

## #259 Kingdom\_ Personal Character

2 Peter 1: 4] For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them **you might become partakers of the divine nature**, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. [5] Now for this very reason also, applying **all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge; [6] and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness; [7] and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love.** [8] For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. [9] For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins. [10] Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; [11] for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you. Peter is speaking to believers but now is instructing them how to become partakers of the divine nature. This appears to be a process where one quality is added to another until an entrance is made into the Kingdom. It is obvious that receiving forgiveness of sins does not put us in the Kingdom as is often taught. It is also clear that our character must be “increased” in order to qualify for citizenship in the Kingdom.

Since the Kingdom is primarily a personal experience it may be manifested by a personal Kingdom character. The personal Kingdom government of God is seen in the individual life by the character that is visible. For example; A thief, a liar, a gossip, one who is causing division, strife, jealousy, anger, immorality, and things like these are manifesting flesh and not the Kingdom.

Love, joy, peace, righteousness, patience, goodness, faithfulness, forgiveness, self-control, bearing one another's burdens, and living according to the laws that have been put in our minds and the laws written upon our hearts indicate the presence of the Kingdom of God as a personal experience. This is of course just part of the provision supplied within the New Covenant but still an indication that the Kingdom has become a personal experience. For example; There are many provisions in the New Covenant that have not yet become our experience even though they are freely provided.

We shouldn't assume that since “I am saved” that I have experienced these tremendous Kingdom attributes into my life. We see the Kingdom provision as reported in scripture, but we may still be far from the Kingdom experience. This is the error of the “since I know, therefore, I am doctrine.” We “know” much more that we have actually experienced but the “experience part has been ignored” because some have related “experience” to “works.” . We wonder how any part of our experience in God can be interpreted as “works” since even forgiveness of sins and water baptism should be a valid experience. The baptism of the Holy Spirit should be a valid experience but surely can't be called works by anyone that has understanding.

In that same way to call seeking to obtain Kingdom character “just works” seems a little ridiculous and definitely ignorant. 2 Peter 1 alone should convince most anyone that the entrance into the Kingdom is not because of forgiveness of sins but because we pressed into the Kingdom.

Luke 16: 16] “The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John; since then the gospel of the kingdom of God is preached, **and everyone is forcing his way into it**

The way we participate in the Kingdom is not the same way we participate in the church or the way we participate in forgiveness of sins. We must “force our way into the Kingdom” and those who are unconcerned or just casual believers are on the outside observing but not entering. If we are just born-again we can see the Kingdom but to enter the Kingdom is something else. This is where we need to speak about the character of the person that is forcing their way into the Kingdom.

Brut force is not how it is done. Pressing in the flesh produces nothing in the Kingdom. Tramping on other people to gain entrance will keep you out of the Kingdom. Rebuking the devil or having an Apostle lay hands on you to “impart the Kingdom” is a big waste of time. Adding one experience and Christian attribute to another is the Kingdom way of participation.

Mark 1:14 And after John had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, **preaching the gospel of God**, [15] and saying, “**The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.**” In other words “This IS the time for the Kingdom.”

The “postponement theory” says that John the Baptist offered Israel the Kingdom but they rejected it. Then Jesus offered them the Kingdom and they rejected it so the Kingdom was postponed until the Millennium. In other words God’s purpose was held up until Israel got good and ready to receive it. This is ignorant and unscriptural.

Mat 21:43 “Therefore I say to you, **the kingdom of God will be taken away from you, and be given to a nation producing the fruit of it.**

God is not waiting on Israel to establish His Kingdom or complete His eternal purpose. Since Israel didn’t press into the Kingdom it was taken away and is given to that corporate group that IS producing the fruit of the Kingdom. In other words these New Covenant believers have pressed their way into the Kingdom and from the Kingdom they are producing the fruit of the Kingdom. The picture could be of Israel only participating in the fruit of Canaan after they entered into the land. It is unreasonable to expect to participate in the fruit of Canaan while wandering in the wilderness.

Since the message of the Kingdom has been a silent mystery in the church, there are multitudes that are wasting this precious time in this life with some false assurance that they are “saved” and therefore, they will sit on the throne of the Kingdom. Any rational mind should see the error of that if they have ever read the scriptures. On the other hand there are many sincere men in the pulpit that are students of the scriptures that ignore the truth about the Kingdom because they have been taught that the Kingdom was postponed. Therefore, we don’t need to be concerned today. The older Scofield Bibles notes said that Matthew 5-6 &7 are not for us but will be for Israel during the Millennium. The Kingdom has been postponed for now. It was called off because Israel didn’t respond to the message.

2 Thes 1: 5] This is a plain indication of God's righteous judgment so **that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which indeed you are suffering.** [6] For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, [7] and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, [8] **dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.** [9] And these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, [10] **when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day**, and to be marveled at among all who have believed--for our testimony to you was believed. [11] To this end also **we pray for you always that our God may count you worthy of your calling, and fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power;** [12] in order that the **name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you**, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

There will be a day when Jesus Christ will **"come to be glorified IN HIS SAINTS"** but this is the time also when **HIS NAME IS TO BE GLORIFIED IN US.** Postponing this "glorification" until this other time is dangerous if we expect to be counted worthy of the Kingdom. "For which we are suffering" is not speaking of some other time.

From just observation over the years it appears that there must be some special light within the person for the SEED [message] of the Kingdom to take root in the spirit of the person.

