for the heart of this people has become dull, with their ears they scarcely hear, and they have closed their eyes, otherwise they would see with their eyes, hear with their ears, and understand with their heart and return, and I would heal them.'

"But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear. "For truly I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.

It is not uncommon for Jesus to speak words that are too deep for surface understanding. Everything Jesus taught was not man-centric, but rather from the perspective of His Father and their shared eternal relationship. This is why Jesus came in human form (the incarnation). The Son created the world. God sent His Son to do His will and "buy back" the souls of men. Jesus *proved* Himself to be God's Son.

He brought the reality of a pure, eternal, and sovereign King into the world of lost, hopeless men. *It is up to us to care enough to seek God.* Those who care will embrace the Kingdom. Those who do not care (or do not take the time or expend the energy - for whatever reason) will not find the Kingdom of heaven.

THE SOWER EXPLAINED

"Hear then the parable of the sower. "When anyone hears the word

of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the one on whom seed was sown beside the road.

“The one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away. “And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.

“And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty.”

So it appears that:

- hearing is not enough/one must connect and find insight
- our hearts are the variant soils
- the evil one is actively snatching away the seeds
- the thorns of life are choking many seeds

All of this to say that our lives are in God’s hands, but our response to God is in our hands. If we care, if we hear, and if we understand - we are on the road to experiencing Kingdom growth.

I have found there are several “chokers” in my own Kingdom experience. Succumbing to *busyness* is a common excuse to not follow Kingdom priorities (hearing and understanding). There is also the challenge of thinking we are *not good enough* or *incapable* of engaging God - all of which plays upon our human insecurity.

We also live in a *relativistic* soup, where there can “*surely be no absolutes*” - no One “true” God Who has spoken. This couples with our natural *passivity* about spiritual things and contributes to *avoidance* and non-commitment. All of these lull us to sleep and keep us from engaging the Kingdom. For many, until it is too late.

Add to this the *encumbrances* (weights) which attach to our souls and the *entanglements* (temptations) that suck up precious heart energy, and we find ourselves in a quagmire of self-deception about what is real and what is not.

Which leads to another Kingdom reality from Jesus' next parable.

THE WHEAT & THE WEEDS

Jesus presented another parable to them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. "But while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed tares (weeds) among the wheat, and went away. "But when the wheat sprouted and produced grain, then the tares became evident also.

"The slaves of the landowner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?' "And he said to them, 'An enemy has done this!' The slaves said to him, 'Do you want us to go and gather them up?'

"But he said, 'No; for while you are gathering up the tares, you may uproot the wheat with them. Allow both to grow together until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn."

The hard thing about "tares" is that even though they look like wheat they are decidedly weeds. Worse yet, the roots of the wheat crop become intertwined with the weeds, and this presents a "waiting until the harvest" effect, for pulling the weeds would take the wheat down with it. So not only the *realities* of sowing need to be navigated, but the *challenge* of growing in an imperfect environment must be addressed as well. So the Kingdom is limited by process, and we find ourselves in circumstances that are useful to the Land-Owner's purposes.

Jesus is not finished, however.

THE MUSTARD SEED

He presented another parable to them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field; and this is smaller than all other seeds, but when it is full grown, it is larger than the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches.

There are three curious things about Jesus' mustard seed version of the Kingdom. 1) it is the *smallest* of garden seeds and 2) when it grows to maturity it is *larger* than the other garden plants and 3) the birds of the air come to nest in the *shelter* of this useful plant.

Jesus is explaining the Kingdom through word pictures - embedded in parables. I learn things from each of the Kingdom parables, and this one is no different. God has shown me that while I may have been the smallest of all seeds when it came to pedigree and personal history, He has placed something supernatural and invaluable inside of me that is designed to grow. He has also spent much time explaining that *shelter is one of His great gifts to the world*, and that even though I might not be the most sought after plant in the garden, I have been planted and grown to do something other plants cannot do: provide shelter. I have taken this quite seriously as I have engaged my home, my friends, and my personal mission.

Jesus now turns to a baking metaphor to explain the Kingdom :)

Leaven is what is used in baking bread, cookies, muffins, pancakes etc. A little bit of the stuff goes a long way. There are over 2000 varieties of this fungus - it is like a mold that feeds on natural sugars and produces carbon dioxide (hence, the air bubbles in bread).

THE LEAVEN

He spoke another parable to them, “The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three pecks of flour until it was all leavened.”

All these things Jesus spoke to the crowds in parables, and He did not speak to them without a parable. This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet: “I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things hidden since the foundation of the world.”

So the “leaven” of the Kingdom (sounds better than fungus, doesn’t it) brings the necessary ingredient of life into God’s recipe for honor, glory, and redemption. Leaven has existed since the dawn of time and is an ever-present picture of what it means to bring beauty and zip into life.

The woman doing the baking in this spiritual metaphor reflects the rich color, creativity, and life-giving contribution women bring into the world. It is quite clear that leaven is a beautiful, simple picture of the nature of the Kingdom.

Now Jesus returns to the weeds (tares) in the field - per request of His disciples. Wow.

THE KINGDOM EXPLANATION

Then He left the crowds and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him and said, “Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field.”

And He said, “The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man, and the field is the world; and as for the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom; and the tares are the sons of the evil one; and the enemy who sowed them is the devil, and the harvest is the end of the age; and the reapers are angels.

“So just as the tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the end of the age. “The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness, and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

“Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.”

We learn several things from His explanation.

- He is the Son of Man and He is sowing good seed
- The world is God’s sowing field
- The good seeds (or sons) are Kingdom seeds
- The tares (weeds) are the sons of the evil one (Satan)
- The weeds are sown by and belong to the devil (his crop)
- The harvest by reaping angels will come at the end of the age
- The tares will be gathered and burned
- The wheat will shine forever in the Kingdom of our Father

If you can hear it, receive it.

But Jesus is not finished. Not only is the Kingdom wrapped up in seeds, soils, and sowing; and like a small mustard seed which *shelters*, and leaven which *energizes* - it is also like hidden treasure of surpassing *worth*. It is the *hope* of uncovered, buried, eternal retirement funds. It is a pinnacle of *value* as an amazing pearl. It is a fishing net of *massive use* to the King - and of great benefit to the fish!

THE HIDDEN TREASURE

“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.

THE AMAZING PEARL

“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.”

THE GREAT NET

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet cast into the sea, and gathering fish of every kind; and when it was filled, they drew it up on the beach; and they sat down and gathered the good fish into containers, but the bad they threw away.

“So it will be at the end of the age; the angels will come forth and take out the wicked from among the righteous, and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

In order to experience a satisfied mind we must see life from the vantage point of our Creator. What does He value? What does He desire from us? How can our lives count for something greater and be rich and full - and most of all, how can we be truly FREE?!

How does your heart respond to these Kingdom parables?

Do you feel like your ears hear?

That your eyes are open?

That your heart is soft toward the King and His Kingdom?

In what ways does your life provide *shelter* to others?

How does your life *energize* the souls of others around you?

In what ways do you feel the Kingdom has *value* to you?

In what ways do you see *the fishing net* in relationship to your life?

These parables have been given to us so we can set our lives along-

side the heart-images presented through them - to help us determine the *value* of King and Kingdom to us - side by side with Jesus' explanation of the Kingdom.

Now it is time to see how His own followers processed His parabolic pictures!

By the way, a "scribe" is someone who processes meaning and records it so it can be conveyed to others.

THE INTERACTION

"Have you understood all these things?" They said to Him, "Yes."

And Jesus said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has become a disciple of the kingdom of heaven is like a head of a household, who brings out of his treasure things new and old."

So this is the REWARD for Kingdom listening and processing. If we have observed His Kingdom parable teachings (scribe) and determined to become a disciple (a growing follower) we are becoming heads of households, bringing out treasures *both old and new*.

When Jesus had finished these parables, He departed from there.

He came to His hometown and began teaching them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished, and said, "Where did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers? "Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary, and His brothers, James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? "And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this man get all these things?"

And they took offense at Him. But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and in his own household."

*And He did not do many miracles there because of their **unbelief**.”*

I can see the newspaper headline now:

HOMETOWN BOY FAILS TO WIN OVER HEARTS
OF COMMUNITY - Faith shortage hampers efforts

Not everyone can receive the truth of the parables OR the Kingdom. *Thank God that you and I have been given the heart to overcome all-too-common unbelief.* To understand the Kingdom of a satisfied mind we MUST decide how we feel about Jesus' parables.

