

Life in the Kingdom – Notes

Up to this point everything we have discussed has been about changing the way we think allowing us to change how we look at ourself and life. The process revolves around changing sources. We are disconnecting from the knowledge of good and evil, exercising our ability to discern the difference and choose one over the other. We are learning to trust God as our Source over our own knowledge and ability and connect with life and life abundantly.

In life in the kingdom of heaven on earth today we will look at four specific content areas and look at what is our part in them and what is God's part. The good news is that God's part is always the hard stuff. This is by design and reflects the goodness, faithfulness and loving kindness of our God and the hope we have today and faith for our future.

- 1) Lordship: to come under the Lordship of Jesus
- 2) Transformation: bringing to the surface what has been done on the inside
- 3) Authority: often abused in the confusion between a spiritual kingdom and the human one
- 4) Spiritual Warfare: all of history could be summed up as the battle for who will be worshipped as the center of the universe; man or God?

Citizens of a Kingdom

Many of us have a belief system that is built on a world view, a kingdom mindset, we do not have. The way we have been taught to define reality is based on our physical world and our reason or rational thought. As a Christian we are trying to integrate a spiritual kingdom we cannot see with the natural order that we can see. Examples are a tree with fruit that looks like life or the knowledge of good and evil; a burning bush that looks on fire that doesn't burn.

God tells us that His ways are higher than our ways and that His thoughts are higher than our thoughts. Even though we are learning to think like God does we will never arise to God's level in understanding kingdom and life. This requires an eternal mindset as reality not a finite point of view describing our understanding of God's reality for us.

The spiritual realm is different from the natural in the sense that we can only be in one place at a time physically. Spiritually we are in two places at one time. We have been translated into a kingdom that is not geographical in nature. We are residents of heaven seated in a heavenly place with Christ Jesus even though physically we are on earth.

As our thinking changes we are living differently. We inhabit the kingdom of God here on earth taking it with us and expanding it. We have not just moved into the kingdom we are made to be compatible with it. The new heart, new spirit and its nature make us compatible and consistent with heavenly things. We are now able to engage the culture we live in taking the kingdom in us and with us everywhere we go.

In the Bible names were a description of a person's nature and their character. Methuselah, the oldest man recorded alive, his name meant when the waters came. He was named prophetically by his father Enoch and died at the beginning of the flood that only Noah and his family

survived. Culturally, names were not just a label to call someone by on their driver's license and legal documents, they had representational meaning. Jesus, Yeshua, Our God who saves or Salvation, told His disciples to rejoice over their name being written in the Book of Life. To rejoice more for this than the fact that they had power over demons.

Rejoice, for your name, a name for who you are, a name only God calls you is chiseled into the eternity of heaven in the Book of Life and written on the palm of God, your heavenly Father. This is the fantastic adventure we get to have in our journey of discovery. We get to have God lead us, teach us and mold us into who He created each of us to be. An identity and purpose meant for our good and not for our harm.

Lordship

Lordship is about surrendering our will to God and plugging into Him as our Source for life.

To surrender does not mean: I will try harder to do the things He is telling me. Our will is not the decision. It is the mechanism that makes our decisions. To surrender is to come under the authority of, to submit our self to Jesus.

The difficulty most of us have surrounding our will is that we have our will about things.

We have our will about relationships.

We have our will about money.

We have our will about employment.

We have our will about lifestyle.

We have our will about the boundaries we set.

If we are deciding which individual issues to surrender to God we are still exercising and strengthening our will over God's will. If we are just trying to follow Jesus instructions it is still up to me whether I follow them or not.

Is Jesus riding as your passenger navigating for you as you go through life?

Is Jesus in the driver's seat and you are the passenger having let go of the wheel?

The LIE

As believers we tend to think and have even been taught that we are supposed to choose the good things and to avoid evil, the bad things in life. Jesus, being our standard for what good is.

This would be because our foundation is still centered on the knowledge of good and evil. Jesus sets the standard for what we now think is good and right. When choosing between them we are using our ability and our knowledge of good, being our own source in our own strength to choose between good and evil. This is the lens all of humanity has used since Genesis, chapter 3.

