

#319 Kingdom: Breathing Life

John 20: 21] Jesus therefore said to them again, “Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you.” [22] And when He had said this, **He breathed on them, and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. [23] “If you forgive the sins of any, their sins have been forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they have been retained.”**

G1720 ε’?φυσά’? Emphusao’? *em-foo-sah’-o* From G1722 and υσα’? phusao’? (to *puff*; compare G5453); to *blow at* or *on*: - breathe on.

Derek Prince, who was a Greek scholar, says that this word is used to indicate a person blowing into a flute.

Empneo [Strong's 1709] means to breath in or on.

While the commentaries say this was a symbolic act and how He symbolically communicated to them the Holy Spirit [or some say He gave the earnest or down payment of the Holy Spirit] it surely indicates more than that in the context of Jesus sending them as the Father had sent Him. In the additional context of imparting the authority to forgive sins or to retain sins indicates something more than symbolism. Jesus obviously also had this authority to forgive sins. Does He also give us the authority to breath out His Life?

To me this is indicative of something new that is revealed as an introduction to the Kingdom of God in its new reality and experience. This was a stumbling block to the Jews when Jesus forgave sins because they knew that no one could forgive sins but God, Himself. For Jesus to give this authority to these disciples had to be based upon more than the human compassion of the disciples. My theory is that this act is based upon the indwelling Kingdom. For “disciples” to go around “forgiving the sins” of people they pass on the street seems a little radical. The Catholic Church uses this scripture for their authority to forgive sins after confession.

Since this is the very first that the Disciples could have been born again AFTER Jesus was resurrected it seems reasonable that this “breathing on or blowing into the disciples had to do with imparting His resurrection Life. Having His Life “ON” us is not the same as having His Life “IN” us. Having His Spirit “ON” us is not the same thing as having His Spirit “IN” us.

It seems clear that this event signaled the beginning of the teaching about the Kingdom of God. For example; The following 40 days is recorded in Acts Chapter 1 and says that Jesus spent those next 40 days teaching about the Kingdom of God before He was taken up. This “breathing in them or on them” is strongly related to the Gospel of the Kingdom being taught to the disciples during the 40 days. This event was the beginning of that teaching!

The scientists are sending out space craft now to very distant planets to gather dust to try to discover where the earth came from and how life began here. They hope to find the heart and the soul of the universe by studying planetary dust but no matter how much information and facts they gather the reality of creation will escape them.

This is true also of the church studying information and facts about the Bible and Christianity to discover the reality of the Kingdom of God and the source of life. We cannot align ourselves with information, facts, principles or concepts about the Kingdom and discover the reality of the Kingdom. All these things may point to the Kingdom but they are still outside the Kingdom and cannot touch the Life and reality of the Kingdom.

The Kingdom is hidden within His Presence. If God is ALL and All and infinite then the Kingdom must be IN GOD rather than God being IN THE KINGDOM! The Kingdom then has its significance in God and not the other way round.

My theory is that we cannot know the King or the Kingdom by searching, by study, by accumulating facts or information. We must rely upon His Teaching Presence subjectively and by revelation in our inner man. All this adds to the burden of preaching the Kingdom to the whole world and the accumulation of thoughts and words by which to preach. Still, it must be possible because Jesus wouldn't command us to do something that was impossible.

Paul said that he didn't preach using persuasive words of man's wisdom but in power and demonstration of the Spirit. When we understand that regular preaching and teaching **cannot reveal the mysteries that have been hidden from past generations** we wonder about the possibility of proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom in a different way. That is possibly by **"breathing out His Life."** We might call this the **"ministry of Life."** If the Kingdom is not preached by enticing words of men's wisdom but in power and demonstration of the Spirit, what exactly does that mean? Are the "Kingdom words" different than our regular words?

Why don't we forget about these "abstract words" and just manifest and demonstrate the Kingdom of God? The problem, as I see it, is the **"Kingdom words and Life" must come out of the inner man which received this "breath of Life" from Jesus.** This "breath of Life" is the Life of the inner man and His Kingdom is imparted to us within His Life. What then is the hindrance to our manifesting His Kingdom words and His Kingdom Life? If Jesus Christ has "breathed into us" then **the very seed of His Kingdom Life is in us.** The question is not; Is His Life in us but what is preventing it from being manifest?

What we permit God to impart to us and what we ask Him to remove from us is really the most important thing that permits the Kingdom seed of His Life to be manifest. We may develop a good doctrine about all the wonderful things of grace that God has graciously imparted to us but they are not manifest because of all the garbage that we have not permitted God to remove from us. Both the impartation and the extraction and elimination are equally important. If we keep eating and eating but there is no elimination we soon find our self in trouble. The Kingdom is a powerful source of elimination when we welcome it and ask for it. The "prophetic impartation" is a fantasy if there is no elimination of garbage. Imparting "ministry" on top of garbage is a stinking mixture that is made evident during our time of "ministry."

