

## Introduction

Someone made the comment to me last week that people in America do not have much understanding of a kingdom, because they have not grown up in a kingdom. I replied that I grew up in Iran, which was a kingdom. We called the king, the Shah, which is the Persian word for king. We thought that the Shah was a very good king, and that he was looking out for the welfare of his people. He was bringing manufacturing and jobs to the Iranian people. My father was involved in training and developing local people to work in the oil fields, and these efforts were bringing good-paying jobs to the Iranian people. We thought the Shah was a good king.

Last week in Part 1 of Seeking First the Kingdom of God, Jesus gave four considerations that led up to seeking first the kingdom of God. He said not to lay up treasures here on earth where moth and rust can destroy and thieves can steal, but to lay up treasures in heaven. He said that our hearts are going to be where our treasures are. If we are going to seek first the kingdom of God, our treasures can't be here on earth.

Second, Jesus taught that the lamp of the body is the eye. If our eye is clear, we will be able to see, but if our eye is evil, our body will be full of darkness. We need clear vision, and we need to be singularly focused on the kingdom of God.

Third, Jesus said that we can't serve two masters. We can't serve God and mammon. If we are going to seek first the kingdom of God, we can't have material wealth as a master.

Fourth, Jesus said that we must trust God. Our lives cannot be full of anxiety and worry, which do not accomplish anything. We are to learn from the birds, lilies, and grass, which God takes care of. He said that we are more important than them. Jesus contrasted anxiety with faith. We are to trust God to take care of our needs.

This week we are looking at what is the kingdom of God. Specifically, we are going to take a brief look at earthly kingdoms. Second, we will define the kingdom of God. Third, we will look at the characteristics of the kingdom of God.

## What is the Kingdom of God?

1. Earthly Kingdoms
2. Defining the Kingdom of God
3. Characteristics of the Kingdom of God

(Mt 6:33) "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you."

### 1. Earthly Kingdoms

What exactly is a kingdom? If we are going to discuss "seeking first the kingdom of God", it is important to have some basic understanding about kingdoms. The dictionary defines a kingdom as "a country, state, or territory ruled by a king or queen." A kingdom has a king or queen who rules and reigns over a defined area. In a traditional kingdom, also known as an absolute monarchy, the king or queen has all power and authority, and their decisions, commands, and laws are final. There are 195 independent countries in the world, and forty-three of them operate as kingdoms, with either a queen or king ruling.

Twenty-six of the monarchies have royal families, meaning the reign is handed down within the family line. The Kingdom of Great Britain is a modern kingdom with a royal family. King Charles III ascended to the throne in September 2022, after the death of Queen Elizabeth. A few weeks ago, the Queen of Denmark, Queen Margrethe, stated that she was stepping down on January 14, after reigning for fifty-two years. Her oldest son, Crown Prince Frederik, will become the new king of Denmark. Both of these kingdoms are constitutional monarchies.

When Israel asked for a king, since all the other nations had kings, God appointed Saul. Saul's sons did not reign after him, so this was not a royal family. God replaced Saul with David, and God promised David that he would never lack an heir to the throne, so this became a royal family. This promise and prophecy was fulfilled in Jesus, whose genealogy goes back to David.

(Ps 132:11) "The Lord has sworn to David A truth from which He will not turn back: "Of the fruit of your body I will set upon your throne."

Twenty-nine of the kingdoms today are known as modern monarchies, rather than absolute monarchies. In a modern monarchy, the constitution of their country limits the power and authority that the king or queen has. Some say that they reign, but do not rule.

When we look at the earthly kingdoms in the Bible, they were traditional or ultimate monarchies, where the king had final authority. The king would appoint people to govern areas, but all of the appointees were under the authority of the king. Kings usually had trusted advisors to help them make decisions and govern.

In a traditional kingdom it is extremely important to have a righteous king, as an evil king can do much harm to the people. For example, in Mark 6:17-29, King Herod did not like John the Baptist telling him it was not lawful to have his brother's wife, so he arrested John and bound him in prison. Later, he put John to death. He had absolute authority to make these decisions, even though they were evil decisions. The reason for the modern monarchies, which limits the powers of the king, is to prevent things like this from happening.

## 2. Defining the Kingdom of God

Just as an earthly king rules over a specific territory or state, and has authority and jurisdiction over the people in the kingdom, those that enter into the kingdom of God come under His rule and reign. Many scholars define the kingdom of God as the rule and reign of God in our lives. When we pray for God's kingdom to come and His will to be done on earth, as it is in heaven, we are praying for His rule and reign to come on earth, and more importantly, in our own lives.