No King - no Kingdom.

No Kingdom - no life.

The Kingdom alternative is much more satisfying!

#12 KINGDOM FRIENDS & ENEMIES

Fear and Faith/Matthew 14:22-15:21

The sea of Galilee is like a huge dish - 13 miles long and about 8 miles wide. It is known for its beauty - and rapid volatility regarding weather changes.

And immediately He made the disciples get into the boat, and go ahead of Him to the other side, while He sent the crowds away. He then went up to the mountain by Himself to pray; and when it was evening, He was there alone. But the boat was already many hundreds of yards away from the land, battered by the waves; for the wind was against them. And in the fourth watch of the night (3-6 AM) He came to them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were frightened, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out because of their fear.”

It is little wonder that Peter, James, John, and the other disciples never turned back once Jesus revealed Himself after His resurrec-

tion. They had lived more in their 3-4 years as His followers than most people can imagine experiencing in a lifetime. Not only did they see the most incredible things that had ever occurred on the earth, they also felt emotional intensity few will ever understand. It is all reflected here in this sea crossing. Fear. Wonder. Exhilaration. Instruction. And this was only one day of hundreds!

But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid." And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water." And He said, "Come!" And Peter got out of the boat, and walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But seeing the wind, he became afraid, and beginning to sink, he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!"

And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and took hold of him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" And when they got into the boat, the wind stopped. And those who were in the boat worshiped Him, saying, "You are certainly God's Son!"

How could these men come to any other conclusion? We have about 30-40 days of Jesus' healings, teaching, and travelling. 30-40 days selected from 3 or 4 years of experiences. Day after day.

And when they had crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret. And when the men of that area recognized Him, they sent into all the surrounding district and brought to Him all who were sick; and they began to earnestly ask that they might just touch the fringe of His coat; and all who touched it were cured.

Before another encounter with the heartless religious leaders, let's take a moment and think about what Jesus' followers were learning. There is no greater fear for fishermen than the realization that they are lost. Added to this, they are struck with "fright" over the apparent apparition of Jesus walking on the water.

Certainly Peter's exhilaration at walking on water (a spiritual high) was eclipsed by that of sinking into stormy seas (a spiritual low). And now, back in the boat, Jesus *stills* the turbulence all around them. It is no wonder that those in the boat conclude that they are travelling with the Son of God. *Who else could it be? How else can*

this be explained?

Do you experience faith? Do you ever feel your faith is being tested? What about storms? Water walking challenges? And most importantly, what conclusion have you come to about Who Jesus is? If only a satisfied mind could come to our door like a package delivery, rather than being worked out in the precarious walk of life!

ENEMY ENCOUNTER

And now, another self-centered and outrageous interaction with the religizencia. They are so obsessed with their traditions that they cannot perceive the power of God - right in front of their faces!

Jesus immediately challenges their traditions with the reality that they set aside God's law when it suits them, and use and twist it to their advantage whenever they wish.

*Then some Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem and said, "Why do Your disciples break the **tradition** of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread."*

And He answered and said to them, "Why do you yourselves transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition? "For God said, 'Honor your father and mother,' and 'He who speaks evil of father or mother is to be put to death.'

"But you say, 'Whoever says to his father or mother, "Whatever I have that would help you has been given to God," he is not to honor his father or his mother.' And by this you invalidated the word of God for the sake of your tradition.

*"You **hypocrites**, rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you: 'This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far away from me. But in vain do they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.'*

*After Jesus called the **crowd** to Him, He said to them, "Hear and understand. "It is not what enters into the mouth that defiles the man, but what proceeds out of the mouth, this defiles the man."*

Jesus speaks later about “straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel.” This was the speciality of the Jewish leaders. They were so concerned with the “outside” that they were willing to let the “inside” crumble. *This is the opposite of Kingdom thinking.* Jesus makes it clear that if we pay attention to the inside - our hearts, then all else will fall into place. This is critical to understanding what it means to find true success - and a satisfied mind! Note how Jesus addresses His followers fear about “offending” those in religious authority.

Then the disciples came and said to Him, “Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this statement?” But He answered and said, “Every plant which My heavenly Father did not plant shall be uprooted. “Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit.”

Peter said to Him, “Explain the parable to us.”

Jesus said, “Are you still lacking in understanding also?”

“Do you not understand that everything that goes into the mouth passes into the stomach, and is eliminated? “But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man. “For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders. “These are the things which defile the man; but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile the man.”

This is where the Kingdom battle lines are drawn. If our interior lives are offered to our King, we will experience the satisfaction and peace only Jesus can provide.

King - Kingdom - Church/Matthew 16:13-20

Jesus continues to address His identity. It is not merely WHAT we know but WHO we know that results in true satisfaction - as well as the kind of empowered living that will make us a success.

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” And they said, “Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still

others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.”

He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

And Jesus said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. “I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.

“I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven.”

Then He warned the disciples that they should tell no one that He was the Christ.

This is a watershed of understanding for someone who wishes to experience a Kingdom life. The question is being asked, “Who is this man?” As you can see, there are various options to consider. But it is Simon Peter the water-walker who nails it. “*You are the Christ (Deliverer), the Son of the Living God.*” And why does he get it? According to Jesus, *it is because God has revealed it to him.*

Up until now Jesus has not mentioned the word “church” as He has trained His followers. He will only speak of it one more time in the Gospels - in the next chapter. No where else in all four Gospels. Why is this? Because the King comes first, His Kingdom next, and then His Church flows from these powerful seeds. It is not the other way around.

I am not running down the idea of church. I have served as a pastor-teacher for over 40 years in a local church. I am merely advocating that the church be seen in the context of the Kingdom. The word church means a “called out assembly.” The Kingdom gives us the WHAT as well as the HOW the church occurs in any and every age. It defines who the “called out assembly” is.

The Kingdom is all about seeds, soils, and sowing. It is like a small mustard seed which shelters and leaven which energizes. It is also like hidden treasure of surpassing worth. It is the hope of uncovered, surprising treasure. It is a pinnacle of value like an amazing pearl. It is a fishing net of massive use to the purposes of the King, and a life-saving benefit to the mostly unaware fish who are busy with fish stuff.

Thank God for the supernatural faith reflected in Peter. It is truly a gift from God!

There are two things we must be on the alert for. One is any *hypocrisy* of religious leaders - ALL religious leaders. The second follows and may be even more perilous...the Trap of SELF and self-interest.

Finding Greatness/Matthew 18:1-35 (Luke 22)

At that time the disciples came to Jesus and said, "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" And He called a child to Himself and set him before them, and said, "Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. "Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

No one seems to be able to escape the reach of *recognition* and *comparison*. And this account about greatness in the Kingdom is not the most disturbing one. Read Luke 22 for greater insight into the challenge (concerning self) when it comes to the Kingdom of Heaven. Personal greatness flows from God's greatness in and through us. Period.

"And whoever receives one such child in My name receives Me; but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him to have a heavy millstone hung around his neck, and to be drowned in the depth of the sea."

“Woe to the world because of its stumbling blocks! For it is inevitable that stumbling blocks come; but woe to that man through whom the stumbling block comes! “If your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; it is better for you to enter life crippled or lame, than to have two hands or two feet and be cast into the eternal fire.”

Embracing the Kingdom unfolds within *spiritual vigilance*. This kind of intentionality is something only God can produce - it is His gift to mankind. All we can do is stay the course - and get out of the way! It doesn't mean we are useless, but that we must yield to our King. *He is the One Who guides us into the path of a satisfied mind, which is what brings true success to our lives.*

“If your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out and throw it from you. It is better for you to enter life with one eye, than to have two eyes and be cast into the fiery hell. “See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that their angels in heaven continually see the face of My Father who is in heaven.

[“For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost.]

THE LOST SHEEP/THE LITTLE ONES

Our spiritual vigilance extends to the people around us. Jesus understood this better than anyone, and He takes the time to explain this on many occasions, including now.

“What do you think? If any man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go and search for the one that is straying?

“If it turns out that he finds it, truly I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine which have not gone astray. “So it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones perish.

He now moves from sheep to brothers.