This is the good soil. There seems to be three places that the seed can fall that will produce nothing. {Mat 13: 18-23}

It seems that once the Kingdom seed takes root and grows that the Kingdom begins to take over the desires and consciousness of that person. It begins to crowd out irrelevant stuff that will not be useful in the Kingdom. It appears that the Kingdom seed begins to crowd out the hindrances to the Kingdom first, which is usually welcomed by us. Then it begins to crowd out some really "good things" that we thought were of great importance to our "ministry." What is "good for ministry" may not be good for the Kingdom seed to bring forth a harvest for the Kingdom. The struggle between "ministry" and the "kingdom values" will always be a problem until there is the "force of the Kingdom within" pushing through the "soil of outward ministry."

The confusion of which is God's will [ministry or Kingdom character] can only really be solved while standing in the Kingdom! Those on the outside will usually see "my ministry" as the most important thing and the focus of their life.

If we relate this to "worship" it is clear that for those in the "ministry of worship" the most important thing is the "time before the message" and the perfection of the music and the singing is the goal of life. However, in the Kingdom for us to worship in "spirit and in truth" is the only thing that matters. Music and singing is of another realm. First the natural then the spiritual!

Outer Court worship is just different from Holy Place worship and I suspect that Most Holy Place worship will be another realm that is totally different again. Outer Court worship should be

designed for Outer Court people but Kingdom people will not be satisfied. Neither will Outer Court people be satisfied with Kingdom worship. However, we hope that all worship is progressing toward that which brings joy to the Father's heart.

Worship can be heavenly and spiritual or it can be earthly and physical. Everybody must begin somewhere but hopefully each one will grow in their worship until it touches the realm of "spirit and truth." The fact is that there are still believers that assume it is better to worship on this mountain than on that mountain and in this way rather than in that way. Hopefully, we will progress to the place where we understand that "True Worship" is neither on this mountain or on that one but of another realm all together. It transcends some locality or method..

"My Kingdom is not of this world" fixes a truth that His Kingdom is of another realm. Whether we agree or not or we prefer the Kingdom to be physical and visible is totally irrelevant. The Kingdom is out of this realm beyond our "observation" and beyond human understanding and evaluation. The Kingdom is of a "spiritual dimension" so only those in that dimension can understand the Kingdom. Those "outside" only hear everything in riddles even if they are spoken clearly and to the point.

But doesn't that mean that God is a respecter of persons and gives understanding to some and not to others? Actually it insists that persons must be a respecter of God and the limitations that God has set upon His revelation of truth. Putting the blame on God for our dullness is human but ignorant. God IS Spirit and those who are in the flesh are of a different realm. God certainly respects those who are in the spirit but those who walk in the flesh still cannot please God, ever! But doesn't this make two different classes of believers and smack of division? Yes, but God still only wants one class of believers, those who walk in the Spirit! He is not obligated to accept those who walk in the flesh because He lives in this other realm. Our job is to go to Him and seek Him with all that we are and quit insisting that if two carnal people "touch and agree" that God is obligated to show up. If two or three carnal people get together God may be in their midst but they won't be aware because He is in another dimension beyond their physical senses.

Then "Kingdom character" is something that is of the spirit and not a matter of social politeness and proper protocol. Kingdom character is beyond training and practice because it is demonstrated out of the Life and Spirit of the Kingdom that is growing as seed within. If there is no "alive seed within" all the discipleship training and human discipline will produce only social acceptance and not Kingdom character.

Surely "social acceptance" is preferred above heathen attitudes but we must not confuse that with Kingdom character. Using heathen methods to attract the heathen has been disappointing even if we can fill the seats. It is true that ex-prostitutes can relate to current prostitutes but both may be outside the Kingdom. Jesus just had one message that fit all peoples. "Repent for the Kingdom is at hand." Only that which is of the Spirit will abide forever. Human persuasion may convert as far as the church but Kingdom transformation is forever. People of questionable character may be in the visible church but only those who are of the Kingdom character will abide forever and sit with Him. Is this way "too narrow" for the "wide road people? Most likely! But it is this "narrow way that leads to life and few there be that find it."

But what about those who are “saved” but still underdeveloped as far as the Kingdom is concerned? Obviously they will not be in a position to rule with Christ so they must be of those who are ruled and watched over and shepherded by those who have grown up in all things into Christ. Will pastors who have been faithful be equipped to shepherd the flock of God on the New Earth? Will “perfected prophets” still be useful in the administration of the Kingdom? The eternal government of God will be so vast that every perfected saint will be necessary to administrate the Kingdom. The question is NOT will they be employed but will they be qualified?

Since we must be counted “worthy of the Kingdom” there must be a testing system by which we are evaluated. There is! It has to do with our spiritual growth which is identified as Kingdom Character. Since the Kingdom is not of this world, it is a spiritual Kingdom and requires “spiritual growth” in order to participate. Those who remain in the flesh will be unqualified to participate and will in no way “inherit the Kingdom.

1 Cor 6: 9] Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall 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, shall inherit the kingdom of God. Other carnal traits are listed in Gal 5: 19-21.

The opposite of these carnal traits is what we are referring to as Kingdom character. As these carnal traits are personal so also is Kingdom character personal ! This is evaluated in Rev 19: 8as experiential righteousness. The “righteous acts of the saints” is personal righteousness. Since most of the emphasis has been placed upon our imputed righteousness by faith in Jesus Christ, those who are preaching the Kingdom will begin to focus upon our character. This will seem strange for those who have been told that all our righteousness is just Christ alone.