(Mt 6:10) "Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

In the church today, we do not talk much about the kingdom of God. We talk about church, and the church has replaced the kingdom of God. In E. Stanley Jones' book, *The Unshakeable Kingdom and the Unchanging Person*, he states, "The greatest loss that has ever come to the Christian movement in its long course in history was this loss of the kingdom." John the Baptist preached the kingdom of God. Jesus preached the kingdom of God. The twelve apostles preached the kingdom of God. Paul preached the kingdom of God. But today, we talk more about the church than the kingdom of God.

### 3. Characteristics of the Kingdom of God

First, we are going to look at some general characteristics of the kingdom of God. These characteristics would be similar to things found in an earthly kingdom. Second, we will look at some specific characteristics of the kingdom of God that are uniquely different than other kingdoms.

#### A. General characteristics

##### i. There is a King

An obvious characteristic of the kingdom of God is that there is a King. The king is the central figure in a kingdom, and in the kingdom of God, Jesus is the central figure. In Jesus' conversation with Pilate, He was asked, "So You are a king?" And Jesus answered him, "You say correctly that I am a king." Jesus is the King of the kingdom of God.

(Jn 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."

##### ii. There is a Domain

Earthly kingdoms have a territory or domain, and the kingdom of God is no different. In Colossians 1:13-14, Paul wrote that God rescued us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son. When a person receives Christ into their life, they are transferred from one domain to the other. They become citizens of the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of God's beloved Son, Jesus.

(Col 1:13–14) "For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, {14} in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."

##### iii. Ultimate Authority

Even though God's kingdom is not an earthly kingdom, and Jesus did not come to serve as an earthly king, He is the King over all the earth. His rule and reign is over all of His creation. In Psalm 47, the sons of Korah wrote that the Lord Most High is to be feared and is a great King over all the earth." They exhorted us to sing praises to our King, "for God is the King of all the earth," and "God reigns over the nations." God is the ultimate authority over the whole world. He is the King over all the earth; He has all authority and power in heaven and on earth, over those not in the kingdom of God, and over those in the kingdom of God. We are exhorted to pray for kings and those in authority, because God can direct the hearts of kings. In Proverbs 21:1, Solomon wrote, "The hearts of kings are like channels of water in the hand of the Lord; He turns it wherever He wishes."

(Ps 47:2–8) "For the Lord Most High is to be feared, a great King over all the earth. {3} He subdues peoples under us and nations under our feet. {4} He chooses our inheritance for us, The glory of Jacob whom He loves. Selah. {5} God has ascended with a shout, The Lord, with the sound of a trumpet. {6} Sing praises to God, sing praises; Sing praises to our King, sing praises. {7} For God is the King of all the earth; Sing praises with a skillful psalm. {8} God reigns over the nations, God sits on His holy throne."

(Pr 21:1) “The king’s heart is *like* channels of water in the hand of the Lord; He turns it wherever He wishes.”

## B. Specific Characteristics

Let’s take a look at some specific characteristics and traits that are unique to the kingdom of God.

### i. Heavenly Kingdom

In Matthew 6, Jesus contrasted storing up treasures on earth with storing up treasures in heaven, signifying that the kingdom of God is not an earthly kingdom, but a heavenly kingdom.

(Mt 6:19–20) “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on **earth**, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. {20} “But store up for yourselves treasures in **heaven**, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal;”

Another clear example is in John 18, where Pilate asked Jesus, “Are you the King of the Jews?” 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.” Then, Pilate said to Him, “So You are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say correctly that I am a king.” The Kingdom of God is not an earthly kingdom, but a heavenly kingdom.

(Jn 18:33–37) “Therefore Pilate entered again into the Praetorium, and summoned Jesus and said to Him, “Are You the King of the Jews?” {34} Jesus answered, “Are you saying this on your own initiative, or did others tell you about Me?” {35} Pilate answered, “I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests delivered You to me; what have You done?” {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.” {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.”

Because it is a heavenly kingdom, flesh and blood cannot enter the kingdom of heaven. Anyone entering the kingdom of God must be born of the Spirit. In John 3, Jesus was speaking to Nicodemus, who had come to Him at night. Nicodemus said that he knew that Jesus had come from God as a teacher because nobody could do the signs He was doing unless God was with Him. Jesus answered, “unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” He also told him, “unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” The kingdom of God is a spiritual kingdom, not an earthly or fleshly kingdom.

(Jn 3:1–6) “Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews; {2} this man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, “Rabbi, we know that You have come from God *as* a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.” {3} Jesus answered and said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” {4} Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born, can he?”

