

Message Eleven

The Kingdom and the Church

Scripture Reading: Matt. 16:18-19; 18:17-18; 13:44-46;
Rom. 14:17; Rev. 21:2, 9-10, 18-21

I. The Bible first presents the kingdom and thereafter presents the church; the presence of the kingdom produces the church—Matt. 4:23; 16:18-19:

- A. The life of God is the kingdom of God; the divine life is the kingdom, and this life produces the church—John 3:3, 5; Matt. 7:14, 21; 19:17, 29; 25:46:
 - 1. The kingdom is the realm of life for life to move, rule, and govern so that life may accomplish its purpose, and this realm is the kingdom.
 - 2. The gospel brings in the divine life, and this life has its realm, which is the kingdom; the divine life with its realm produces the church—2 Tim. 1:10.
 - 3. The gospel of the kingdom brings forth the church because the kingdom is the life itself, and the church is the issue of life—Matt. 4:23; Acts 8:12.
- B. The kingdom is the reality of the church; therefore, apart from the kingdom life, we cannot live the church life—Matt. 5:3; 16:18-19; Rev. 1:4-6, 9:
 - 1. The reality of the kingdom of the heavens (Matt. 5—7) is the content of the church life; without the reality of the kingdom, the church is empty.
 - 2. Since the kingdom life issues in the church life, as we live corporately in the kingdom life, we spontaneously live the church life—Rom. 14:17.
 - 3. A believer who does not live in the reality of the kingdom cannot be built into the structure of the church—Eph. 2:22.
- C. Without the kingdom as the reality of the church, the church cannot be built up—Matt. 16:18-19:
 - 1. The church is brought into being through the authority of the kingdom.
 - 2. The keys of the kingdom are given to make the building of the church possible—v. 19; 18:18; cf. John 20:23.
 - 3. When the kingdom of the heavens is able to assert its authority over a company of believers, those

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believers can be built up into the church—Col. 2:19;
Eph. 4:15-16.

II. The genuine church is the kingdom of God in this age; today the believers live the kingdom life in the church—Matt. 16:18-19; 18:17-18; 13:44-46; Rom. 14:17; 1 Cor. 4:20; Eph. 2:19; Col. 4:11; Rev. 1:4-6:

- A. Each time the Lord Jesus spoke of the church, He mentioned it in relation to the kingdom; this indicates how intimately the kingdom and the church are related—Matt. 16:18-19; 18:17-18:
1. Romans 14:17 proves that the church in this age is the kingdom of God.
 2. *The kingdom of God* in 1 Corinthians 4:20 refers to the church life (v. 17), implying that in the sense of authority, the church in this age is the kingdom of God.
 3. The term *fellow citizens* in Ephesians 2:19 indicates the kingdom of God, the sphere wherein God exercises His authority.
 4. What Paul and his fellow workers were doing in the gospel work for the establishing of the churches was for the kingdom of God—Col. 4:11.
 5. The word *kingdom* in Revelation 1:6 reveals that where the church is, there the kingdom of God is; the church represents the kingdom.
- B. In the church as the kingdom, we are under the kingdom's rule, government, discipline, and exercise—1 Cor. 6:9-10; Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 5:5.
- C. In the Lord's recovery, at the same time we are both in the kingdom and in the church, in the treasure and in the pearl—Matt. 13:44-46.
- D. Although the church today is God's kingdom, we are in the kingdom in reality only when we live, walk, and have our being in the spirit, not in our natural man—Rom. 8:4; Gal. 5:16, 25.
- E. As those who are under the dispensing of the Divine Trinity, we need to live a kingdom life in the church,

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growing and developing in the divine life until we reach maturity—2 Cor. 13:14; 2 Pet. 1:5-11.

III. The church brings in the kingdom; the work of the church is to bring in the kingdom of God—Matt. 6:10; 12:22-29; Rev. 11:15; 12:10:

- A. The church was brought into being for the purpose of bringing in the kingdom—Matt. 16:18-19; 18:17-18; Rev. 1:6, 9; 11:15:
 - 1. The church's responsibility is to perpetuate Christ's victory and to bring in God's kingdom—12:10-11; 11:15.
 - 2. The work of the church on earth is to bring in the kingdom of God; all the work of the church is governed by the principle of the kingdom of God.
 - 3. The church is responsible for bringing heaven's will down to earth and for carrying it out on earth—Matt. 6:10; 7:21; 12:50.
- B. The church, which comes into being under the rule of heaven, by reason of her submission to the heavenly rule, deals with God's enemy—16:18-19; Eph. 6:10-18:
 - 1. In order for the kingdom of the heavens to be established, there is the need of spiritual fighting—Matt. 12:22-29.
 - 2. The responsibility of the church is to continue the warfare Christ fought on earth; the church must continue the victorious work that Christ has carried out against Satan—Heb. 2:14; 1 John 3:8b; Col. 2:15; Psa. 149:5-9.
- C. The church should pray to bring in the kingdom of God—Matt. 6:10:
 - 1. The coming of the kingdom is not automatic; if there is no prayer, the kingdom cannot come.
 - 2. The prayer of the church is the most effective means of curbing Satan—16:19; 18:18.
 - 3. The church must be the outlet of heaven, allowing heaven's authority to be expressed on earth—16:18-19; 18:17-18.

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4. Genuine prayer is a joint labor with God to bring His kingdom to the earth and to carry out His will on earth; hence, prayer is a spiritual battle—6:10; 2 Cor. 10:4; Eph. 6:12.

IV. Ultimately, in the New Jerusalem the kingdom and the church, the treasure and the pearl, become one entity—Rev. 21:2; Matt. 13:44-46:

- A. The kingdom produces the church, the church brings in the kingdom, and the ultimate issue is the New Jerusalem—Rev. 21:2, 9-10.
- B. The New Jerusalem is a combination of the treasure and the pearl—vv. 18-21.
- C. The New Jerusalem combines in itself both the kingdom and the church:
 1. The New Jerusalem is the bride, which according to Ephesians 5 is the church—Rev. 21:2, 9-10.
 2. The New Jerusalem is a city, which speaks of God's government, and in this center of government is the throne of God—vv. 2, 10; 22:1, 3b-5.

V. Those who always put God's kingdom before them—that which touches God's will and His enemy—are the most useful workers in the hands of God—Matt. 6:33; 7:21; Col. 4:11; Matt. 25:21, 23.