The process of coming to perfection seems clear enough. Jesus Christ imparts His Life to us and forms a new inner man that is created in the image of God. Then He fills us with the Holy Spirit to teach us and sanctify us, first on the inside. What God has imparted to us is pure but is still

immature and undeveloped. What has remained from having been in Adam, called flesh, is the garbage that must be removed. As more and more garbage is removed the pure inner Life and the new inner man can grow and fill the space occupied by the garbage. When all the garbage is removed, what remains is Christ which IS the pure Gold of the Lampstand Church. When we use the metaphor of Gold, the “garbage” is referred to as the “dross.” When we use the metaphor of “spirit”, the “garbage is referred to as “flesh.” However, the process of removal is the same.

As we are coming to perfection the removal of the “garbage” is just as essential as the growth of the inner man and our growth is fully dependent upon that elimination of the “garbage.” To teach perfection and ignore the elimination is ignorant. Prophesying against the apathetic and underdeveloped condition of the church is pathetic if there is no solution given. Prophesying that God will soon judge the church and destroy it from the land is no deterrent to immaturity if there is no positive solution to the carnality.

If Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for it that He might sanctify and cleanse

it, there must be something in the church to cleanse it from. Then God’s priority is “cleansing” the church and not the destruction of the church. What the prophets are saying about “destruction” would be more accurately called “elimination.” This might be compared to the “Garbage carried out through the ‘dung gate’ and burned in the fire” like it was in Jerusalem. We might use “garbage” as a metaphor for wood, hay and straw that will be burned to expose the silver, gold and precious stone.

Therefore, it is not that God has failed to put the seeds of “perfection” [Christ/ Life / Light] in us but that the “tares” of the old nature are preventing the growth and maturity of “Christ in us, our hope of glory.”

It is probably not necessary to identify what the “garbage” is and what is acceptable in the Kingdom of God but because of clarity we will pursue some different realms of “garbage.”

Mark 9: 34] But they kept silent, for on the way they had discussed with one another **which of them was the greatest.** [35] And sitting down, He called the twelve and said to them, **“If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all, and servant of all.”**

Now, is this a suggestion or is this the Law of the Kingdom? Does the servant of “some” qualify? Does just being a servant to God qualify us? This “law” is very revealing when we place this “Law” in the Holy Place and the “ministry of the priesthood.” To stand before the Lord, minister to the Lord, to burn Incense and then to be His minister is the basis of becoming a servant to all. Cleaning toilets is of a different dimension but could be a practical part of our development!

We qualify as “servants of all” not just by doing but also by our attitudes and by our inner motive of why we do these things. The Kingdom is always looking at the whole picture and observes both the inward and the outward life. The Kingdom is NOT out to lord it over us or to destroy us but to sanctify and cleanse us from every spot and wrinkle so that we might become holy and

blameless. Therefore, the motive behind our “serving all” is just as important as what we do to “serve all.” With this understanding we can identify some “garbage” that needs to go to the “garbage dump and be burned.” Identifying the garbage is not so difficult!

“I am going to serve these people because by doing that I am serving God.” “These people are a disaster and deserve nothing but my desire is to serve God so let me pass through this time of “serving all.” “This time of “serving all” is temporary because this is a stepping stone to greater things.” “I am paying my dues now but God will give me a great ministry later so I am “serving all” and abiding my time waiting for an advancement in authority and power.” “It is true that my ministry is not known and nobody recognizes me yet but one day I will receive the recognition that I deserve.” “My ego is being humbled now but God will exalt me in due time.” “I am serving a small congregation now but if I am faithful and successful my denomination will advance me to positions of authority on the executive board.” All these motives that have the purpose of gaining personal status sometime in the future is a dead end road in the Kingdom.

Building large buildings, creating a multimedia ministry, and “serving all” as a status symbol is actually leading us away from the Kingdom! Are these things wrong? Certainly not! The problem is not in the “serving” but in the motive behind the serving which might be my own name and fame. The process of being converted to the Kingdom must cover all these fallen areas of our being.

Becoming ego-centric, ego seeking, ego sensitive as the means to “public greatness” is anti-Christ and anti-Kingdom even though many people may be sincerely helped by the ministry. The “bond-servant of Christ” is primarily the servant of all. In Revelation 22 we see the “bondservants” have become the “first.”

Mat 25: 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.** [35] ‘For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; [36] naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.’ [37] “Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You drink? [38] ‘And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You? [39] ‘And when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’ [40] “And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.’

The Kingdom has been prepared for the saints from the foundation of the world BUT we still must inherit it by our works of serving “all” and by our life. These were serving out of a pure heart because they were not even aware that they were serving Jesus.

The question within the Evangelical Church is this; But won’t we all inherit the Kingdom because we believe in Jesus? We are surely not “saved” by our works are we?

Mat 25: 41] “Then He will also say to those on His left, ‘**Depart from Me, accursed ones, into**

the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels; [42] for I was hungry, and you gave Me nothing to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me nothing to drink; [43] I was a stranger, and you did not invite Me in; naked, and you did not clothe Me; sick, and in prison, and you did not visit Me.' [44] "Then they themselves also will answer, saying, `Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not take care of You?' [45] "Then He will answer them, saying, `Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' [46] **"And these will go away into eternal punishment,** but the righteous into eternal life."

