

The Basics of Christianity

The Kingdom of God

Matthew 6:25-33

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Matthew 6:33 (NASB95)

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INTRODUCTION:

This morning we are continuing with "The Basics of Christianity" series. This morning we are going to consider the Kingdom of God.

All Stand and Read Scripture

Matthew 6:25-33 (NASB95)

²⁵ "For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life, *as to* what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, *as to* what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and *yet* your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they? ²⁷ And who of you by being worried can add a *single* hour to his life? ²⁸ And why are you worried about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin, ²⁹ yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these. ³⁰ But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is *alive* today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, *will He* not much more *clothe* you? You of little faith! ³¹ Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?' ³² For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. ³³ But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Prayer

The first thing we should know about the kingdom of Heaven is that we need to be in it. God wanted everyone to know about the kingdom of Heaven. It is a place that shields us from the deadly storms of this earthly kingdom.

Matthew 6:33 (NASB95)

³³ But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

I read this verse back in 2013 and it started a lengthy study concerning the kingdom of heaven. Jesus told us that the first thing we should seek for is "**His kingdom and His righteousness**". I thought to myself, "If Christ put so much emphasis on the kingdom, if we are to seek it first in our Christian walk with God, then maybe I should know a whole lot more about it."

ILLUSTRATION:

All of us at some point in our life has had the feeling that we needed someone to give us attention or needed to be accepted. Because of this need, people will join a club that will acknowledge their accomplishments, prestige, wealth, knowledge, skills, or some other trait that they may have in common with that club. Many of them can be very exclusive and very expensive, but the satisfaction that they get by being accepted in the club seems to justify the cost.

One club that I actually found on the internet was named the **Exclusive Wealth Club**. It was advertised this way:

"Welcome to The Club!"

"Stay in multi-million dollar private estates, villas and mansions all over the world! Attend some of the World's most Exclusive Events. You only have one life and if you're not doing what you love, what's the point?"

I don't know what the membership fees are, but membership is by invitation only. The Exclusive Wealth Club VIP Membership category is currently at capacity. Many clubs will cost millions in down deposits, use fees, and monthly, annual or lifetime fees. But people will pay or do whatever is necessary in order to get the feeling of belonging to something that promises to give them pleasure.

There is one club that is better than any these clubs regardless of their cost. Unlike the exclusive clubs, this club, for now, is INCLUSIVE, everyone is invited!

TERMS OF MEMBERSHIP:

Instead of having monthly, yearly, lifetime, or use fees this club offers a onetime fee for all eternity.

Instead of staying at multi-million-dollar private estates all over the world while you are alive and a member in good standing, this club offers a mansion built especially for you surrounded by streets of gold with God, your creator, in Heaven, FOR ETERNITY!

Anyone can join, but unfortunately, the fees are so high that NO man can afford them.

But there is "Good News". God very much loves you and He wants you to join so badly that He chose to send His Son to earth to pay your entire eternal fees!

BENEFITS:

It is a cure for anxiety. God will provide a way to never have to worry about the cares of this world ever again. He will provide for your needs.

- You will receive the indwelling of the Eternal Holy Spirit to guide you in your life.
- Only YOU can cancel your membership. It cannot be taken away from you.
- You will be transformed from this mortal body into an eternal being when Christ returns.
- From that time on for eternity, there will be no more hunger, thirst, pain, or sickness.
- You will be in the presence of God, your Creator and Christ, your Savior Who paid your fees.

Only people who are members in good standing when Christ returns or when they die can experience Heaven. At that point the club becomes EXCLUSIVE ONLY. If you were not a member in good standing, all terms of membership are annulled. **No exceptions!**

CONDITIONS:

It is impossible to earn your own way into the club. No amount of good deeds or morality can qualify you for membership. It is a free gift from God through His Son, Jesus Christ.

Prestige, earthly accomplishments, money, or family heritage have no value.

There is just one simple rule: You must be willing to humble yourself before God, love God and others more than yourself, become His servant, and obey His commands.

What is this club? **It is the Kingdom of God!** If people could just learn of this club, understand it's purpose, and envision the eternal benefits, they would do everything in their power to become a part of it!

As Matthew told us in our scripture, this time from the King James Version:

Matthew 6:33 (KJV)

³³ But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

The phrase "Kingdom of Heaven" occurs 31 times in the NASB. All in Matthew.

The phrase "Kingdom of God" occurs 65 times in the NASB. All in the New Testament.

The word "Kingdom" occurs 155 times in the New Testament.

Matthew often uses "kingdom of heaven" instead of "kingdom of God," but the two terms are synonymous. The "kingdom of heaven" does not refer to heaven as a place, but to God's reign as King. Where there is a king, there must be a kingdom.

There are two ways to think about this kingdom. In one sense when the kingdom is mentioned, it is mentioned as an **invisible** kingdom. All of those who are in the body of Christ by a true saving faith in Him. They are the true church. They have the Holy Spirit in their lives.

In another sense, there is the **visible** kingdom. This kingdom is made up of all of the invisible as well as the people who proclaim to be believers but are not. They are 'visible' to us because we cannot distinguish a true Christian from a believer that is not born again. They may appear to be genuine, but inwardly they do not know, love, or serve God.

Jesus starts many parables using the phrase "**The kingdom of heaven is like**" or "**The kingdom of God is like**".