The proper use of the human will is submission. The lie in this is our bad definition or looking on the wrong side of the coin, the perversion of submission. In the war for freedom we often wrongly believe that submission makes us slaves. Consider this. What electronic device is a slave to electricity? In order to work, by design, they have to submit to letting the electricity flow

to them, be in them and then flow through them. This is exactly the same thing we do with the River of Life. *If we are not submitted to someone (Jesus) we can become a slave to anyone.*

Remember when God told Adam to subdue the earth and rule it? He gave all of mankind dominion and authority over earth, choosing to need man to accomplish His sovereign will on the earth. To submit our will to align with God's will is to allow the power of God access to us, in us and through us. Knowledge is no longer our source.

Submission allows the power of God impulse control in our life. The impulse from the flow of the power of God in our life will never lead us to do damage to ourself or others. The Spirit of God in us does not produce bad fruit in our life. Our surrender to Jesus Lordship always fulfills and reveals more of our God given identity.

Submission of our will is no longer about choosing between good and evil. We are now choosing between sources. Are we choosing God's voice and power or my own ability and strength? True freedom is about us choosing God, exercising our will over being compelled to do so.

Defining freedom according to Scripture we have a much greater chance of attaining it. Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is FREEDOM! Salvation is just the beginning and sets us free from the bondage of our wrong thinking and false identity or lack thereof. As we work through our obstacles of bad definitions, a poor self-image and the lies entangled in our mind, our will and our emotions (our soul) we are becoming free from the baggage of our past and even past generations. We are writing our legacy establishing a heritage of freedom.

Freedom comes as we begin to embrace the identity God created for us, redeemed us for and is restoring us to the fullness of. We are surrendered and surrendering to God's way over our own; choosing from the inside out to walk in God's wisdom as we hear and obey, hear and surrender trusting God over our own abilities. We have no power of our own to disentangle our soul since none of us have the ability to save ourself.

Changing sources we hear His voice and we surrender choosing to obey His voice over our ability. We are truly learning to walk in a new way as we begin and continue to walk in our purpose and identity.

Transformation

Transformation occurs as we let go of who we used to be and embrace who we are as a new creation. This is our journey of discovery, to uncover what Jesus has done in us on the inside. We are working out and walking out our salvation, our restoration into the whole man or the whole woman God created us to be. We are overcoming the death put into us by the world through bad definitions, our poor or misinformed self-image and the obstacles we face in our path to living in the freedom Jesus redeemed us for. All three of these areas are being addressed in a natural progression through God's revelation to us and not in linear steps.

Our part in being transformed is to seek understanding for the change we are engaging in. The change we are after is not about growing our knowledge of good over evil. We are seeking life instead of knowledge. This is not just about how we act, but what is the source for how and why we do the things we do?

Are you the source for the transformation or are you plugging into God and allowing Him to be your Source? God sees our heart, knows our motives and even the thoughts behind our motives. He knows completely why we act the way we do with the choices we make.

God's part is to help us let go of our ability and let Him be our Source. We are no longer our own source relying on our knowledge of good and evil to lead us. The shift is not changing my behavior so that I look like Jesus or someone I think does look like Jesus. We are changing how we think, how we see and ultimately what is our Source for how we think, act and feel.

Flesh and Spirit: *Are we are paying attention to what is Spirit and what is flesh?*

Are we allowing our flesh- our strength, our knowledge and our will- to empower the transformation process or are we increasingly yielding over time to the Spirit living within us guiding our spirit?

When we are born again we receive everything pertaining to life and godliness. Jesus, Himself takes up residency in you. In the parable of the laborers in the vineyard we are the laborers and the vineyard is the kingdom. The wage for all being the same because receiving all of God is our wage. God does not just give us a piece or a fraction of Himself. We get all of Him whether we know it or not.

