

The Kingdom Within



Learning by Living (Part 7)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again, sharing with you precious insights out of Scripture that have made the difference between success and failure in my life and can do the same in yours.

This week I will be continuing with the theme which I commenced last week: "Learning by Living," in which I am sharing with you vital, practical lessons that I have learned in serving the Lord and His people.

In my talk yesterday I shared with you one very practical way in which we can check our own spiritual progress, by checking on how we use our tongue. I pictured someone standing in front of the mirror of God's Word and then sticking his tongue out and looking at what the mirror shows him about his tongue.

Well, today I am going to share with you an exciting discovery that I made about the message of the Gospel; one that has an important practical effect on how it works in our lives.

For many years I had been preaching the gospel as I understood it. Then, quite unexpectedly, God showed me that I was not really preaching the whole message. And let me say I had been associated with movements that were called "full gospel" for many, many years. I discovered sometimes the "full gospel" isn't the whole gospel. I found that I had been leaving out a vitally important part of the message as it is actually presented in the New Testament.

In the New Testament it is not just "the Gospel," but it is "the Gospel of the Kingdom." That is what I am going to share with you today.

For instance, to introduce the Gospel, in Matthew 3:1–2, the forerunner who went before Jesus.

> "John the Baptist came, preaching in the desert of Judea and saying, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.'"

That is the introduction to the whole of the New Testament and the message of the Gospel, or the Good News.

Now after John had been put in prison, Jesus began his public ministry. It is recorded in Matthew 4:17. And he began with exactly the same words.

> "From that time on Jesus began to preach, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.'"

That is the basic message of the Gospel. Now, when you hear that, you need to put yourself in the place of people in those days and realize what the word "kingdom" meant for them.

Most of us in the western world are used to thinking in terms of democracy. For us a king, if it has any reality at all, is just a kind of ornamental figure that rides in processions and gets married and does things like that; but has no real function in government. But you need to bear in mind that in the New Testament, the king or kingship, was the normal method of government.

So when John the Baptist and then Jesus proclaimed "the kingdom of heaven is near," what they were saying is, "God's Kingdom is ready to be established. God is ready to take over the government of the human race."

You understand? If you look back in human history, all man's problems started when he rejected the government of God over his life. And the only logical and practical solution to those problems is for man to come back under the government of God in his life once again.

The Good News is that God is willing to take us over again. If I were God, I think I would have, I would have drawn the line there. But, you see, people do not see this way, because the word "government" to this present generation tends to suggest something they resent and they do not want and "Why should anybody tell me what to do?" That is the attitude. We have to change our attitude. We have to realize we need God's government in our lives. And to come into that government the first thing we have to do is to repent. We have to acknowledge we have been rebellious, self-pleasing, doing our own thing, living by our own standards, we have to turn from that and turn to God and say, "God, I am willing to be governed by you. Thank you that you are willing to govern me."

You see this was predicted, even in the Old Testament, in one of the most famous prophesies in Isaiah, concerning the coming of Jesus Christ. In Isaiah 9:6–7, he says:

> "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

Notice the first specific statement about this wonderful, miracle child is that the government will be on His shoulder. And then certain statements are made about Him, all of which indicate how He is qualified for the government. And then the next verse says:

> "Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom."

So He is coming to govern and He is coming to govern as a King. And then if we look in Matthew 4 again, we see that when Jesus proclaimed this Good News, He did a lot more than just talk. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 4:20:

> "For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power."

You see, if we present an incomplete message, we are likely to leave out the power. The power goes with the message of the kingdom. It is the kingdom that is not a matter of talk, but of power. And whenever Jesus proclaimed this message or instructed His disciples to do so, there was always not just words, but a demonstration of the reality of God's power and authority taking dominion over all the evil forces that plague humanity and destroy the human race.

Listen, for instance, to this description of the opening of the ministry of Jesus in Matthew 4:23–24:

> "Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. Now, news about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all that were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, the epileptics and the paralytics, and he healed them."

That list there is a list of all the different forms of torment and sickness and infirmity and anguish that can come upon sin-cursed humanity. And when Jesus proclaimed the Good News of the Kingdom, that good news was demonstrated by the fact that all those plagues and torments of humanity were brought into subjection by the power of the kingdom and all the people were healed.

You see, if we do not preach the right message, we do not give God the opportunity to confirm it. If we just talk about the good news, that is vague, when we talk about the Good News of the Kingdom, then God demonstrates the coming of the kingdom in power, in dominion, in victory over sin, sickness and Satan.