Let's begin by comparing "the Kingdom of Heaven" with "the Kingdom of God".

BODY:

I. The Kingdom of Heaven Verses the Kingdom of God.

Some Bible scholars try to make a distinction between the two, but a quick comparison of the gospels indicate that the terms refer to the same thing. Matthew is the only book in the New Testament that uses the phrase "Kingdom of Heaven". When we compare parallel accounts between the Gospels, we see the phrases used interchangeably.

Matthew 13:31 (NASB95)

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;

Mark 4:30-31 (NASB95)

³⁰ And He said, "How shall we picture the kingdom of God, or by what parable shall we present it? ³¹ *It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the soil, though it is smaller than all the seeds that are upon the soil,*

We even have one passage in Matthew that uses both expressions.

Matthew 19:23-24 (NASB95)

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. 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 used the expression "Kingdom of Heaven" almost exclusively, while the other gospel writers used the phrase "Kingdom of God"

It may be that since Matthew wrote his gospel to the Jews, he chose to use the phrase "Kingdom of Heaven" because of the Jews' misconception of the coming kingdom.

Many of the Jews anticipated a physical kingdom where the Messiah would set up an earthly kingdom and they would be freed from the rule of Romans. The expression "heaven" (which literally means "heavens") would emphasize a spiritual kingdom.

So our first observation is that any effort to distinguish between the "Kingdom of Heaven" and the "Kingdom of God" is really without warrant. The word "Kingdom" is frequently used also to refer to the Kingdom of God.

Let's now consider what Jesus meant when He spoke of the "Kingdom of God".

II. What is the Kingdom of God?

It is the Reign of God. The term "kingdom" as used by the Jews often stressed the abstract idea of "reign" or "dominion", not some geographical area surrounded by physical boundaries.

- **It is an invisible Kingdom.**

John 18:36 (NASB95)

³⁶ Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm."

- **The kingdom was "INAUGURATED" on the Day of Pentecost.**

Acts 2:36 (NASB95)

³⁶ Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified.”

- **But in a special way the rule or reign of God was yet to be manifested with the coming of Christ.**

Matthew 4:17 (NASB95)

¹⁷ From that time Jesus began to preach and say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

- **Today, the "reign of God" has authoritatively been manifested in Christ.**

1 Peter 3:22 (NASB95)

²² who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him.

- **The kingdom will be "CULMINATED" with the coming of the Lord, when Jesus "delivers the kingdom to God the Father"**

1 Corinthians 15:24-26 (NASB95)

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. ²⁵ For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. ²⁶ The last enemy that will be abolished is death.

- **There will be a "NEW HEAVEN AND NEW EARTH".**

Revelation 21:1-4 (NASB95)

²¹ Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer *any* sea. ² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, ⁴ and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be *any* death; there will no longer be *any* mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.”

- **It will be experienced only by those in the church who are born again.**

Matthew 7:21-23 (NASB95)

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*. ²² Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ ²³ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.’”

When He comes to know us is when we are born again—when we commence a relationship with Him, accepting His free salvation, and thus have our names forever written in the Lamb’s book of life.

III. How Can We Become a Part of the Kingdom of Heaven?

When we understand what it means to seek the kingdom of God, we will confidently seek righteousness and eternal life. It would be as popular as the cure for cancer would be to

anyone who was inflicted with it, if it discovered today. We would want to be a member of God's eternal club, the Kingdom of God.

There is just one simple rule: You must be willing to humble yourself before God, love God and others more than yourself, become His servant, and obey His commands.

The Scriptures instruct that people must repent—that is, be sorry for their sins, become totally committed in their hearts to stop sinning and start living in accordance with God's instructions and then be baptized for the forgiveness of sin and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 2:38 (NASB95)

38 Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Repentance is a two-step process that begins as a gift from God. He leads us to repentance by opening our eyes to our need to stop living in rebellion to His commands. Then He forgives us of our sins for our obedience to His commands.

We are baptized to acknowledge our past sins and the desire to change, to be cleansed of past guilt and become a disciple of Jesus Christ. We are promised the indwelling of the Holy Spirit as well. Having God's Spirit thus identifies us as Christians.

Only people who are in the Kingdom of God when Christ returns or when they die can experience Heaven. At that point the club becomes EXCLUSIVE ONLY and it will be too late to accept Christ's free gift of salvation.

CONCLUSION:

The moment you get a glimpse of God's glory and understand how putrid this world is you will joyfully give up your shiny trinkets in order to serve your master and inherit the treasure of his kingdom. When you finally understand that Christ came to this earth to offer us a treasure of eternal value nothing else will matter.

Our master is in charge of taking care of our needs for food. Of my needs for clothing. Of my needs for shelter. He is in charge of protecting us. You see, it is a wonderful thing to be a slave to a great master.

But sometimes, here in America, we get it all backwards. We think that we must take care of ourselves. We will work long hours, make payments on all of our loans, and do all the things that we think we want and need to do. Then we promise God that whatever time, energy, or money is left, we give some of it to Him. But let me remind you that we are stewards of everything and owners of nothing. Everything that we have belongs to God. We are just caretakers of those things.

Is the kingdom of heaven worth everything to you?

Only a fool would give what he cannot LOSE to gain what he cannot KEEP.

The Family of God.