The process of learning is being able to distinguish God's voice from my voice for what I am hearing. Is my flesh or God's Spirit operating over me and leading me? Time and our experience with God are the factors that allow more and more of God's Spirit to be in control and less and less of our flesh driving our choices.

The trap many of us get into is we are growing in our knowledge of good giving us clarity for a standard to follow making our will stronger. We are strengthening the very thing we are supposed to surrender. "Not my will, but Your will be done." God's ways are not our ways. God's thoughts are higher than our thoughts.

We tend to think God is after compliance and obedience when God is after our surrender. To surrender requires sensitivity. How can we surrender to what is Spirit when we don't know what is Spirit and what is flesh? We do not learn to think and live in a new way in a moment or even overnight. We are not just relearning, we are reprogramming a new way to look at life and embrace it. Our wrong thinking and misunderstanding of God, our failure to get it, is necessary and a part of the process. Grace is given to us because of our need not because we have earned it and deserve it.

This is much like an infant learning to walk. The first few steps they take are not really walking, more like controlled falling. As parents, we don't expect our infant to run a marathon the next day. God as our Father is raising us and teaching us how to handle our inheritance and run the business of our Father as we exercise dominion over His creation.

God's guidance in our life keeps us on course for our purpose and our destiny. As our Perfect Father, God is not trying to keep us from making errors and force us to stay on a line or on a spot. As our Source for life we are guided to stay on course rather than not to make any errors. The process is not about learning how to walk the straight and narrow, but how to hear His voice guiding us on our path. We are constantly reconnecting with our Source for life in an ongoing and daily process.

The Lie

The lie we have often come to believe is that we go through life with our ups and downs in surrender as we learn to walk with God in everything that we do. However, when I DIE; I'll be more and better. Everything will be fixed and I will walk in the fullness God has for me.

This implies that my death will do more for me than the death of Jesus.

We don't want to settle for the, "this is all I've got mentality, but one day I will be more and better." Jesus death, resurrection and power in us give us more than we have been able to tap into. Our death does not set us free, Jesus does.

Baptism of the Holy Spirit

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is not a topic to be studied, but a person to be engaged and embraced.

We are not here to do something from God and for God. We are here to do life with God. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is receiving power from God.

We want to be careful that in our knowledge of good and trying to help God we don't put to death the life the Spirit brings. When we walk in the power of God as our Source we no longer have to apply the power of self to the equation. Swimming in the flow of the River of Life we are so energized and alive that we often get out and run beside it until we lose the energizing effect. When this happens we are ready to jump in again to be refilled and energized. Our struggle is to live in the flow of the power of God to us, inhabiting us and flowing through us.

We do not want to impose ourselves on how we think God is going to act. As in Acts, “Wait here until the Holy Spirit comes and you receive power from on high.” We don’t want to prescribe ways that prove God has shown up. When He comes we will receive power. Sometimes the power is expressed through the laying on of hands and healing occurs, making selfish people become generous and tired people energetic. The expression of the Holy Spirit is up to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not limited by what we know of the knowledge of good.

We often consider ourselves failures because we don’t live up to the expectations of others or ourselves. However, we cannot fail at what only God can do. The infilling of God is not a singular experience. God filling us to overflowing is an ongoing and growing awareness of the presence and power of God in every area of life. The power of Him comes to us, in us and through us to do what we cannot.

We ask, Holy Spirit come, fill our heart with Your heart. Come and fill us with Your power, cover us and surround us, fill the empty places in our soul. Let us not try to do something, but wait here for You. Help us to be still and see what You can do.

Holy Spirit, empower us for ministry; empower us for life. Help us to lay down our strength, our knowledge, our drive and receive Your filling of us. Amen

God brings life to His people not regulation to our performance.

The Holy Spirit gives us both gifts and fruit. We know we have been filled with the Spirit when we are different in a way we didn’t make happen. The fruit of the Spirit in us is ever increasing in our way of addressing life and our circumstances. We might suddenly see things differently. Our perspective has changed; colors are brighter or different in a way; our situation is filled with options that bring life and hope instead of the doom and gloom we saw before. We can recognize the good in others, their strengths instead of focusing only on their weaknesses. We have been changed even though our circumstance and the people around us have not necessarily changed.