{5} Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. {6} “That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”

The Apostle Paul taught the Corinthians that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, and that the perishable cannot inherit the imperishable. The kingdom of God is not a fleshly or earthly kingdom, but a heavenly kingdom, a spiritual kingdom. We also gather from Paul that the kingdom of God is not perishable, like the things on earth, but it is imperishable.

(1 Co 15:50) “Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.”

## ii. Eternal Kingdom

The kingdoms of the earth are temporal. Some may last longer than others, but they are all temporal. The kingdom of God is eternal. In Matthew 25, Jesus taught about the judgment, and He used an illustration of separating the sheep from the goats. Jesus said to the sheep, “Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. The kingdom of God is unique in that it has been prepared for the inhabitants of the kingdom. Jesus said of the goats, those who were not going to enter the kingdom of God, “These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.” The kingdom of God is eternal, and those entering it will have eternal life.

(Mt 25:31–46) “But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. {32} “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; {33} and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left. {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.... {46} “These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

In Luke 18, Peter said to the Lord, “Behold, we have left our homes and followed You.” I think he was asking the Lord, “What’s in it for us? We are making sacrifices to follow You, and we want to know what’s in it for us?” Jesus responded to Peter, and the rest of the apostles, “Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who will not receive many times as much at this time and in the age to come, eternal life.” The kingdom of God is eternal, and those who enter will have eternal life.

(Lk 18:28–30) “Peter said, “Behold, we have left our own *homes* and followed You.” {29} And He said to them, “Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, {30} who will not receive many times as much at this time and in the age to come, eternal life.”

## iii. Holy and Righteous Kingdom

Another characteristic of the kingdom of God is that it is holy and righteous. Sin and unrighteousness will not be present in the kingdom of God. We see this reflected in Paul’s letter to the Corinthians. He told them not to be deceived, that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God. Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, homosexuals, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, and swindlers will not inherit the kingdom of God. The difference between

the righteous and the unrighteous is that believers have been washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus. Believers have been forgiven and declared innocent. When a person receives Christ into their life, they are transferred out of darkness and into the kingdom of God.

(1 Co 6:9–11) “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, {10} nor thieves, nor *the* covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. {11} Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.”

In Paul’s letter to the Ephesians, he wrote the same thing again. He warned them not to let immorality or any impurity or greed be named among them, as is proper among saints. He went on to say, “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.” It is a holy kingdom.

(Eph 5:3–5) “But immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints; {4} and *there must be no* filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. {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.”

There will be a judgment, and the scriptures are clear that the unrighteous will not enter the kingdom of God In the parable of the tares (Matt 13:24-30, 36-43) and in the parable of the dragnet (Matt 13:47-50), we learn that at the end of the age, the angels are going to gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks and those who commit lawlessness, and throw them into the furnace of fire. There is going to be a separation of the righteous and unrighteous. There is going to be a judgment between the righteous and the unrighteous. The kingdom of God is righteous, and the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God.

#### iv. Joyful and Peaceful Kingdom

Because the kingdom of heaven is not earthly, the natural things, like eating and drinking, do not characterize it. In Romans 14:17, Paul wrote that the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. The kingdom of God is a spiritual kingdom, and it is characterized by righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Where there is righteousness, there is peace. If you remove peace, there will be no joy. The kingdom of God is characterized by righteousness, peace and joy.

(Ro 14:17) “for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”

In Psalm 16, David, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, said that in God’s presence is fullness of joy, and in His right hand there are pleasures forever. God is full of joy, and in His presence is fullness of joy. The kingdom of God is characterized by righteousness, peace, and joy.

(Ps 16:11) “You will make known to me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever.”

## v. Secure Kingdom

Earlier in Matthew 6, Jesus taught that we are not to store up for ourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves can break in and steal. The treasures on earth are not safe and secure; they are all subject to damage or loss. On the other hand, the kingdom of God is safe and secure. Therefore, Jesus encourages us to store up for ourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal. Anything we put in heaven has no risk, and is completely safe and secure.

(Mt 6:19–20) “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. {20} “But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal;”

## vi. Unshakeable Kingdom

It is not only safe and secure; it cannot be shaken. In Hebrews 12:26-29, God promises that there is going to be shaking. The earth and the heavens are going to be shook, and there will be some things that are removed. However, “we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken.” Those who are in the kingdom of heaven are secure because they have received a kingdom which cannot be shaken.

(Heb 12:26–29) “And His voice shook the earth then, but now He has promised, saying, “Yet once more I will shake not only the earth, but also the heaven.” {27} This *expression*, “Yet once more,” denotes the removing of those things which can be shaken, as of created things, so that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. {28} Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe; {29} for our God is a consuming fire.”

