

THE KINGDOM OF GOD sermons by Rev. George R. Fiddes

Sermon 6 - LIVING THE KINGDOM

The Righteousness of the Kingdom

Having entered the Kingdom there is a responsibility to live a new life, a life of righteousness. Therefore today we look at the Righteousness of the Kingdom, thinking particularly of:

- The Necessary Attitudes –
- The Necessary Conduct –
- The necessary Priorities-

There is in the July edition of Life and Work a letter that is written in defence of homosexuality as a viable Christian lifestyle. The means of justification is that the Christian faith is about love and that is all that matters. As I considered what was being said, I reckoned that the author of the letter was coming more from a humanist perspective than a Christian one. What was being espoused as Christian was a very narrow caricature of what the Christian faith is really about.

It is only when we look and see what Jesus teaches about the Kingdom that we can gain a sound understanding of what it is to be a Christian.

In the true Christian experience, it is necessary that we come with repentance and faith, that we receive forgiveness, that we know and experience the mercy and grace of God and renewal in our lives. We are also called to holiness of living to reflect the righteousness of the Kingdom.

1. Necessary Attitudes.

The best and the clearest indication and direction that we have with regard to the attitudes that should be in our lives are set out in the Beatitudes as delivered to us by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. (Matthew 5 – 7). Attitudes are the heart of behaviour. For example, with the start of Wimbledon, there will be the hopes and the expectation that Andy Murray will be able to do well. One of the recognised factors in the life of any successful athlete is a right attitude. It is no different when we are in the cause of Christ.

The attitudes are listed in chapter 5:

- Poverty of Spirit(humility) can lead to The Kingdom of Heaven
- Mourning (over sin) - Comfort from the burden of sin
- Meekness (towards God and others) – Inheriting the earth(living a blessed life)
- Hungering and thirsting after righteousness – Being filled with righteousness
- Mercy towards others – receiving mercy
- Purity of heart (desiring holiness) – Seeing God
- Makers of peace – Being known as children of God
- Enduring persecution – the Kingdom of Heaven

2. Necessary Conduct

There must be an outworking of these attitudes in our conduct. The very same Sermon on the Mount says: *Let your light shine.*

Last week I was talking to the children about being salt and light. That is something that is intended for us all. We are to be salt in this world, meaning that we bring

flavour and taste and preservation. We are to be light shining the light of God into the darkness, so that people might glorify God. (Matt. 5:3-16)

There is a necessity for a higher standard of conduct. It is not enough that you don't murder but you also need to avoid anger (Matt 5:21-26). Not just avoid adultery but eschew impure thoughts. (Matt5:27-30). And more. For example, avoid divorce because of what it does; avoid flippant oaths by speaking truthfully. And positively, responding to evil with good; loving your enemies; doing charitable deeds to be seen of God and not man; praying & fasting to be seen of God not man. (Matt 5:21-6:18)

3. Necessary priorities

Getting your eyes fixed on heaven. The things that are most important to us are the things that motivate us. (Matt 6:19-24)

We are to lay up treasure in heaven, for if our treasure is there then our hearts will be also. Let me ask you what is most important to you today, is it your eternal salvation, is it your relationship with God, is it God's Kingdom. You cannot serve two masters – whatever those two masters might be.

Living the Kingdom entails effort, choices, commitment: not to do things that come naturally, but to do things that come from that supernatural inspiration. Or, as Paul told the Corinthians, to follow “*a more excellent way*”. (1 Corinthians 12: 31.) There is no need to worry. Indeed the Sermon on the Mount gives the assurance that we should: *seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.* (Matt 6:25-34)