Authority

As believers, followers of Jesus, our authority is delegated to us. Authority and power are related. However, we do not want confuse them with each other. Power is the ability to accomplish something. Authority is delegated power. Jesus gives us power to use on His behalf.

Our part: we exercise authority

God's part: He empowers our actions and our words to accomplish His result.

We connect with God hearing His voice. We believe what we hear. We act on what we have heard exercising the authority delegated to us. God, the Holy Spirit, empowers what we have been given to do.

To have authority is to command; telling someone or something what to do. We are not asking, having a debate or even a conversation; we are telling the person, object or circumstance what it will do.

John 10:24-39 (NASB): Jesus Authority

The Jews then gathered around Him, and were saying to Him, "How long will You keep us in suspense? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly." Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father's name, these testify of Me. "But you do not believe because you are not of My sheep. "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. "My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. "I and the Father are one."

The Jews picked up stones again to stone Him. Jesus answered them, "I showed you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you stoning Me?" The Jews answered Him, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, make Yourself out to be God." Jesus answered them, "Has it not been written in your Law, 'I SAID, YOU ARE GODS'? "If he called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), do you say of Him, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'? "If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; but if I do them, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, so that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father." Therefore they were seeking again to seize Him, and He eluded their grasp.

To exercise authority we need to be under authority. Jesus gives us His authority and we come in His name. This is not about the name of Jesus, but the authority Jesus has that we are representing in His place, in His name. We come in the name of Jesus with His authority.

Our faith is not in ourselves, our ability or our knowledge of what to do. We place our faith in Jesus and rely on the strength of His faith and His obedience to the Father, not ours. This is not dependent on us or anyone, but Jesus.

Matthew 8:5-13 (NASB): The great faith of the Centurion

And when Jesus entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, imploring Him, and saying, "Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, fearfully tormented." Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him." But the centurion said, "Lord, I am not worthy for You to come under my roof, but just say the word, and my servant will be healed. "For I also am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, 'Go!' and he goes, and to another, 'Come!' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this!' and he does it."

Now when Jesus heard this, He marveled and said to those who were following, "Truly I say to you, I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel. "I say to you that many will come from east and west, and recline at the table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven; but the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

And Jesus said to the centurion, "Go; it shall be done for you as you have believed." And the servant was healed that very moment.

Spiritual Warfare 2 Corinthians 10:3-18 (NASB) Context:

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, and we are ready to punish all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete.

You are looking at things as they are outwardly. If anyone is confident in himself that he is Christ's, let him consider this again within himself, that just as he is Christ's, so also are we. For even if I boast somewhat further about our authority, which the Lord gave for building you up and not for destroying you, I will not be put to shame, for I do not wish to seem as if I would terrify you by my letters. For they say, "His letters are weighty and strong, but his personal presence is unimpressive and his speech contemptible." Let such a person consider this, that what we are in word by letters when absent, such persons we are also in deed when present.

For we are not bold to class or compare ourselves with some of those who commend themselves; but when they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are without understanding. But we will not boast beyond our measure, but within the measure of the sphere which God apportioned to us as a measure, to reach even as far as you. For we are not overextending ourselves, as if we did not reach to you, for we were the first to come even as far as you in the gospel of Christ; not boasting beyond our measure, that is, in other men's labors, but with the hope that as your faith grows, we will be, within our sphere, enlarged even more by you, so as to preach the gospel even to the regions beyond you, and not to boast in what has been accomplished in the sphere of another. But HE WHO BOASTS IS TO BOAST IN THE LORD. For it is not he who commends himself that is approved, but he whom the Lord commends.

In spiritual warfare we are tearing down speculation and every wrong thing that has been raised up against the knowledge of God.

We want to get away from this kind of thinking...