“If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. “But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed.

“If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. “Truly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven.

“Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven. “For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst.”

*Then Peter came and said to Him, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?”
Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.”*

Peter, ever the keen listener, internalizes and quantifies how this kind of forgiveness manifests itself. Can you imagine the look on his face as Jesus launches into these additional Kingdom parables?!

As we read, remember that Jesus has just spoken of lost sheep and brother forgiveness. When seen in this context these parables are truly breathtaking!

THE KING & HIS SLAVES

By the way, don't stumble over the term “slave.” It has little to do with our American slavery experience and is better compared to one who serves fairly and is treated fairly - even protected. Someone told me once that a “bond-servant” was like a person who had been a slave, fulfilled his commitment, and because of love for his master and protection that relationship provided, chose to serve

or “bond” himself to his master. What a picture, albeit hard for the American mind and heart to grasp.

“For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. “When he had begun to settle them, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. “But since he did not have the means to repay, his lord commanded him to be sold, along with his wife and children and all that he had, and repayment to be made.

“So the slave fell to the ground and prostrated himself before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me and I will repay you everything.’

“And the lord of that slave felt compassion and released him and forgave him the debt.

“But that slave went out and found one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred days wages; and he seized him and began to choke him, saying, ‘Pay back what you owe.’

“So his fellow slave fell to the ground and began to plead with him, saying, ‘Have patience with me and I will repay you.’ “But he was unwilling and went and threw him in prison until he should pay back what was owed. “So when his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were deeply grieved and came and reported to their lord all that had happened.

*“Then summoning him, his lord said to him, ‘**You wicked slave, I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave, in the same way that I had mercy on you?**’ “And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him.*

“My heavenly Father will also do the same to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart.”

The King is always concerned about the heart. Pure and simple.

After a brief interlude with the religious leaders and some instruction for His followers in chapter 19, Jesus returns to His Kingdom parables.

#13 THE STORIES OF THE KINGDOM

The Landowner/Matthew 20

The heart always propels us to compare ourselves with those around us rather than to contemplate our individual standing before our King.

“For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. “When he had agreed with the laborers for a days wages for the day, he sent them into his vineyard.

“And he went out about the third hour and saw others standing idle in the market place; and to those he said, ‘You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right I will give you.’ And so they went.

“Again he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour, and did the same thing. “And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, ‘Why have you been standing here idle all day long?’ “They said to him, ‘Because no one hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You go into the vineyard too.’

“When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, ‘Call the laborers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last group to the first.’ “When those hired about the eleventh hour came, each one received a days wages.

“When those hired first came, they thought that they would receive more; but each of them also received a days wages. “When they received it, they grumbled at the landowner, saying, ‘These last men

have worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden and the scorching heat of the day.'

"But he answered and said to one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for a days wages? "Take what is yours and go, but I wish to give to this last man the same as to you. 'Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with what is my own? Or is your eye envious because I am generous?'

"So the last shall be first, and the first last."

Kind of makes you want to be content with not leading the pack. It also is a real statement on our views of what is fair and what is unfair. But this is a tough one to process, is it not?

The Wedding Feast/Matthew 22

Now Jesus turns to a gut-wrenching Kingdom parable that is hard to even imagine. We need to see it in it's most human sense. Remember, a parable places one thing alongside another, in order to demonstrate a principle or a teaching.

Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son. "And he sent out his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding feast, and they were unwilling to come.

"Again he sent out other slaves saying, 'Tell those who have been invited, "Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fattened livestock are all butchered and everything is ready; come to the wedding feast."' "But they paid no attention and went their way, one to his own farm, another to his business, and the rest seized his slaves and mistreated them and killed them.

"But the king was enraged, and he sent his armies and destroyed those murderers and set their city on fire. "Then he said to his slaves, 'The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy.

'Go therefore to the main highways, and as many as you find there, invite to the wedding feast.'

"Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered together all they found, both evil and good; and the wedding hall was filled with dinner guests. "But when the king came in to look over the dinner guests, he saw a man there who was not dressed in wedding clothes, and he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without wedding clothes?' And the man was speechless.

"Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' "For many are called, but few are chosen."

I suppose it would be fair to say that everyone is called to the feast. By virtue of all the Bible says about how God reveals Himself, everyone has enough data to seek his or her Creator. It is the distractions that lure us from greater things. Here are a few reflected in this parable.

- a lack of judgment about what is important
- a disdain for authority
- the farmer, the businessman, and the murderers are all considered
- the King took guests from the highways
- the King exits those with no wedding clothes

It is important to note that in the bigger context beyond this parable, there is a clear picture of "wedding clothing."

Revelation 19.8

"It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints."

Revelation 19.14

"And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses."

Do you treasure your invitation to the Wedding Feast?

Now Jesus again turns to the religious leaders in chapter 23, and gives them His most stringent criticism yet. While Jesus is explaining the Kingdom in Matthew, He is also explaining what the Kingdom IS NOT. Enter the hypocrites.

The End/Matthew 24

The Mount of Olives is right outside of Jerusalem and includes the Garden of Gethsemane which is at the foot of the mountain. You could actually see the Temple from the Garden of Gethsemane.

To fully understand the Kingdom we must grasp the fact that it is every bit as much a physical kingdom as it is a spiritual Kingdom. What Jesus describes in this parable is the end of the world as we know it, and the beginning of the age to come.

What we choose to embrace and give up in this life is completely tied to the Kingdom we will receive in the future - a Kingdom and existence that will have no end!

Jesus came out from the temple and was leaving when His disciples came up to point out the temple buildings to Him. And He said to them, "Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, not one stone here will be left upon another, which will not be torn down."

*As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, **when will these things happen**, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"*

And Jesus answered and said to them, "See to it that no one misleads you. "For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will mislead many.

*"You will be hearing of **wars and rumors of wars**. See that you are not frightened, for those things must take place, but that is not yet the end. "For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be **famines and earthquakes**.*

“But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs.

*“Then they will deliver you to **tribulation**, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name. At that time many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another.*

*“Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many. “Because lawlessness is increased, **most people’s love will grow cold**. “But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved.*

“This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.

“Therefore when you see the “Abomination of Desolation” which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains.

“Whoever is on the housetop must not go down to get the things out that are in his house. “Whoever is in the field must not turn back to get his cloak. “But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! “But pray that your flight will not be in the winter, or on a Sabbath.

*“For then there will be a **great tribulation**, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will. “Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the chosen ones those days will be cut short.*

“Then if anyone says to you, ‘Behold, here is the Christ,’ or ‘There He is,’ do not believe him. “For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect. “Behold, I have told you in advance.

“So if they say to you, ‘Behold, He is in the wilderness,’ do not go out, or, ‘Behold, He is in the inner rooms,’ do not believe them. “For just as the lightning comes from the east and flashes even to the west, so will the coming of the Son of Man be. “Wherever the corpse is, there the

vultures will gather.

“But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

“And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming in the Clouds of the sky with power and great glory.

“And He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together His chosen ones from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.

*“Now learn the **parable from the fig tree**: when its branch has already become tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near; so, you too, **when you see all these things, recognize that He is near, right at the door.***

*“Truly I say to you, **this generation** will not pass away until all these things take place. **“Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away.***

*“But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone. “For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of **Noah**. “For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so will the coming of the Son of Man be.*

“Then there will be two men in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. “Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one will be left.

*“Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming. “But be sure of this, that if the **head of the house** had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have*

been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into.

It is really quite amazing when you consider that Jesus has just commented on everything from Creation to His Second Coming. Of course, we will have to wait to see if everything He says comes true, but I am placing my future hope on the fact that it will. While eternity will have its share of great bliss for His children, Jesus has carefully explained to all of humanity how the end will come. *He encourages us all to be alert - to be ready!*

*“For this reason you also must be **ready**; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will. “Who then is the **faithful and sensible servant** whom his master put in charge of his household to give them their food at the proper time? “Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes.*

“Truly I say to you that he will put him in charge of all his possessions. “But if that evil slave says in his heart, ‘My master is not coming for a long time,’ and begins to beat his fellow slaves and eat and drink with drunkards; the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour which he does not know, and will cut him in pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing (biting and grinding) of teeth.

Are you ready for the end of the age? Are you preparing? How do you feel about it? What do you dislike? What encourages you?

