“When Kingdoms Collide”

Acts 1:1-8; 2 Cor. 5:18-21

(notes based on the sermon by Pastor Steve Massey, Hayden Bible Church, 1/31/21)

 We live in an earthly kingdom, yet we belong to another Kingdom, the Kingdom of God. Who’s in charge? Of course, it’s our King, the Lord Jesus Christ. Our King is alive and perfectly aware of what’s going on in our earthly kingdom. Nothing is outside of His control or catches Him off guard. How should we live out our Christian life down here? **A Christian life should be preoccupied with advancing the Kingdom of God.** (Q1)

 Think about how you spend your time, how you use your money, how you build and invest in relationships. The values and priorities of our Heavenly Kingdom are meant to shape our values and priorities in our earthly kingdom. We are called to be light, not to have the same values and priorities of our prevailing culture. **To confuse the kingdom of man with the Kingdom of God is to confuse what it means to be a Christian.**

 What did Jesus teach His disciples when He was with them for the 40 days between His resurrection and His ascension? He said that the Kingdom of God

1. … is the rule of God among people
2. … is present in every heart surrendered to Christ as King through repentance and faith in Him
3. … will not grow beyond those united by faith to their King

His Kingdom doesn’t grow by might or revolution or vitriol or clever arguments. It only grows by the faith of His followers sharing their faith so that others may also share this faith. Acts 1:6 shows that the disciples were also confused about this, even though Jesus preached and taught repeatedly about His Kingdom. The Kingdom of God does not depend upon politics or court rulings. Many of God’s people are putting way too much energy into the wrong kingdom. (Q2)

 Jesus says in Acts 1:7 that some things are hidden to us (“It is not for you to know…”) What I do know is this: **The future unfolds only according to God’s plan and authority. Your Father is in charge and He loves you with an everlasting love!** I also know that the best human government can restrain evil, but it cannot advance the work of God. Only the Holy Spirit can do that. Acts 1:8 goes on to say what is NOT hidden: God’s master plan for His Kingdom on earth is not political and it is not militaristic. It is to give His Holy Spirit so that His people will be witnesses for Him. THAT’S IT!!! That’s the only way the Kingdom grows. **The Kingdom of God grows as the Spirit of God works through His witness people.** You don’t need a class or a methodology or an evangelist to get you fired up. There is just no substitute for you and me taking up the cause of Christ in our little sphere of influence. (Q3)

 **Witnesses declare the truth of God concerning the Son of God.** Let’s pray that this will be our preoccupation. Of course, we still need to take a stand against evil in our world. But as we stand, let us remember James 1:19-20. (Q4) **The only righteousness that glorifies God is produced through salvation and sanctification.**

 Here’s another reason we get caught up in these earthly battles: God’s way is harder! It requires faith. It requires allowing the Holy Spirit to work through us, instead of wresting the control away from Him. Acts 1:8 goes on to say this incredibly important phrase: “… you shall receive power…” God has NOT promised to sanctify our culture. We can all see that the world is “going to Hell in a handbasket.” The good news is that He is pulling people out of the handbasket and He is using us to help. **The only way to advance the Kingdom of God is to wield His power by the power of the Holy Spirit** in your particular, “Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth.” (Q5)

 Dear Father, give us grace not to be distracted by lesser things, but to be committed to give and go and love and communicate for You and Your Kingdom. We want to live completely for You. Amen.

**QUESTIONS:**

1. What have you been preoccupied with lately? With what should you have been preoccupied? Be specific. See also Acts 1:8 and Matt. 28: 18-20.
2. Why do disciples tend to confuse these two kingdoms?
3. This is a very important question: What is your little sphere of influence?
4. How does righteousness grow? How does evil get conquered?
5. Where is your “Jerusalem”? Let me get you started: your family, your friends, your helpers, …

“Crown Him with Many Crowns” (Bridges)

1. Crown Him with many crowns,
The Lamb upon His throne.
Hark! How the heavenly anthem drowns
All music but its own.
Awake, my soul and sing Of Him
Who died for thee,
And hail Him as thy matchless King
Through all eternity.

3. Crown Him the Lord of life,
Who triumphed o'er the grave,
Who rose victorious to the strife
For those He came to save.
His glories now we sing,
Who died, and rose on high,
 Who died eternal life to bring,
And lives that death may die.