The Kingdom is NOT sentimental or permissive when it comes to attaining to its Kingdom standards. We are calling this the "absolute Kingdom." This is not a matter of attaining to a lower place "in the Kingdom" but receiving a place in the "eternal fire." This scripture will help us to become "Kingdom sensitive" instead of "ego sensitive." Fulfilling the Kingdom demands with joy is quite an accomplishment. The natural man is defeated before he begins. Even the really spiritual person is hard pressed to fulfill the demands of the Kingdom. However, all these things CAN be accomplished by Christ in us. The hindrance to our meeting all these demands is all the garbage that is still in us that we call carnality, immaturity, flesh, natural or mere men.

When we were in Cuba our car broke down in a section of Havana where many people

were going to work. We were standing on the side of the road where the people were walking by. We didn't see one happy face and no one greeted us. Going to work was not a joy but a burden because the only incentive was working to get some food so they could continue to live.

Serving others must have higher calling than survival. The Kingdom is not without incentives but the incentives are much higher than is normal human incentives. We compartmentalize the church into segments. Music, worship, preaching, Sunday School, missions, outreach, young people, young married couples, singles, older married couples, widows and then some emphasize the power ministries, the wisdom ministries. The gift ministries and on and on. This represents a biased approach based upon distinctions and may even ignore the Government of the Kingdom of God.

The Kingdom Church is not just a humanitarian group that give to others or meets emergency needs. If our motive to serve the least of these is "humanitarian" sooner or later our motive will grow weak and more intolerant. If this "work" is not being appreciated or if it is taken as an entitlement or the people don't try to help themselves or are lazy we suddenly lose our burden to serve. Then we become cynical, disillusioned, and lose our faith in man to rise above their immediate need.

Sometimes the "spiritual" will "jump off the spire of the temple" in a grand attempt to help the needy with programs and provision and soon burn out and lose their zeal. We did that when the Spanish people began arriving from Guatemala and Mexico. We provided them with money and prescriptions and they saved their money to buy booze. All our effort collapsed into a religious offence that was just an experiment in human nature.

The problem with the Gospel of the Kingdom **that is not in word only** but is in power and demonstration of the Spirit is that there is no wiggle room. There is no partial Kingdom or half way commitment or I have done a little so everything is imputed to me. The Kingdom is The Kingdom and is absolute. There is no room for indecision, intolerance, patronizing service, or superiority. The Kingdom is straight forward and uncomplicated in its demands. It lifts us to the higher order of things. If something is not universal it is not the Kingdom. If someone is excluded from the Kingdom for some reason, it better be a Kingdom reason and not a human reason.

When the Kingdom comes into view it strikes us with surprise because we did not expect such an “intolerant Kingdom.” It says either perform and live up to the standards that are set in stone or be cast out into the eternal fire. We suddenly are confronted by extraordinary principles, concepts, standards and demands that are clearly beyond our feeble capacity to perform.

God so graciously gives us all an equal opportunity to participate but passes judgement decisively if we don't perform according to the Kingdom standards. It would be easy to coin the phrase the “dreaded Kingdom.” Therefore, if we can't preach God's unlimited provision, the Kingdom becomes a “dreaded demand” that the natural man cannot fulfill. This will throw the natural man into confusion and despair. This is most likely why the Evangelical Church has rejected the Gospel of the Kingdom as too severe for the church.

Mat 6:32] “For all these things the Gentiles eagerly seek; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. [33] **“But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you.**

Everything that we will ever need to meet the demands of the Kingdom are freely provided within the Kingdom. The confusion comes to those who stand outside the unlimited provision of the Kingdom and complain about the unreasonable demands of the Kingdom and try to explain them away with carnal arguments. Nevertheless, the Kingdom stands as God's absolute and the demands are nonnegotiable. The Kingdom is NOT some Idealism that is a goal that no one will every reach but is set before us as an unattainable prize, as some say!

To preach some “conciliatory Kingdom” that makes no demands will be a great disservice to the church because it presents a false hope for the lukewarm and casual believer. One wonders if the total demands of the Kingdom was preached in an average church service what the reaction would be and how fast the church would empty out leaving the preacher standing alone.

The Gospel of the Kingdom obviously didn't come to bring peace but a sword and to cause division. However, I am convinced that the New Creation, fully developed, will be able to live in this dimension of His Life IF we are able to lay aside everything of the old creation.

The immediate problem for most of us is getting rid of everything connected to the old creation. The Romans 7 approach of more human effort cannot eliminate the old creation or remove the garbage he left behind. Therefore, our theory is that everything that we discover hidden within us that qualifies as “garbage” must be confessed, repented of, forsaken and ask God to remove from us. To me this seems to be the way it works. His Life cannot be “breathed out” from flesh.