Over the years I have witnessed lots of different shakings. What I have witnessed is probably pale in comparison to what God promises to do in the future. I have seen people lose their fortunes in a stock market crash, and their lives were shaken. I have seen people lose their spouse or a loved one, and their lives were shaken. I have seen people shaken because of wrong theology. They believed a certain way, and when things did not happen the way that they believe they must happen, their faith was shaken. False teaching can shake up people. Paul left Titus in Crete to set in order what remained after the people had been shaken up by false teaching.

The kingdom of God cannot be shaken. Temporal things, and things that are not of God, will be shaken and removed, but the kingdom of God cannot be shaken. That is a great reason to seek first the kingdom of God, because you are seeking something that cannot be shaken.

## vii. Growing Kingdom

Jesus taught about the kingdom of God through many of His parables. In Matthew 13, He gave seven different parables about the kingdom of God. In Matthew 13:31-32, Jesus said the kingdom of God is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field. Even though it was small, it grew larger than the garden plants and became like a tree, so that the birds of the air could come and nest in its branches. We gather from this that the kingdom of God is one that grows. We are to be growing in faith. It may start small, but it is to grow. We are to grow in knowledge, wisdom, and love. We are to be growing in our character, becoming more like God. God wants growth in our lives, because that is a characteristic of the kingdom of God.

(Mt 13:31–32) “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; {32} 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.”

### **viii. Transforming Kingdom**

Another characteristic of the kingdom of God is that it is a powerful and transforming kingdom. It has impact on the lives of those it touches. In Matthew 13:33, Jesus said the kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three pecks of flour until it was all leavened. We learn that the kingdom of God was again growing, and it was changing everything around it. The leaven was having an impact on the flour that it was put in. The kingdom of God is to have an impact on our lives, and also the lives of those around us. The kingdom of God is powerful and transforming.

(Mt 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.”

In Romans 12:2, Paul wrote that we are not to be conformed to the world, but to be transformed by the renewing of the mind so that we can prove the will of God, that which is good, acceptable, and perfect. The transformation that takes place in our lives is an inward transformation of our heart that works its way to the outside. The leaven that Jesus spoke about was hid in the flour and it did its work. Many of the religions use outward peer pressure and control to force people into their behavioral expectations. God’s kingdom does not work that way. He works from the inside out, changing our hearts and minds.

(Ro 12:2) “and do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”

### **ix. Powerful Kingdom**

In 1 Corinthians 4:20, Paul wrote that “the kingdom of God does not consist in words but in power.” The kingdom of God is powerful.

(1 Co 4:20) “For the kingdom of God does not consist in words but in power.”

While Jesus was going about teaching and preaching about the kingdom of God, people were amazed at the authority and power He had. They said, “For with authority and power He commands the unclean spirits and they come out.”

(Lk 4:36) “And amazement came upon them all, and they *began* talking with one another saying, “What is this message? For with authority and power He commands the unclean spirits and they come out.”

In Matthew 12, the Pharisees saw that Jesus had healed a demon-possessed man that was blind and mute. They accused Him of casting it out by Beelzebul the ruler of the demons. Jesus responded by saying that a kingdom divided will not stand. Then, He said, “But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.” The kingdom of God is characterized by power.



(Mt 12:25–28) “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. {26} “If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then will his kingdom stand? {27} “If I by Beelzebul cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast *them* out? For this reason they will be your judges. {28} “But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.”

When Jesus sent out the twelve apostles to proclaim the kingdom of God, He gave them power and authority over all the demons and to heal diseases. Jesus told the apostles to wait in Jerusalem for the Holy Spirit to come and clothe them with power. We are to be His witnesses on earth, and we are to be filled with His Spirit and His power.

(Lk 9:1–2) “And He called the twelve together, and gave them power and authority over all the demons and to heal diseases. {2} And He sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to perform healing.”

#### x. Mysterious Kingdom

When Jesus was explaining the parable of the sower and the soils, He told His disciples, “To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted.” Since the kingdom of God is a spiritual kingdom, only those who have been born again, those who have been born of the Spirit, can fully grasp the mysteries of the kingdom.

(Mt 13:10–11) “And the disciples came and said to Him, “Why do You speak to them in parables?” {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.”

In Paul’s letter to the Corinthians, he explained that it is the Spirit that searches all things, and we have received the Spirit of God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God. On the other hand, “the natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.”

(1 Co 2:10–14) “For to us God revealed *them* through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. {11} For who among men knows the *thoughts* of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the *thoughts* of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. {12} Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, {13} which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual *thoughts* with spiritual *words*. {14} But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.”

