



2019 March Sermon Series: The Main Thing

Message #3 – The Main Thing... Becoming a Citizen of the Kingdom of God

Getting the Nod

Drama: **God's Chisel**

NKJV | Mk 1:14-15 Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, 15 and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel."

NKJV | Mt 6:33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

NKJV | Mt 6:10 Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Introduction: The kingdom of God was **one of Jesus' most talked about topics**, but it's hardly a well-grasped concept for believers today. If you asked a group of people to define it, you would probably get a **variety of answers**. **The Greek term for kingdom is used 162 times in the New Testament**, with most of them referring to the Kingdom of God. Yet, **how often do we as believers discuss God's kingdom** and keep it on the forefront of our hearts?

I believe one of the reasons we don't talk about God's kingdom as much as we should is because we don't fully understand this mysterious concept. But one simple way to look at it is to know that in the both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament **the term "kingdom" is understood as primarily the rule or reign of a king... but to define the territory is to define both spiritual and eternal land**. It is seldom used in a static sense to refer to a territory. And the deed is not ours... but God's.

Transitional Statement: **Today the Big Rock is how to become a citizen and disciple of the Kingdom of God**. And to illustrate how enormous this topic is... let's watch a video of a famous surfer...

Connecting Us

Video Clip of Surfing a Tsunami

Illustration of riding the wave of God's Kingdom: The video starts with famed surfer Laird Hamilton upright on his board. He is holding on to a rope being towed along the water by a speeding jet ski. You sense a massive wave rests just underneath Laird and the jet ski, but the camera is focused in a manner that you can't quite tell how big it is.

As Laird gains speed by the power of the jet ski, you begin to see that he is on the downward slope of the wave. **The focus is on Laird alone**. But as the camera pulls back, back, back, you see the

surfer for what he really is—a mere speck on a wave so enormous it defies comprehension. Laird is surfing on the crest of a 65-foot breaker. **That's when the focus changed to the wave.**

The wave curls and the surfer speeds down its face, propelled by the wall of water crashing around him, **and he is exhilarated by the ride of a lifetime.**

Application: This is a picture of the kingdom of God and us... So often we can only focus on ourselves... but then as we go deeper into the Kingdom of God... it becomes our focus!!! Like the wave, God's kingdom is on the move. It is enormous beyond our comprehension, and it's there whether we're ready to catch it or not. Should we want to ride this wave, we soon learn that it travels so fast, we can't do a thing on our own power. Our paddling simply won't do. We need the Holy Spirit to tow us along to get up to speed. Even when we catch it, we still don't do the bulk of the work. We are simply willing to ride the wave of what God is doing, exhilarated all the while by its awesome nature.

Transitional Statement: To go a little farther in describing the Kingdom of God, let's look at the core values of that kingdom...

God's Take

Here are the Core Values of the Kingdom of God:

1. It arrived with Jesus and Jesus is the Ruler of it. (Mark 1:15)

- Jesus is the human face of the kingdom of God. He makes it invitationally accessible.
- We are invited into His reality... but that reality is only recognized what it affects... **Like WIND... you can't see it... but we definitely see what it can do. (Power poles on 35)**

2. The only way you can become a citizen is by repenting and submitting to Jesus. (Mark 1:15)

- No one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again (John 3:3) and surrendered to God's rule.
- It is the only way in become a citizen of the kingdom. And don't diminish the value of surrender.
- **Illustration of Desert Storm and the willing white flags:** I had a parishioner in my last church that saw first hand the Iraqi soldiers begging to be captured. It was a surrender that was actually a victory.

3. This kingdom is both in us and around us right now. (Mark 1:15)

- There can be no kingdom of God in the world without the kingdom of God in our hearts.
- The Kingdom of God is a journey that takes place in us... and His rule is seen around us.
- **Illustration of my request for local license:** God had captured my heart... the territory of God's kingdom... but that capture compelled me to be broken for others to experience it.

4. We are to seek it first above everything and everyone else. (Matt. 6:33)

- If the kingdom of God isn't first, it doesn't matter what's second.
- We will never catch the enormous wave of God in our lives if we can only focus on the surfer!!!

5. The closer you get to the Ruler, the greater the liberty becomes. (Matt. 6:33)

- We are citizens of a kingdom that cannot be shaken and the child of a King with no limitations.

Describing the Citizens of the Kingdom of God:

- They're disciples... not just converts.
- They're transformed... not just conformed.
- They're abiding... not just surviving.
- They're producers... not just learners.
- They're promoters of the King... not just attendees of the church.
- They're pulling for the Church... not just posing as members.

