

## 18 – Think On This

July 5, 2020

### **“Your Kingdom Come, Your Will be Done”**

It's God's kingdom that must come and his will that must be done – not ours.

The Rich man who had a bumper crop and decided to build more barns was called a 'fool' because he paid more attention to **his** kingdom than he did to God's kingdom. He was not that different from a lot of Christians today. We too can easily become preoccupied with **our** lives and **our** futures and **our** kingdoms. When we wonder **if** Jesus is for us, **if** he is on **our** side we betray the truth that we are more preoccupied with **our** lives than we are with his kingdom.

When we do think of kingdom living we often think about it in terms of putting out the word. If you stop to think about that though in the parable of the sower, the focus is on the soil not the seed. In our churches here in North America we often think of kingdom work as spreading the Word. We are big on sowing seed when we should probably spend as much or more time on nurturing the soil. The story of the unfruitful fig tree in Luke 13 places emphasis on the soil as well. When the owner wants to cut it down his manager says, “*leave it alone for one more year, and I'll dig around it and fertilize it. If it bears fruit next year, fine! If not, then cut it down.*”

In the economy of the kingdom we think of 'the good soil' in terms of the human heart that is ready to receive the word so that it will germinate and grow and bear fruit. There is a lot going on before we ever get to see the actual fruit. Spreading the Word is wonderful of course but any good farmer knows that preparing the land is just as important. No farmer worth their salt is going to spend time and money on good seed when the land will only yield 25%. So the first thing to figure out is what sorts of things should we be doing to prepare hearts for God's Word.

Some may say that we do not have much of a say in that as only God knows what is in the heart of man but Jesus also pronounces seven woes on the teachers of the law, the people who are to spread God's Word. In Matthew 23:23 he says,

*“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when you have succeeded, you make them twice as much a child of hell as you are.”*

Apparently there is more to kingdom work than simply spreading the Word. It is the gentle rains of compassion that soften the earth and warm rays of love and mercy that coax the plant to break through the dirt. **1 cor.13** Some plants will need the safety of a fenced garden to make it to the harvest. Some think that kingdom work can be summed up in the 'golden rule', *love your neighbor as your self*. That is scriptural of course **Lev.18:19**, but Jesus expands this portion of the law when he says, “*Love one another as I have loved you*” **Jn. 15:12**. And of course Paul

tells us, “*Forgive as the Lord forgave you*”, Col.3:13. These are so much deeper and bigger than the golden rule.

Many faiths promote the golden rule but Jesus asks for more. We are called to love with the same love that our heavenly Father has lavished upon us. The unmerciful servant is called so precisely because he refuses to grant the forgiveness and grace that his king showed him.

**Matthew 18:23-35** The church always needs to be thinking in terms of how it prepares the way for sowing the seed of God’s Word.

Another problem with our idea of kingdom work is the common misperception that kingdom has to do with how many members you have and with what sorts of programs your church runs and what kind of facility the church has and what style of worship you have and with whether or not they are “successful”-whatever that’s supposed to mean. I have said this often .... Success in church is measured by its fruitfulness and fruit is measured by how much love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, steadfastness and self-control the church exudes. This is the stuff that also is needed to prep the land for the next crop.

That’s Kingdom Work.

## **Prayer**

Father in Heaven, may your kingdom come and your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Grant healing to those for those suffering the effects of our broken world. Grant open eyes of faith faith that we may see you more clearly. Grant open ears of faith to hear your Holy Spirit speaking to us. Grant us the compassion and love of your heart Lord that we may do the work our King has given. Come Lord Jesus. Maranatha. Amen.

*May the Lord Bless you and keep.*

*May he cause his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you.*

*May he turn his face towards you and grant you his peace.*

Blessings in Christ,

*Pastor Kasey VanderVeen.*