The Virgins and the Parable of the Talents/Matthew 25

As Jesus prepares His disciples with the events of the end, He is also very careful to continue to develop the *readiness* aspect of what is unfolding. Perhaps most important of all is our preparation of heart and soul.

The parable of the *ten virgins* amplifies the fact that “no man knows the hour or the day.” The parable of the *talents* encourages us to be Kingdom productive and not to bury our head in the sand when it comes to our spirituality. By the way, a “talent” was a large amount of money, and the “right hand” is the hand of favor.

*“Then the kingdom of heaven will be comparable to **ten virgins**, who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. “Five of them were foolish, and five were sensible in their preparation. “For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, but those who were thinking ahead took oil in flasks along with their lamps.*

“Now while the bridegroom was delaying, they all got drowsy and began to nod off. “But at midnight there was a shout, ‘The bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ “Then all the virgins rose and trimmed their lamps.

“The foolish said to the prudent, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ “But the prudent answered, ‘No, there will not be enough for us and you too; go instead to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.’

“And while they were going away to make the purchase, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast; and the door was shut.

“Later the other virgins also came, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open up for us.’ “But he answered, ‘Truly I say to you, I do not know you.’ “Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour.

*“For it is just like **a man about to go on a journey**, who called his own slaves and entrusted his possessions to them. “To one he gave five talents, to another, two, and to another, one, each according to his own ability; and he went on his journey.*

“Immediately the one who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and gained five more talents. “In the same manner

the one who had received the two talents gained two more.

“But he who received the one talent went away, and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money.

“Now after a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. “The one who had received the five talents came up and brought five more talents, saying, ‘Master, you entrusted five talents to me. See, I have gained five more talents.’

“His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’

*“Also the one who had received the two talents came up and said, ‘Master, you entrusted two talents to me. See, I have gained two more talents.’ “His master said to him, ‘**Well done, good and faithful servant. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.**’*

“And the one also who had received the one talent came up and said, ‘Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you scattered no seed. ‘And I was afraid, and went away and hid your talent in the ground. See, you have what is yours.’

“But his master answered and said to him, ‘You wicked, lazy slave, you knew that I reap where I did not sow and gather where I scattered no seed. ‘Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my money back with interest.

*“Therefore take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents.’ “**For to everyone who has, more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away.** “Throw out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

“But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. “All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left.

*“Then the King will say to those on His **right**, ‘Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*

The whole thing is pretty clear. Light and darkness. Good and evil. Kingdom of heaven and the kingdoms of men. Sheep and goats. And in all of it, Jesus is VERY concerned with how we respond to others, particularly those in need...

*‘For I was **hungry**, and you gave Me something to eat; I was **thirsty**, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you **invited** Me in; naked, and you **clothed** Me; I was sick, and you **visited** Me; I was in prison, and **you came** to Me.’*

“Then the righteous will answer Him, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You something to drink? ‘And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You? ‘When did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’

“The King will answer and say to them, ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.’

*“Then He will also say to those on His **left**, ‘Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry, and you gave Me nothing to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me nothing to drink; I was a stranger, and you did not invite Me in; naked, and you did not clothe Me; sick, and in prison, and you did not visit Me.’*

“Then they themselves also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and

did not take care of You?'

*"Then He will answer them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.'
"These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."*

THE KINGDOM PARABLES

We have encountered many Kingdom parables within the scope of this book. Each one gives us multiple insights into what it means to be a son or daughter of the Kingdom.

The Sower
The Wheat & the Weeds
The Mustard Seed
The Leaven
The Hidden Treasure
The Net
The Lost Sheep
The Little Ones
The King & His Servants
The Landowner
The Wedding Feast
The Ten Virgins
The Talents
The Fig Tree

It was important to Jesus to leave mankind these keys to be able to spiritually unlock the meaning of the Kingdom, whether one lived as His contemporary or thousands of years after He had returned to His Father.

These Kingdom stories are a huge part of the "keys of the Kingdom" upon which He would "build His Church!" They are given for us to understand and explain the nature of Christ's Kingdom as we "fish

for men” on our journey toward a satisfied mind - a life of experiencing true peace and rest!

#14 THE KING IS CROWNED **Matthew 27.35-37**

This is the culmination of Jesus’ earthly Kingship. His miracles have been accomplished. His teaching has been spoken to the world. His parables have been launched. His humanity and His “godness” has been established. He will now become the King His Father wants Him to be - the suffering servant King Who will take away the sin of the world.

Notice how the Roman governor Pontias Pilate refers to Jesus as he interrogates the Son of God. And note how Jesus responds with some of the last words He would speak before His death.

John 18.37 Therefore Pilate said to Him, “So You are a king?” Jesus answered, *“You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.”*

And when they had crucified Him, they divided up His garments among themselves by casting lots. And sitting down, they began to keep watch over Him there. And above His head they put up the charge against Him which read, “This is Jesus the King of the Jews.”

The heartless Jewish leaders were self-serving until the very end of their murderous process. Hardness of heart is breathtaking. John 19.21 - “So the chief priests of the Jews were saying to Pilate, “Do not write, ‘The King of the Jews’; but merely that He said, ‘I am King of the Jews.’”

Matthew 27.50-54

And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth shook and the rocks were split.

The tombs were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the tombs after His resurrection they entered the holy city and appeared to many.

Now the centurion, and those who were with him keeping guard over Jesus, when they saw the earthquake and the things that were happening, became very frightened and said, "Truly this was the Son of God!"

There are several very important Kingdom teachings in this passage.

#1 Notice that as Jesus feels *forsaken* He also *forgives* His killers who are crucifying Him. - Luke 23:24

#2 *Jesus yields up His own spirit.*
This is a choice that Jesus makes.

"No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father."
- John 10.18

#3 *The veil of the temple is torn in two from top to bottom.*
He not only satisfied the requirements of the Law of Moses (love for God, for one another, and the shedding of blood to cover sin), He opens a way to God that Moses could not do.

"Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.” - Hebrews 10.19-25

In the Tabernacle and Temple, which were the historic mobile and stationary places that the Hebrew people met God, there were two rooms. The outer room, the Holy Place, was where the priests performed their duties which were proscribed in the books of Exodus and Leviticus.

The second room, the Holy of Holies, was set apart by a large “veil” or curtain, through which the High Priest would enter once each year. He would sprinkle animal blood from sacrifices on the mercy seat for himself and the rest of the people. The Holy of Holies was where the “ark of the covenant” resided, and the mercy seat was the cover of the ark. Jesus, our great high priest, died and tore this veil from top to bottom, sprinkling His perfect, sinless blood for your sins and mine.

#4 The earth shakes and the rocks are split.

This would have been hard not to notice. It is one thing to have an earthquake, quite another to be of a magnitude that splits rocks.

#5 The centurion embraced Who Jesus was.

This earthquake impressed the Centurion who was standing next to Jesus. I wonder how it made Pilate and his wife feel, as well as the others standing by?

Matthew 27.19

While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent him a message, saying, “Have nothing to do with that righteous Man; for last night I suffered greatly in a dream because of Him.”

#6 The tombs are opened and dead people resurrect and move about

Jerusalem in the wake of His resurrection three days later.

The earthquake would have been disturbing enough to those living in Jerusalem, but what would THIS do? Uncle Zeke shows up at your house - after being dead for days or even years! There is little wonder why this event turned the world upside down!

There is ample first hand, eye-witness, historical evidence that Jesus not only lived and died, but that He also raised from the dead! We can choose avoidance and ignorance to the peril of our souls. We can reject the supernatural reality of the resurrection and its implication for us personally.

Or we can acknowledge that only a spiritual King could pull this off!

#15 THE RETURN OF THE KING **Revelation 19:11-16/Matthew 28**

Matthew 28 is just one of the beautiful eyewitness accounts of the resurrection of Jesus, the Son of God. This is key, because Jesus must return a second time to complete His Father's will - and to establish His Kingdom. This would be a good time to read Matthew 28 and decide for yourself whether or not Jesus really did raise from the dead.

Matthew tells the "Story" to his Jewish audience. *Mark* expresses the truth of the resurrection to his Roman listeners. *Luke* gives his precise, chronological account within the amazing events of Jesus' Story. And *John* paints his resurrection representation from the vantage point of his close friendship with Jesus and the other disciples.