We often blame things out of order on the enemy's actions. Although Satan is attempting to fight God through us most often life circumstances are just that. Stuff happens in a fallen world. Although he may not have caused say, a flat tire. He is there when we discover what is out of order like the flat tire.

Our confusion is that spiritual warfare is not about what is in front of us. The central issue is about which voice we are listening to regarding what we see in front of us. In our best and worst moments Satan is waiting to interpret our circumstances to us and how they diminish who we are. God is also there to encourage us, lift us up and enable us to rejoice and to walk with us through our circumstance and situation.

We get to choose which voice we are going to listen to. In our fallen world it seems easier to listen to the voice we are most familiar with as a former resident in the kingdom of darkness. Doom and gloom are more familiar to most of us than the voice of Life and the light in us to overcome the darkness around us.

One of the ways we overcome the darkness trying to overwhelm us is to praise God in the moment. We are not praising God for what has happened. We are praising God that He is with us. We are not going through this alone. We are praising God that we have access to His wisdom and His strength to lean on in this time of challenge and opportunity. We have praise as we trust Him to lift us out of the storm or to walk with us, even carry us, through the storm.

Spiritual voices are empowered by human agreement. Satan as the current ruler of this world has no power over us. This is why he has to get us to agree with him and accept his lies and deceptions in order to defeat us. He gets us to weaken our self because he cannot on his own. Our geography is filled with whichever kingdom we are most in agreement with in that moment.

The voice we listen to will draw more of the same to us. Darkness will draw the spiritual forces of negativity, discord, unrest, powerlessness, loss of hope and death. Light will draw life to you, a fresh perspective with hope for today and faith for your tomorrow that you cannot even see yet. God, as our Source for life, always gives us what we need to live in victory every day in spite of our circumstances. Are we receiving the goodness God has for each of us? God is never a God of the minimums as a Good, Gracious, Loving and Giving God.

We know what we see and think, but are we asking God what he is seeing and what He thinks about what is in front of us? When we bring God's perspective to the circumstance we are more able to respond than to react.

In that moment when we ask God what he thinks and sees we hear the Word of God that breaks the dominion darkness is trying to have over us. The presence and power of God in us overcomes the evidence of our circumstances. This doesn't mean our circumstances are changed. We are changed changing how we are able to go through what is in front of us.

Destroying Speculation

Speculation is the rational thought processes based on evidence. We are logically trying to figure out our circumstances. This doesn't really work because we can only see part of the picture in front of us. Satan, the little god of this world is in charge of the evidence we see. He parades the evidence in front of us getting us to define truth the way he wants us to see it. This is his method for getting us to come into agreement with him giving him power over us.

Taking down the lofty things against the knowledge of God

Satan cannot fight God. The created can never fight The One who has all the power and makes all the rules. God is sovereign and the ultimate power in every situation. Unlike physical battles, spiritual warfare is the only battle we win by surrendering. God, You are in charge! God writes the rules. Whatever the enemy intends for evil will turn out for good.

Through Jesus, death and sin no longer have power over us.

Satan's tactic is to attack our knowledge of God with the goal of getting us to place his perspective, his interpretation of truth higher than God's. He does this by controlling the evidence causing us to doubt and distrust the truths of God we know. Through doubt we come into agreement with Satan as he gets us to worship something other than God.

He wants us to speculate so he can get us to raise up lofty things (idols) against our knowledge and understanding of God. This affects our quality of life and our ability to connect with our God.

We seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness every day. What we seek first orders our day and determines how we face all of our circumstances.

Spiritual warfare summed up is about who we are going to worship in our best and worst moments in life. To seek God's perspective and accepting His truth over our understanding, our interpretation based on what we know, we position ourself to have the power of God flow to us, inhabit us and flow through us. This is the River of Living Water in our life today.

Thank You God that You always win. Thank You for having each of us to be a part of Your story. Give us eyes to see and ears to hear and Your wisdom for our part each day. Help us to never doubt You always trusting in Your Goodness and Your faithfulness knowing You will never reject us or throw us away. It is never too late for You to transform our lives and reveal the identity You have given to each of us. Amen.