

KINGDOM PRINCIPLES FOR FRUITFUL LIVING

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Rev. Jonathon D. Counts, Bible Study Presenter

OUR POST-MODERN DILEMMA

- The denominational church is losing its influence in society. The pews are empty!
- The un-churched and/or de-churched population is increasing.
- It continues to be difficult to engage both youth and young adults.
- Church is no longer important.
- However, some churches in our communities do not have this dilemma. What is our issue?

OUR POST-MODERN OPPORTUNITY

- The state of our society appears to be a threat but it is actually an opportunity.
- The opportunity is becoming Kingdom Focused.
- We have to rid ourselves from a Church Mentality and embrace a Kingdom Mentality.
- Being apart of a denomination is key for doctrinal and accountability purposes but it should not be our focus.
- The Kingdom is our mission and vision.

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE KINGDOM

- To be Kingdom focused means to focus on the Sovereignty and Kingship of Christ. It also means to live under the lordship of the King while engaging with society. The ultimate goal is to be the *ecclesia* (the called out ones) to represent Christ in the world (David Tarkington).
- The Church cannot become Kingdom Focused until believers have a Kingdom mentality individually.
- The individual mindset will impact the mindset of the Body.
- Fruitful living individually will impact the fruitfulness of a Body of believers.
- We must set aside our biases and preferences to come into alignment with what God desires.

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

- The Gospel of John was not a synoptic Gospel so it writes very differently.
- There is literature within this Gospel that is not found in the others such as the miracle of changing water into wine, the conversation with the Samaritan woman, the raising of Lazarus, and the washing of the disciples feet etc...
- Jesus' birth and baptism, the temptation by Satan, the parables, no call for the disciples, and other material are not found in John.

JOHN'S GOSPEL

- John's Gospel truly presents Jesus as the true revelation of God. Jesus is the Word of God made flesh (1:14). As a result, people have a real encounter with God's self-revelation.
- This Gospel is adamant about presenting the humanity of Jesus. We feel the grief, anguish, fatigue, irritability, thirst and the death of Christ in this Gospel.
- Salvation is presented as eternal life which is eternally rich and is practiced in the Christian community where believers abide in Christ while loving one another.
- John was in the inner circle of Christ so it was said that he had intimate knowledge of the events of Christ.

4 SECTIONS OF THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

- Introduction (Chapter 1)
- Jesus manifests God's glory before the world (Chps. 2-12)
- Jesus manifests God's glory to His disciples (Chps. 13-20)
- Appendix: Jesus' appearance by the Sea of Galilee to Peter and others (Chapter 21)

JOHN 15:1-17

- Is found within the third section of the Gospel of John where Jesus manifests God's glory to His disciples (chps 13-20)
- Presents the prerequisites for fruitful living.
- There is an open invitation to intimately connect with Christ.
- There is also a challenge to live out the Kingdom on earth.

THEMES IN THE TEXT

- The Gardener- God
- The Vine- Jesus
- Branches- Believers
- Fruit-bearing- Our Responsibility
- Love- Our Mission

KINGDOM PRINCIPLE #1 DEVELOPING INTIMATE FELLOWSHIP WITH CHRIST

- The imagery of Jesus being the true vine suggests that He is the source of all life (15:1). The image presented is a grapevine and its only role is to produce grapes.
- Two types of branches: fruit-bearing and barren (15:2). What distinguishes the two is how the word (divine utterance) spoken by Christ was received and the process of pruning which prevents spiritual sickness and disease(15:2-3).
- The truth of being a Christian is that one must be connected to or abide in Christ (15:4).
- To abide (menó) means: to remain, to stay, to await, to settle in, to sink deeper
- When one desires to live a fruitful life, you must develop an intimate fellowship with Christ that goes beyond Sunday church attendance and events. It is a 24/7 pursuit of the presence and power of Christ that never stops.
- What is holding you back from an intimate fellowship with Christ?

KINGDOM PRINCIPLE #2

INTENTIONAL FRUIT-BEARING

- Bearing means to carry or to bring forth.
- Fruit means deed, action, or results.
- In the Kingdom, you have to produce something (15:5). Barrenness is not an option.
- There must be complete dependence on Christ to bring forth lasting fruit in the Kingdom (15:5). No flesh can glory in His presence!
- There are severe consequences when you are not connected to the Vine or do not have a desire to live in the Kingdom which is fire and the loss of fellowship, vitality, and eternal reward (15:6)
- Having intimate fellowship with Christ produces the benefits of the Kingdom (15:7)
- Fruit bearing confirms discipleship (15:8)

KINGDOM PRINCIPLE #3

LOVE

- Jesus' love for us as believers is *agape*'(love): a divine love which is what God prefers without conditions.
- The love we are to extend is *agapeo*' (to love) which follows the example of Christ towards us.
- Jesus expresses His love towards us and we are to rest in His love through obedience (15:9-10).
- In the Kingdom, we must love one another without biases and "isms" which is sacrificial (15:12-13).
- Obedience to Christ enhances our relationship with Him. We will be considered friends or *philos* (someone loved in a personal intimate way) (15:14-15).

FINAL THOUGHT

- We have been chosen to live fruitful lives.
- We have been appointed (set in place and position) to birth fruit that will make a lasting impact which produces results for the Kingdom citizen.
- Love one another as Christ commanded which will open the door for congregations to become fruitful.