His followers certainly believed it! They would now turn the world upside down with the message of Life. And speaking of eyewitnesses, you might enjoy reading 1 Corinthians 15 as you think about

the implications of this spectacular event.

We now turn to the final book of the God Story, the Revelation of Jesus Christ, where we view what is commonly called the “second coming” of the King.

And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war.

His eyes are a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems; and He has a name written on Him which no one knows except Himself. He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.

And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses. From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty.

And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, “King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.”

“Manger-Jesus” is so tame. We can control Him. He is a baby, after all. *Childhood Jesus* is Someone about Whom we have very little information. Certainly harmless, at least until He was a teenager.

Teacher and Healer Jesus becomes problematic for not only the Jewish religious leaders, but for the human heart. We must discredit His supernaturality or the implications are just too personal and far-reaching.

Second-Coming Jesus is just so “not PC.” He rides a horse rather than a BMW or a Prius. He does not come to pat on the back and preach harmonic convergence to the human race, He arrives to wage war. He is not meek and demure, He is down-right scary. He is coming to make all things right - from His Father’s perspective.

It is little wonder proud humanity feels the need to miscast Him.

ALL AUTHORITY

So everything distills to this moment - this decision - this commitment to the King. Is He the King of the earth? Is He more than the founder of a 2000 year old religion? Is He the King of your heart?

Check out Paul's answer to these questions.

“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities — all things have been created through Him and for Him.”

“He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.”

*“He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have **first place** in everything.”*

For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.

- Colossians 1:15-20

From these and other passages it appears that spiritual life happens in this order.

KING - NEXT KINGDOM - THEN CHURCH.

What is any local expression of God, any “called out assembly,” if it is not submitted to the King? Church is much more than a place we

GO. Church is WHO we are. We are, after all, a defined part of the “army” that comes with Him in the clouds. SERIOUSLY.

The true Kingdom servant wishes to see Christ have “first place” in the heart of every man, woman, and child.

#16 WHY FOLLOW?

Matthew 4.19

And He said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.”

Our time upon the earth is limited. One day - several decades - or a hundred years. Why should we live for a future we have never seen? Why should we set our self impulses aside because of the words and heart of a King Who came to the earth so long ago?

The answer to this is simple. **He deserves it.** Jesus and His Father paid the ultimate price to buy “many sons and daughters” back from eternal death. *If we are eternal beings with a soul, then what is the value of what Jesus and His Father have brought about?*

But what does it mean to give our lives to this King? What will be the cost? What is the potential reward? If I make my journey His journey, what will be the result?

“Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.

“For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.

“For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?”

“For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and will then repay every man according to his deeds.”
- Matthew 16.24-26

His consistency throughout the God Story is astonishing!

Paul thought this through biblically and personally, and we learn several things from his words. Such as: Hope is for this life as well as the life to come. Also: If there is no eternal life and we have chosen to submit to this King our choice was a pitiful one - no hope - no eternal life/no eternal life - no hope.

“If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied.” - 1 Corinthians 15.19

What do you think? Are we making the right choice by embracing and trusting our King with the safekeeping of our soul?

THE CROWNS OF THE KINGDOM

Because Jesus will return a second time, and because until then He has asked us to sacrifice and submit ourselves to His Kingship over our personal wills and desires, it seems encouraging to consider the REWARD of making such a decision to “bend the knee.”

Now before we get all excited about what we will “get” from God because we have chosen His Kingship, let’s take a look at the concept of “crowns” that is woven through the scriptures.

And this part is important - because you want to be able to see some of the ultimate destination now - and it is quite motivating!

Philippians 4.1

*“Therefore, my beloved brethren whom I long to see, **my joy and crown**, in this way stand firm in the Lord, my beloved.”*

Standing firm in His Kingship appears to result in **deep love** for others - something we will surely carry into the life to come. Have you ever wondered what we will do together for eternity? I believe the story of love and personal sacrifice will be woven into endless conversation. Definitely worth our choice to stand firm and receive our crown.

1 Thessalonians 2.19

*“For who is our hope or joy or crown of **exultation**? Is it not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming?”*

We will experience a crown of unspeakable **joy** (exultation) when He returns, and it will directly relate to our role as we have “fished for men.” Every time we have set ourselves aside - our interests, our desires, our natural inclination - we are investing in God’s process of redemption or “buying back” the souls of men.

When God’s good works flow through us, we are *storing up* a joyful crown of exultation.

2 Timothy 4.8

*“In the future there is laid up for me the **crown of righteousness**, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.”*

As I have faithfully lived my life **counting on** and hoping for His return, I will experience what is called “the crown of righteousness.” Not my own righteousness, but His righteousness, given to me for *believing* He will return. It is a faith thing!

James 1.12

“Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been ap-

*proved, he will receive the **crown of life** which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.”*

Whatever life takes (or even robs from us) will be returned many times over. This is a cornerstone of all of the ancient parables and stories of faith. While this life is precious and beautiful on so many levels, it is “not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed.” Or as Paul put it specifically:

“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.”
- Romans 8.18

Our crown of LIFE is our reward, the reward of loving our King and placing hope in His return!

1 Peter 5.4

*“And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading **crown of glory.**”*

This is a really hopeful crown concept because whenever and wherever people are cared for and shepherded, the “chief shepherd” notices. The One Who cares about sheep places high value on others who do the same - and gives the shining crown of glory as His reward to those who have engaged in caring for others “in His Name.”

Revelation 2.10

*‘Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the **crown of life.**’*

I am so glad to live in America. We are so “faith safe.” My wife Burnadette consistently reads, keeps track, and prays for suffering believers around the world. And there are many. Some pay the ultimate price for their faith.

Whatever the crown of life is - it belongs to the men, women, and children who are *tested* in the most severe ways. It is nice to know that He is watching, that He is keeping track, and that He is waiting to reward those who give to our King in the deepest of ways. After all, even vengeance belongs to God. Wow.

Revelation 3.11

*"I am coming quickly; hold fast what you have, so that no one will take **your crown**."*

Be strong! Your crown is coming. Our Master is bringing His reward. IT WILL ALL BE WORTH IT!

Let's return to the term "diadems" or "crowns" we encountered earlier in Revelation 19.

*"His eyes are a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems." Crown means "to encircle." Jesus has **many** crowns.*

Here's a radical thought. What if our individual crowns are woven into His many crowns? This makes sense to me on so many levels.

My crowns are His crowns. His crowns are my crowns.
Our crowns are the Father's crowns!

Check this out:

Then comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. - 1 Corinthians 15.24

If our crowns are His crowns, wow. Double Wow!

Everything will be handed over to the glory of our God and Father.

OUR RETURN TO THE FOUR KINGDOM SUCCESS CHALLENGES

This Kingdom book has been a long time coming for me. At first I didn't know any better and for the first several years of my Christ-following. It was all about church. Church was the model.

The local church is splintered and on every corner. Everyone has a little different perspective on "doctrine." Competition for sheep is high. The paralysis of tradition is often in full flower. There is much variance on what is "true" and what is not. And so the church has become every bit as *relative* as the American soup in which we live.

As I mentioned earlier, it is not that I reject the local church. I have given my adult life to shepherding. Christ is King. He is the Head of the Church. I deeply believe this. I think the *true diversity* of function and beauty in the American and the world Church is wonderful.

Perhaps being birthed into the American church at this time in history necessitated a paradigm of "where we GO" rather than "who we ARE." But what began to emerge for me as I read the Word was *a recognition of true authority*. For my lawless heart - there needed to be something else.

And kindly, carefully, Jesus helped me to understand that it was King first - Kingdom second - and then from this supernatural combination the Church was "called out" in the world. Christ-following is BEING more than it is the DOING.

The King and His Kingdom is near whenever there is deep drive to see Him have "first place" in everything. And this has not only revolutionized my exterior life - my behavior - it has overtaken my interior life as I have grown in my ability to "decrease, so that He can increase."

So I ask you, I implore you, to allow Jesus to help you build His kingdom of a satisfied mind within you. It is my hope to hear these words when I stand before my Sovereign and King: "Well done,

good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.”

So let's relate what we have read about the Kingdom over these pages to our original success challenges from page 11. How do I achieve the goal of a satisfied mind?