At this present phase in God's dealings with humanity, the kingdom of God has not yet become a visible, external kingdom that we can see with our eyes. Jesus explained this when he was asked by the Pharisees, in Luke 17:20–21:

> "He was asked when the kingdom of God would come, and he replied, 'The kingdom of God does not come visibly, nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is within you.'"

In this period in which we are living now, the kingdom of God is not a visible, external kingdom with an earthly capital, but it is an inward spiritual kingdom. But it is all the more real because it is spiritual. You see the spiritual is actually more real, more permanent than the physical and the material. So the kingdom of God in this dispensation is the condition of a person who has willingly come under the Kingship of Jesus.

You see, the gospel is a whole lot more than just getting saved and having eternal life. The gospel culminates in the kingship of Jesus in your life.

I think millions of Christians are having problems, with sin and with other areas in their lives, simply because they are not living out the full message of the good news. They have got out of sin, they believe, but they haven't come under the Kingship of Jesus. They are like people suspended between two worlds. And sometimes they are up and sometimes they are down. Sometimes they have victory and sometimes they do not. That is not the condition of someone who is truly under the kingship of Jesus.

Now Paul describes the nature of this inward spiritual kingdom in one tremendously simple but powerful verse: Romans 14:17:

> "For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."

That is the nature of the inward kingdom. It consists of three things: righteousness, peace and joy. And only in that kingdom can anyone have righteousness. Because any person who is not under the kingship of Jesus is still a rebel. Do you understand? God says there is no peace to the wicked. So many, many Christians are not really under the kingship of Jesus. Consequently, they are not living lives of righteousness. There is no way of righteousness apart from being under the kingship of Jesus. Now when righteousness comes, peace and joy follow.

I meet so many Christians who are running after peace and joy, but they are by-passing righteousness. Well it does not work, I will tell you that, out of my own experience, out of what I have seen in the lives of many. But also notice the last phrase, "in the Holy Spirit." It is only the Holy Spirit who administers the kingdom within. It is not a matter of just plain theory or theology or doctrine, it is a matter of a relationship with Jesus that is made real by the Holy Spirit.

Now, I would like to ask you very simply, as I close my talk today. Are you really in the kingdom of God? Or to put it round the other way, is the kingdom of God really in you? Are you struggling with a lot of problems that you really do not know how to handle? I want to offer you this suggestion based on my own understanding of Scripture and my own experience. Do not settle for a half gospel. Do not live on the stepping stones but never get to the other bank. Being saved, having your sins forgiven, receiving eternal life, that is wonderful. But those are stepping stones into the kingdom of God. Do not hang around on the stepping stones all your life. Step out of them onto the other bank, into the kingdom. Come under the kingship of Jesus by a deliberate decision and surrender of your will to Him.

Radio Program

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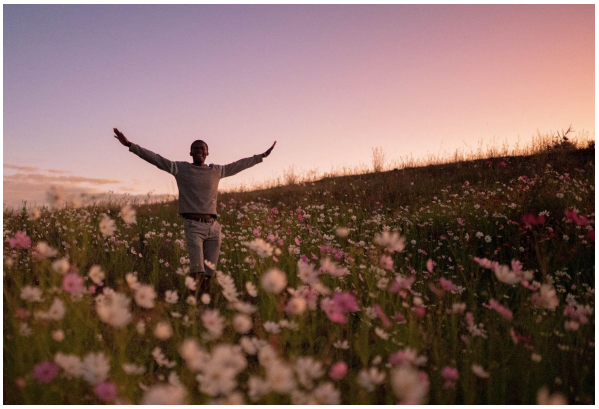


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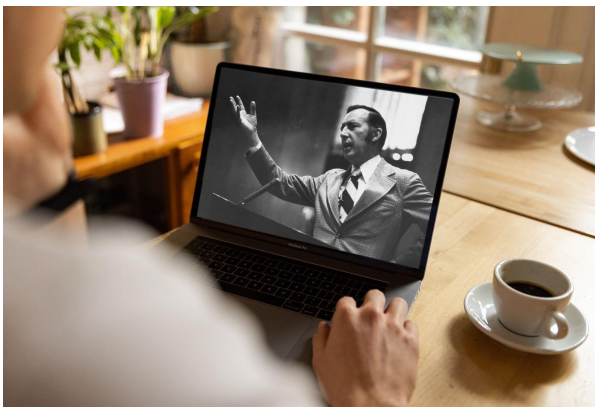
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