Transitional Statement: When you came in, you were given a little green army man. How many of you remember playing with these guys? Some of the Church staff went to the D6 Family Ministry Conference last year and learned an important lesson from these guys...

Our Challenge



Illustration of the Little Army Men: When I was young, my brother and I used to play with these little green army men. And what was the first thing that we did? We opened the clear plastic bag of army men and dumped them out. Now, take a guess what we did next... we began to organize our army according to their purpose. You had the crawling guys out front... and the kneeling guys behind them with bazookas (now known as RPG's) and rifles... because you can't put them behind the standing guys... that's called friendly fire. Then you had the radio guy farther back to relay messages to the other platoons... and the grenade launchers positioned to hit the enemy forces as they attack. Then there was the guy with the mop... or at least that's what we thought he was. It turns out that we put him in the back because who needs a janitor on the battle field? It turns out that he was a mine sweeper!!! So, we quickly took him from the back to the front... to save hundreds of lives as he located the danger, buried in the ground.

The Application: The secret to your army was to put your guys in the right places to make the greatest advance on our enemy and to win back the territory that was lost! **We are the Army of God... and He wants each of us to be put in the right place where He can use us most effectively!!! Our role as a church is to make disciples... you know, soldiers... and to get you where you need to be so that God is intimately important... and that each of us find spiritual maturity... where we become seasoned soldiers... and put you in the right place to be used in the Kingdom of God to win victories for Him and His Church!!!**

Where are you in the army of God?

- **Are you on the sideline looking in?** Are you standing on the side of the battlefield without a place to fight? Then today we want to recruit you. We want you to get to know our commander!!!
- **Are you in uniform but lacking fighting skills?** Are you a soldier in a uniform... on the battlefield but not so seasoned at helping in the fight? Then you need battle training. You need to grow as a soldier in your knowledge of the enemy and God's army.

- **Are you in the fight but still wonder where you should be fighting?** Are you a soldier fighting but not too sure about your role in the field? Then you need to find out your purpose and giftedness... and jump into your place to make the biggest difference.
- **Are you seasoned and want to build this army larger?** Are you a soldier who knows how to fight... where to fight... and why you fight... but want to gain more soldiers for this fight? Then you need to learn how to tell others about why you fight... and the awesome Commander who they need to meet.
- **Where ever you're at... there's a next step.**

What's Your Next Step in the Kingdom of God? What is our discipling process? We at Heritage want to help you find out where you are and what the next step is...



Step #1 - Knowing Christ: First and foremost, a disciple is a follower. This is where people find Christ and get to know His family and find community and a place to belong. **Church attendance and community.**

Step #2 - Growing in Christ: The Bible is full of discipling relationships. Moses prepared Joshua to take over the leadership of Israel. Eli prepared Samuel for the work of a prophet. Elijah mentored Elisha. Paul prepared Timothy. Jesus poured into 12 men. This is where you deepen your roots in the mysteries and power of God's Word and prayer with other Christians and learn the secrets of what a disciple of God looks like. This is where you become more like Jesus every day. **Getting plugged into a small group and/or a Christian Education class.**

Step #3 - Serving Christ: A discipling life is an others-oriented life. Learning the place that God can use you and finding your gifts that God can use in the Kingdom of God... to impact other lives with the love of Christ. **Calling the office and finding a place to get involved. Sylvia, Mike Ford, Department leaders.**

Step #4 - Sharing Christ: A disciple is one who makes disciples. Learning how to share Christ with others and help lead them to a personal relationship with Him. **Special electives.**

Transitional Statement: So, where are you? What's your next step?

Drawing the Net

Illustration of the 4 out of 10 and getting to Atlanta: Last week I posed the statistic that George Barna laid out... 4 out of every 10 Americans have committed themselves to Christ while the other 6 are not. I then suggested that most churches focus on the 6 and try to get as many of them to get saved. The 4 out of 10 would just have to jump in and help. But the form of evangelism is to focus on the 4!!! **Object Lesson:** If you walk out into the parking lot this morning and someone says to you, "How do I get to Atlanta?" You say, "Well, get in your car." Well, that's good advice. That's the start of it. But you also need to say, "Start your car and head south on I-71... then I-75 and don't stop until you get there." You give more detailed directions to see them through to the destination they have named.

The beginning of evangelism is found in the reality about Jesus Christ, how to get into him and to him; but there is much more. **Evangelism is persuading a person to be a disciple of Jesus Christ.** (Leith Anderson, "Making More Disciples," Preaching Today,