Success Challenge #1:

Engage honest conversation with yourself about what you want out of life. By reflecting upon what *you want* you will be better able to place it next to *what Jesus wants* for your journey. It takes effort to engage in honest personal evaluation. But it is well worth it!

This is one of the wonderful things about the Kingdom teaching we have just looked at. It is all about *honesty*. And *unashamed transparency*. I don't have to clean myself up to be worthy of God, He has done just that by covering my soul with the precious blood of Christ. The Kingdom is a curious blend of obedient grace. We find ourselves by losing ourselves, and by surrendering to our King we find rest from the meaningless futility of life which excludes God.

How do we do this?

- ask God each day to allow you not to *hide* but to courageously and fearlessly face the Light He has so lavishly poured out upon the world
- choose to not make *excuses* for interior and exterior behavior that hurts others or falls short of the “great commandment” of “loving the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength... and love your neighbor as you love yourself”
- reject and renounce the other *voices* from within and without that cause you to be bound in *shame* or to lift yourself above others

Success Challenge #2:

Find a *Source* you can trust to “self-mentor” your quest toward a satisfied mind. (see addendum: How can I trust the Bible? - the God Story). There are SO many life philosophies from which to choose - how can a person be sure he or she will achieve a satisfied mind? We must be guided by the Source in order to succeed.

How do we do this?

It is up to each one of us to determine what we will do with our time - the years, the days, the hours, and the moments that belong to us. Our lives are like a river, running steadily toward the sea. When you and I choose to “buy back” or redeem portions of our flowing time for the purposes of God, we are choosing to follow God’s path of wisdom rather than the well-worn path of human self-interest.

The Kingdom teachings are guideposts to call us to return to the path of life. To regain perspective. To invest our lives in eternal things rather than things which slip away.

Building regular *reflection* into your life is key. What worked today? Where do I need to make things right with others? With God? What am I doing to draw close to Jesus?

How am I prioritizing my heart and life to make sure I will hear the words “well done” when I stand before my Master King? Am I familiar with His ways? How do I respond to the reality of a lifestyle of resetting my compass over and over again?

Success Challenge # 3:

Invite the spiritual process of interacting personally with Jesus’ teaching about His Kingship and His Kingdom. Once you have determined whether or not Jesus is the King over the entire earth, your end-game becomes much more clear. If this is a stretch for you, ask your Creator to meet you on the road to personal connection.

Some people are *lazy*. There is always tomorrow, right? Some of us are content to be *ignorant*. If I am *unaware*, then I fancy myself to be off the hook. Some of us are great at making *excuses*. We have our litany of reasons and philosophies that bring false comfort to the part of us that is our “God-shaped hole.”

And some choose *self-gratification* to the point of being absorbed by self. Some choose *relativism* as a cop out. How can someone really know anything? After all, no One God has distinguished

Himself as worthy to be my God.

These and many other self-reasons allow us to obscure the God Who has created us. But the Kingdom heart is *courageous*. It is *hungry* to investigate, to learn, and to experience the God Who has revealed Himself to us through the macro and micro of nature and science, in philosophy, and through specific revelation and supernatural intervention. Note the pages yet to come on Interpretation and revelation (pages 84-86).

Success Challenge #4:

Find *other* men and/or women who are *courageous and willing to ask* penetrating questions as you engage the Kingdom process. Some people represent faith constructs as lesser or non-intellectual. This is not only arrogant it is a fatal blow to the soul.

Find and engage friends who are open to faith. We certainly don't have to check our intellect at the door in order to courageously face the deep questions about our destiny. The great questions of life need and deserve to be asked and answered. Really!

Of course, all of the instruction or intentionality in the world means nothing if you and I place no value on honoring our King. If we are content to BE kings we are probably going to struggle with submitting to our King.

Religion is simply inadequate. It cannot bring you a satisfied mind that will carry you into the life to come. Jesus had His major human conflict with religious people. The corruption that is "in the world through lust" invades and even inhabits the halls of religion. And let's not forget the empty "no God" world.

The Kingdom is the only place to truly find the King. Finding others who are searching to connect with the King is key to true success.

I hope the time you have invested together with me thinking about the Kingdom has been helpful.

See you in heaven - I plan on being there :)

Dave Nadler

You can find me at 4@fourthstream.com

BUILDING YOUR KINGDOM!

We each are building our own kingdom.
This is the nature of life.
God has created our lives for fulfillment and enjoyment.
But also for higher purpose.
Kingdom purpose.

HE WANTS US TO SUCCEED IN FINDING A SATISFIED MIND.

Remember what Jesus told His followers in Matthew 13:

*And the disciples came and said to Him,
“Why do You speak to them in parables?”*

*Jesus answered them,
“To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the
kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted.*

*“For whoever has, to him more shall be given,
and he will have an abundance; but whoever does not have,
even what he has shall be taken away from him.*

*“Therefore I speak to them in parables;
because while seeing they do not see,
and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.*

***“But blessed are your eyes, because they see;
and your ears, because they hear.***

*“For truly I say to you that many prophets and righteous men
desired to see what you see, and did not see it,
and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.”*

***Here is a little added content about the Kingdom -
if you are so inclined!***

ADDED CONTENT: CAN YOU COUNT ON THE BIBLE?

The Bible is unique among literature and stellar in spiritual quality. If *mankind* were going to write a book about our history and our accomplishments, it would certainly contain little of what the Bible records. The picture is simply not that flattering. The focus of the God-Story is not upon mankind, but upon the One who created us.

The scriptures paint the entire God-story - along with what is already written in the *stars* or upon the building blocks of *life*, or etched upon the *conscience* and *heart* of every man and woman.

After personal investigation I have concluded that the supernatural quality of the scriptures makes it plain that even though human authors were used, the Holy Spirit's hand was upon them and their words. The argument that the Bible is “a collection of teachings of men” has been firmly challenged by history, modern scholarship, and the personal examination and encounter of millions. *There is not a person on the face of the earth (or has there ever been) who is not living by some tenants of faith.*

Within the pages of the Bible is one account after another of men and women in different times and different places who are all struggling to find God - and ultimately, deep meaning during our brief years upon the earth. The Bible tells the story in the words of actual flesh and blood souls, those who have experienced God first-hand. These people's lives have been recorded for us so that we, too,

may search for God and find Him, and along with knowing Him, find eternal life!

A few words about revelation...

The Bible explains exactly how God has chosen to reveal Himself.

Through everything that has been made...can you see it?

Romans 1:20 “For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood *through what has been made*, so that they are without excuse.”

Through His eternal Law delivered through the Jews...do you know it?

2 Corinthians 3:3 “being manifested that you are a letter of Christ, cared for by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on *tablets of human hearts*.”

Through His eternal Son, Jesus the Nazarene...can you hear Him?

Hebrews 1:1-4 “God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, *whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world*.

And He is the *radiance of His glory* and the *exact representation of His nature*, and *upholds all things by the word of His power*. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high...”

Revelation - do you believe it?

ADDED CONTENT: INTERPRETING & TEACHING THE BIBLE - HAS GOD REVEALED HIMSELF?

The concept of Revelation

It seems that one of the great questions of life is “Has God spoken - and how can we determine authenticity?” There are many paradigms espousing the ways God has or has not revealed Himself to humanity.

The Atheist and Agnostic

This religious group denies supernatural revelation from our personal Creator. By rejecting the reality and authenticity of supernatural intervention, they reject the revelation (and God) represented in the Bible.

The Cultist

Throughout history many “religions” have sprung from personal experience, ignorance, exploitation and avarice, and self-love, as well as self-loathing. Founders, leaders, and followers take what they perceive to be true about God and impose it on their particular system of beliefs. Most religions of the world find their roots in this view of revelation.

The Religionist

There are many motivations to quantify what it means to be pleasing to God. Religion capitalizes on this to exert control over people that cannot be achieved by brute force or mere indoctrination. By manipulating people through their “brand”, religionists shape belief paradigms to achieve desired results re: influence, money, control et al.

The Proof Texter

It is often common to take verses or concepts from the Bible or other religious writings and pervert them to fit the hopes of the founders or adherents. Rather than allowing the scriptures to interpret themselves, passages are assembled for a desired result. Rather than sound doctrine, the result is truncated teaching and man-centered dogma.