#### Conclusion and Applications

The kingdom of God is the rule and reign of Christ in our lives. When a person becomes part of the kingdom, they are transferred from the domain of darkness and into the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is spiritual kingdom, not of this realm, and Jesus is the King of the kingdom. It is a holy and righteous kingdom, and it will not be inherited by flesh and blood, or by the unrighteous. The kingdom of God is an imperishable and unshakeable kingdom. It is a secure

kingdom. It is an unshakeable kingdom. It is characterized by righteousness, peace, and joy. It is a transforming kingdom. It is a powerful kingdom. It is a growing kingdom.

This morning we have taken a quick look at what the kingdom of God is. I believe there are four applications that God wants us to have from this message.

### **1. Greater awareness and understanding of the kingdom of God.**

First, God wants us to have a greater awareness and understanding of the kingdom of God. It is not nearly emphasized as much as it was in Jesus' ministry, and the ministry of the early church. A greater awareness and understanding will help us focus more on the kingdom of God in our daily lives.

### **2. Increased motivation to store up treasures in the kingdom of God.**

Second, I believe God wants us to have a greater motivation to store up treasures in the kingdom of God, rather than here on earth. When we realize the how temporal earthly treasures are, and how they are subject to damage and/or loss, and how safe and secure our treasures are in heaven, we should be trying to store up treasures in the kingdom of God. God wants our hearts to be in the kingdom of God and not on earth, and our hearts are going to be where our treasures are.

(Mt 6:20–21) “But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; {21} for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

### **3. Increased desire to see God's kingdom established in your life, and in others.**

Third, I believe God wants to see His kingdom, His rule and reign, established in our lives. He wants us to pray for His kingdom to come in our lives. He wants our lives to reflect the kingdom of God, which is righteousness, peace, and joy. He wants our lives transformed. He wants us to be filled with His power and to be His witnesses. He wants more of His kingdom established in our lives.

### **4. Greater appreciation and gratefulness, resulting in praise. (Heb 12:28-29)**

Fourth, God wants us to have a greater reverence and awe of Him, which will be reflected in our gratitude, praise, worship, of Him. Because we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, we are to show gratitude to Him. He wants us to continually offer up sacrifices of praises to Him, and to give thanks to His name. Christians are to be a grateful people, and are to serve and praise Him with reverence and awe.

(Heb 12:28–29) “Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe; {29} for our God is a consuming fire.”

(Heb 13:15) “Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name.”

### **Closing Prayer**

Father God, Your kingdom is an amazing kingdom. What a privilege it is for us to learn about the mysteries of Your kingdom. What a blessing it is for us to be part of Your kingdom. Thank You for the transformation in our lives. Thank You for the growth in our lives. Thank You for the security that we have, and that we receive a kingdom that cannot be shaken. Thank You for the joy and peace that we have in Your kingdom. May Your kingdom come and Your will be done in our lives. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

## What Is the Kingdom of God?

### Introduction (Mt 6:33)

#### 1. Earthly Kingdoms (Ps 132:11, Mk 6:17-29)

#### 2. Defining the Kingdom of God (Mt 6:10)

### 3. Characteristics of the Kingdom of God

#### A. General characteristics

- i. There is a King (Jn 18:37)
- ii. There is a Domain (Col 1:13–14)
- iii. Ultimate Authority (Ps 47:2–8, Pr 21:1)

#### B. Specific Characteristics

- i. Heavenly Kingdom (Mt 6:19–20, Jn 18:33-37, Jn 3:1–6, 1 Cor 15:50)
- ii. Eternal Kingdom (Mt 25:31–46, Lk 18:28-30)
- iii. Holy and Righteous Kingdom (1 Co 6:9–11, Eph 5:3-5, Mt 13:24-30, 36-43, 47-50)
- iv. Joyful and Peaceful Kingdom (Ro 14:17, Ps16:11)
- v. Secure Kingdom (Mt 6:19–20)
- vi. Unshakeable Kingdom (Heb 12:26–29)
- vii. Growing Kingdom (Mt 13:31–32)
- viii. Transforming Kingdom (Mt 13:33, Ro 12:2)
- ix. Powerful Kingdom (1 Co 4:20, Lk 4:36, Mt 12:25–28, Lk 9:1–2)
- x. Mysterious Kingdom (Mt 13:10–11, 1 Co 2:10–14)

### Conclusion and Applications

- 1. Greater awareness and understanding of the kingdom of God.
- 2. Increased motivation to store up treasures in the kingdom of God. (Mt 6:20–21)
- 3. Increased desire to see God’s kingdom established in your life, and in others.
- 4. Greater appreciation and gratefulness, resulting in praise. (Heb 12:28-29, 13:15)