The Topical Approach

There are many great themes represented in the Bible (as well as other religious writings). These “truths” are recognized by careful observation and study. Here it is common to begin with a deep desire to be relevant in order to maximize success. By taking these great “themes” of the Bible and presenting them systematically and efficiently, good things have and can be achieved.

Exposition

In this approach teachers and followers are committed to allowing the original text explain God and His ways. It is built upon exposing original meaning and discovering spirituality through the authority of the text. The supremacy of the Word in the original languages forms the basis for expositional teaching. Thorough teachers find their home here.

The Safest, most authentic Approach

The safest way to interpret and teach the Bible is to *allow the Bible to interpret itself*. The idea that there are “many interpretations” of the Scriptures is way overblown. When the “old” and “new” testaments consult one another (which a good faithful teacher will insist upon) there are very few up-in-the-air passages in the scriptures. *Good scholarship and teaching will allow the Scriptures to interpret themselves as one woven, inspired, supernatural whole.*

1 Corinthians 4:6 and Revelation 22:18 are good guideposts for any teacher of God’s revelation.

I share these perspectives to help you understand how to pursue authentic principles and discern the true sense of what God has revealed/is revealing in the God Story! We must be careful as we pursue solid understanding of what comes from man - and what comes from our Creator and King.

**ADDED CONTENT:
THE KINGDOM AND THE CHURCH
Intertwined for the purposes of God**

Fueled by the message and reality of the Kingdom, Jesus' Church began to be called out from among the Jews and the Gentiles - from every nation and every tribe.

Acts 1:3

To these He also *presented Himself alive after His suffering, by many convincing proofs*, appearing to them over a period of forty days and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God."

Acts 1:6

So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, "Lord, is it at this time You are *restoring the kingdom* to Israel?"

Acts 8:12

"But when they believed Philip *preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ*, they were being baptized, men and women alike."

Acts 14:22

Strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying, "*Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.*"

Acts 19:8

"And he entered the synagogue and continued speaking out boldly for three months, *reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God.*"

Acts 20:25

"And now, behold, I know that all of you, *among whom I went about preaching the kingdom*, will no longer see my face."

Acts 28:23

"*When they had set a day for Paul, they came to him at his lodging in*

large numbers; and he was explaining to them by solemnly testifying about the kingdom of God and trying to persuade them concerning Jesus, from both the Law of Moses and from the Prophets, from morning until evening.”

Acts 28:31

“Preaching the kingdom of God and teaching concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all openness, unhindered.”

Romans 14:17

“For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”

1 Corinthians 4:20

“For the kingdom of God does not consist in words but in power. “

1 Corinthians 6:9

“Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God.”

1 Corinthians 15:24

“Then comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power.”

1 Corinthians 15:50

“Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.”

Galatians 5:21

“Envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”

Ephesians 5:5

“For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person

or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.”

Colossians 1:13

“For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and *transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son...*”

Colossians 4:11

“...and also Jesus who is called Justus; these are *the only fellow workers for the kingdom of God* who are from the circumcision, and they have proved to be an encouragement to me.”

2 Thessalonians 1:5

“This is a plain indication of God’s righteous judgment so that you will be *considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which indeed you are suffering.*”

James 2:5

“Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the poor of this world to be *rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?*”

Revelation 11.15

“Then the seventh angel sounded; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, *“The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever.”*

Revelation 12:10

Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, *“Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night.*

ADDED CONTENT: KINGS & KINGDOMS

The Story of the “king of kings”

Daniel recounts his experience as one of the Hebrew prophets under the rule of Nebuchadnezzar, probably the most successful Babylonian king. Daniel had been taken prisoner in Israel and spent most of his life in Babylon.

You can read about his incredible life in - wait for it - the book of Daniel! He is a man of character and a supernatural dream-interpreter, and recounts one king’s story from the top of the power and true wealth food chain of history. Worth the read! For now, we are concerned with the person who is Nebuchadnezzar II.

“Then Daniel, whose name is Belteshazzar, was appalled for a while as his thoughts alarmed him. The king responded and said, ‘Belteshazzar, do not let the dream or its interpretation alarm you.’ Belteshazzar replied, ‘My lord, if only the dream applied to those who hate you and its interpretation to your adversaries!’

“The tree that you saw, which became large and grew strong, whose height reached to the sky and was visible to all the earth and whose foliage was beautiful and its fruit abundant, and in which was food for all, under which the beasts of the field dwelt and in whose branches the birds of the sky lodged -

it is you, O king; for you have become great and grown strong, and your majesty has become great and reached to the sky and your dominion to the end of the earth.”

“In that the king saw an angelic watcher, a holy one, descending from heaven and saying, “Chop down the tree and destroy it; yet leave the stump with its roots in the ground, but with a band of iron and bronze around it in the new grass of the field, and let him be drenched with the dew of heaven, and let him share with the beasts of the field until seven periods of time pass over him.”

This is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the Most High, which has come upon my lord the king:

that you be driven away from mankind and your dwelling place be with the beasts of the field, and you be given grass to eat like cattle and be drenched with the dew of heaven; and seven periods of time will pass over you, until you recognize that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind and bestows it on whomever He wishes.

‘And in that it was commanded to leave the stump with the roots of the tree, your kingdom will be assured to you after you recognize that it is Heaven that rules.

‘Therefore, O king, may my advice be pleasing to you: break away now from your sins by doing righteousness and from your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor, in case there may be a prolonging of your prosperity.’

“All this happened to Nebuchadnezzar the king.

“Twelve months later he was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon. “The king reflected and said, ‘Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?’

“While the word was in the king’s mouth, a voice came from heaven, saying, ‘King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is declared: sovereignty has been removed from you,

and you will be driven away from mankind, and your dwelling place will be with the beasts of the field. You will be given grass to eat like cattle, and seven periods of time will pass over you until you recognize that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind and bestows it on whomever He wishes.’

“Immediately the word concerning Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled; and he was driven away from mankind and began eating grass like cattle, and his body was drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair had grown like eagles’ feathers and his nails like birds’ claws.

*“But at the end of that period, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven and my reason returned to me, and **I blessed the Most***

High and praised and honored Him who lives forever;
For His dominion is an everlasting dominion,
And His kingdom endures from generation to generation.

*“All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing,
But He does according to His will in the host of heaven
And among the inhabitants of earth;
And no one can ward off His hand
Or say to Him, ‘What have You done?’*

“At that time my reason returned to me. And my majesty and splendor were restored to me for the glory of my kingdom, and my counselors and my nobles began seeking me out; so I was reestablished in my sovereignty, and surpassing greatness was added to me.

“Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, exalt and honor the King of heaven, for all His works are true and His ways just, and He is able to humble those who walk in pride.” - Daniel 4:19-37

ISRAEL'S KINGS

NO HEART - WHOLE HEART - HALF HEART

We can learn incredible things from the lives of Saul, David, and Solomon to help us live a Kingdom life! Their stories exemplify the choices of a Kingdom heart.

1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, and 2nd Chronicles are a great read to understand the foundations on Kingdom teaching in the Bible which finds deep teaching roots in the Kings of Israel.

Saul = No Heart

David = A Whole Heart

Solomon = A Half a Heart

You can find study guides for each of these books at Fourthstream.com under podcasts by book.

**ADDED CONTENT:
THE KINGDOM IN THE BOOK OF MATTHEW**

These are listed to help you reference each mention of the Kingdom in Matthew. We covered many of these as we have considered the Kingdom in this book! (Didn't want you to miss any :)

Matthew 3:2

“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

Matthew 4:17

From that time Jesus began to preach and say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

Matthew 4:23

“Jesus was going throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people.”

Matthew 5:3

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 5:10

“Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

Matthew 5:19

“Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”

Matthew 5:20

“For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.”

Matthew 6:10

“Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven.”

Matthew 6:13

“And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. [For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.]”

Matthew 6:33

“But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”

Matthew 7:21

“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter.”

Matthew 8:11

“I say to you that many will come from east and west, and recline at the table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven;”

Matthew 8:12

“...but the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Matthew 9:35

“Jesus was going through all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.”

Matthew 10:7

“And as you go, preach, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’”

Matthew 11:11

“Truly I say to you, among those born of women there has not arisen anyone greater than John the Baptist! Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”

Matthew 11:12

“From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and violent men take it by force.”

Matthew 12:25

“And knowing their thoughts Jesus said to them, ‘Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste; and any city or house divided against itself will not stand.’”

Matthew 12:26

“If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then will his kingdom stand?”

Matthew 12:28

“But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.”

Matthew 13:11

“Jesus answered them, “To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted.”

Matthew 13:19

“When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the one on whom seed was sown beside the road.”

Matthew 13:24

Jesus presented another parable to them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field.

Matthew 13:31

“He presented another parable to them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field...”

Matthew 13:33

He spoke another parable to them, “The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three pecks of flour until it was all leavened.”

Matthew 13:38

“...and the field is the world; and as for the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom; and the tares are the sons of the evil one...”

Matthew 13:41

“The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness...”

Matthew 13:43

“Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.”

Matthew 13:44

“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.”

Matthew 13:45

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls...”

Matthew 13:47

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet cast into the sea, and gathering fish of every kind...”

Matthew 13:52

And Jesus said to them, “Therefore every scribe who has become a disciple of the kingdom of heaven is like a head of a household, who brings out of his treasure things new and old.”

Matthew 16:19

“I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven.”

Matthew 16:28

“Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.”

Matthew 18:1

At that time the disciples came to Jesus and said, “Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?”

Matthew 18:3

“... and said, “Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.”

Matthew 18:4

“Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”

Matthew 18:23

“For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves.”

Matthew 19:12

“For there are eunuchs who were born that way from their mother’s womb; and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men; and there are also eunuchs who made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. He who is able to accept this, let him accept it.”

Matthew 19:14

But Jesus said, “Let the children alone, and do not hinder them from coming to Me; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as

these.”

Matthew 19:23

And Jesus said to His disciples, “Truly I say to you, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.”

Matthew 19:24

“Again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.”

Matthew 20:1

“For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard.”

Matthew 20:21

“And He said to her, “What do you wish?” She *said to Him, “Command that in Your kingdom these two sons of mine may sit one on Your right and one on Your left.”

Matthew 21:31

“Which of the two did the will of his father?” They *said, “The first.” Jesus *said to them, “Truly I say to you that the tax collectors and prostitutes will get into the kingdom of God before you.”

Matthew 21:43

“Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people, producing the fruit of it.”

Matthew 22:2

“The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son.”

Matthew 23:13

“But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you shut off the kingdom of heaven from people; for you do not enter in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.”

Matthew 24:7

“For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes.”

Matthew 24:14

“This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.”

Matthew 25:1

“Then the kingdom of heaven will be comparable to ten virgins, who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom.”

Matthew 25:34

“Then the King will say to those on His right, ‘Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.’”

Matthew 26:29

“But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father’s kingdom.”

ADDED CONTENT: PROPHECY IN MATTHEW

The book of Matthew was written to amplify the Jewish perspective on the unfolding Good News. Fulfilled Messianic prophecy illuminates the timeless power of God in fulfilling His Word. Here are just a few of the many prophecies which were completely and miraculously fulfilled in the life and Words of Jesus the Deliverer - the Son of God Most High!

OLD TESTAMENT QUOTES...Christ in Matthew

- | | | |
|------------|----------------|-------------------------|
| 1. 1:23 | Isaiah 7:14 | Virgin Birth (Emmanuel) |
| 2. 2:6 | Micah 5:2 | Where was He born? |
| 3. 2:15 | Hosea 11:1 | The flight into Egypt |
| 4. 2:18 | Jeremiah 31:15 | The babies slaughtered |
| 5. 3:3 | Isaiah 40:3 | The Preparer preaches |
| 6. 4:15,16 | Isaiah 9:1,2 | Capernaum ministry |

Messiah (verb) means 'to smear, to anoint' or 'the anointed one who covers.' Here are some prophetic passages which speak of the coming Deliverer. What do you learn about Christ from these prophets?

Isaiah the prophet:

- | | |
|-------------|----------------------|
| 4:2 | The Branch |
| 7:10-17 | Emmanuel |
| 9:1-7 | The Son |
| 11:1 | Vision |
| 32:1-8 | Righteous King |
| 42:1-4 | Servant |
| 49:1-6 | Servant |
| 50:4-9 | Tongue of Disciples |
| 52:13-53:12 | Suffering servant |
| 55:3,4 | Everlasting Covenant |

Jeremiah the prophet:

23:5,6 (33:14-16; 30:9,21,22)

The Lord Our Righteousness (Messianic Prince)

- | | | |
|------------------|----|-------------------|
| Jeremiah 31:31 | -- | New Covenant |
| Ezekiel 34:23,24 | -- | Israel's Shepherd |

Ezekiel 37:22	--	Everlasting Covenant
Hosea 3:4,5	--	Israel's Latter Day Return
Micah 5:1-4	--	Booth Raised (4:8?)
Zechariah 9:9,10	--	Triumphal Entry

OTHER PASSAGES ON MESSIANIC FULFILMENT
FOR SOME ADDED FUN

Deuteronomy 18:18; Acts 3:22; 7:37; Psalm 2:1; Acts 4:25; Matthew 3:17; Acts 13:33; Hebrews 1:5; 5:5; 2 Peter 1:17; Psalm 110:1; Matthew 22:44; Acts 2:34; Hebrews 5:6,10; 6:20; 7:11, 15, 21; Psalm 118:22; Matthew 21:42; Acts 4:11; 1 Peter 2:7

Additional Passages (Isaiah 28:16) in Romans 9:33; 10:11; 1 Peter 2:4

Why do you think the fulfilled prophecies concerning Christ are important?

ADDED CONTENT: JESUS IN THE PSALMS

Other **Jesus Psalms** Quoted in the New Testament
(for your enjoyment/a great journey in itself :)

Psalms 2:1-2	Acts 4:25-28
Psalms 2:7	Acts 13:33, Hebrews 1:5, Hebrews 5:5
Psalms 2:9	Revelation 2:26-27, 12:5, 19:15
Psalms 8:2	Matthew 21:16
Psalms 8:4-6	1 Corinthians 15:25-28, Hebrews 2:5-10
Psalms 16:8-11	Acts 2:25-32, Acts 13:34-37
Psalms 22:1	Matthew 27:46, Mark 15:34
Psalms 22:7-8	Matthew 27:39,43, Luke 23:35
Psalms 22:18	Matthew 27:35, Mark 15:24, Luke 23:34, John 19:23-24
Psalms 22:22	Hebrews 2:11-12
Psalms 40:6-8	Hebrews 10:5-10
Psalms 41:9	John 13:18
Psalms 45:6-7	Hebrews 1:8-9
Psalms 68:18	Ephesians :8
Psalms 69:4	John 15:25
Psalms 69:9	John 2:17, Romans 15:3
Psalms 69:21	Matthew 27:34, John 19:28-29
Psalms 69:22-23	Romans 11:9-10
Psalms 69:25	Acts 1:20
Psalms 78:2	Matthew 13:35
Psalms 78:24	John 6:31
Psalms 97:7	Hebrews 1:6
Psalms 102:25-27	Hebrews 1:10-12
Psalms 110:1	Matthew 22:44, Mark 12:36, Luke 20:42, Acts 2:34, Hebrews 1:13
Psalms 110:4	Hebrews 5:6, Hebrews 6:20, Hebrews 7:17,21
Psalms 118:6	Hebrews 13:6
Psalms 118:22-23	Matthew 21:42, Mark 12:10-11, Luke 20:17, Acts 4:11, Ephesians 2:20, 1 Peter 2:7
Psalms 118:26	Matthew 21:9, Matthew 23:39, Mark 11:9, Luke 13:35, Luke 19:38, John 12:13

**ADDED CONTENT:
ENGAGE TRAINING: A KINGDOM RESOURCE**

Over time we have prepared a series of studies connecting you with the Kingdom and to help you connect others. This course is available to you by contacting us at 4@fourthstream.com.

It *expands* the Kingdom concepts we have discussed in this book and opens the door to *deeper* inquiry and growth. There are study notes and videos for each section of the course. Perhaps one or more of the chapters interests you. Enjoy!

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Reasons to Believe.....	page 18
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THE KINGDOM CORE IS ALL ABOUT HEART!



A pure heart is a humbled heart - it is a gift from God.
 To know God is the great adventure of the human experience.
 We then love to do kindness in the power of God.
 Which results in growing indestructible life connections.

WOW.

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