

Kingdom living

Studies on the Kingdom of God

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Colossians 1:3-14 describes a group of Christians living in a very troubled time in history. They were ordinary people living in victory in the midst of a pretty awful society.

You can be like the Colossian Christians...

- You can:
- live worthy of the Lord and please Him in every way
 - know God's will because you are hearing from God
 - have a fruitful Christian life
 - showing the fruits of the Spirit
 - doing powerful good works
 - be continually growing in the knowledge of God

This is **Kingdom Living**: part of your inheritance in Christ

Kingdom living simply means that you live with Jesus as your King. It means He is your Lord!

This means you will:

- ☞ **BE what God wants you to be**
- ☞ **DO what God wants you to do**

For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. Colossians 1:13

There are two kingdoms in the world today:

The Kingdom of God	The kingdom of darkness (Babylon)
God is in control Jesus is Lord ↓ Kingdom Living	Anything or anyone other than God is in control ↓ Confusion

The question is *Which Kingdom is winning?* If we listen to the news it seems as if the Kingdom of Darkness is winning. The world seems to be running flat-out towards destruction. Yet in the midst of all this darkness God chooses to save us and bring us into His Kingdom: the Kingdom of God. But that doesn't necessarily mean we are experiencing Kingdom living!

Many Christians know they are not living the kind of life that God would like them to have. They find it difficult to resolve what they know in theory with what they experience in practice. Their Christianity doesn't seem to be working in society, in the church and most worrying of all - in their own lives.

There are many reactions:

- some tack their Christianity on to everyday life like a club or a hobby
- some get ground down by the darkness and may end up cynical, critical and judgmental
- some get confused, especially about the church
- some give up on God, or the church, or living a Christian life
- some retreat to the past, or to the future
- many get isolated in the tiny "church" component of society (which is pretty irrelevant to the rest of the population)

But, there is another alternative: Kingdom Living!

.... giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves. Colossians 1:12,13

Just like the Colossians you can live God's way in a confused world.
You can be what God wants you to be and do what God wants you to do...

I can do everything through him who gives me strength. Philippians 4:13

But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him. 2 Corinthians 2:14

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. Romans 8:28

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. Romans 8:37

So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. John 8:36

And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:19

I have come that you may have life, and have it to the full. John 10:10

For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose. Philippians 2:13

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is -his good, pleasing and perfect will. Romans 12:2

These are great scriptures! They show that we can live victoriously in Christ and can also help push back the darkness and make a real impact on the world around us.

But not too many Christians live like this! For most of us these scriptures are great in theory but not like what happens in practice. When we live under the Lordship of Christ He has first place in everything. We be what God wants us to be, and do what God wants us to do. That's when the Christian life is how it is supposed to be! That's when these scriptures become real! That's **Kingdom Living!**

It must start within you, though.

.... nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is within you. Luke 17:21.

As God deals with you He will change you from within until you become complete; whole; mature: perfect in Christ.

We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. Colossians 1:28

... that's real KINGDOM LIVING.

In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed. Daniel 7:13,14



God wants you to experience Kingdom living

- living in the Kingdom of God now and forever.

The Kingdom of God is the major message in the New Testament

John the Baptist heralded it

"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near." Matthew 3:2

Jesus ushered it in

*"The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!" Mark 1:15
"I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent." Luke 4:43*

The disciples were sent to proclaim it (and so are we!)

*When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.
Luke 9:1, 2*

The purpose of God is not just to save you (that's just the beginning). It is to bring you into a full relationship with Himself, now and for eternity. In this relationship you bring God pleasure and fulfil His will. You live fully under His Kingship. He is your Lord and your God. You are in the Kingdom of God!

You can be what God wants you to be and do what God wants you to do.

What is the Kingdom of God?

The Kingdom of God is concerned with you as an individual and as part of the Body of Christ in your relationship with God. It means that He is King of every area of your life:

Jesus is Lord

in your choices
in your family
in your church
in your work
in your behaviours
in your heart
in your thinking

in your attitudes to God, people, and situations
in your internal life
in your serving
in how you bring up children
in your use of money, time and resources
in your circumstances
in your death and resurrection to new life



So the Kingdom of God is not a thing or a place. It is more a condition of relationship in which God is King of everything.

At the personal level the Kingdom of God is:

- **within you**

Once, having been asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, "The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is within you." Luke 17:20, 21



- **God's will for your life**

Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Matthew 6:10

- **the most important thing in life**

The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it. Matthew 13:44-46

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Matthew 6:33

- **a condition of intimate fellowship with God**

At salvation we enter into **relationship** with God. We become His children and belong to Him.

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body. 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20

For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. 1 Peter 1:18, 19

After salvation we can have a life of **fellowship** with God (ie. Kingdom living!).

In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again." "How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!" Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. John 3:3-5

...and for your pleasure they were and are created. Revelation 4:11

God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful. 1 Corinthians 1:9

- **what gives meaning and purpose in life**

In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession - to the praise of his glory. Ephesians 1:11-14

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. Ephesians 2:8-10

- **a condition in which we are living in righteousness, peace and joy**

For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Romans 14:17

Jesus talked often about the importance of the Kingdom.

In Matthew 13 Jesus described the Kingdom of God in parables.

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Matthew 6:33

Matthew uses the term 'Kingdom of Heaven' where the other Gospels use 'Kingdom of God.' That's because Matthew was written to Jews, and they wouldn't say God's name.

Parables of the Kingdom in Matthew 13

Jesus often taught in parables (stories built around well known activities).

v 10- 17 Jesus explained that these parables could only be understood by those:

- who were given understanding by God
- who were open to God
- who would listen and understand
- who had soft, teachable hearts.

He said that those who were like this would hear and understand the truths he was teaching and that *whoever has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him.* v12. This shows how important it is to have our hearts right as we hear from God and seek His truth!

The parable of the sower v 3-9 and 18-23

When you hear the 'message of the Kingdom' a number of things can happen depending on the state of your heart:

- the evil one can snatch it away
- the word can be received with joy but if it doesn't have any root it will be lost when trouble or persecution come along
- it can be choked out by the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of riches

All of these mean that you are not fruitful and miss out on Kingdom Living.

But when the word is received and understood it brings fruit in your life. (Everyone is different: for some this is 30, some 60, some 100 fold). The key thing is that God is King; you are experiencing Kingdom Living; He is at work in and through your life; you are bringing forth His fruit!



The parable of the weeds v 24-30 and v 36-43

This world contains a mixture of people who are living in the Kingdom of God (the good seed) and people who don't have Him as Lord (the weeds i.e. the people of the evil one).

At the harvest (when we die or when Jesus comes again) anything that is not of Jesus will be burnt up. *They will weed out of His Kingdom everything that causes sin and all those who do evil.* v41 The only things that will remain will be kingdom things: aspects where Jesus is Lord. Make sure that more and more of your life is under the kingdom! Anything else is of no eternal value.



The parables of the mustard seed and the yeast v 31-35

The Kingdom of God is pervasive. When Jesus is Lord it spreads out and grows to affect all aspects of your life (if you let Him be King!). The more you let Him be your King the more effective your life will be.



The parables of the hidden treasure and the pearl v44,45

The Kingdom of God is so wonderful that it is worth giving up everything you have to find it!

The parable of the net v47-52

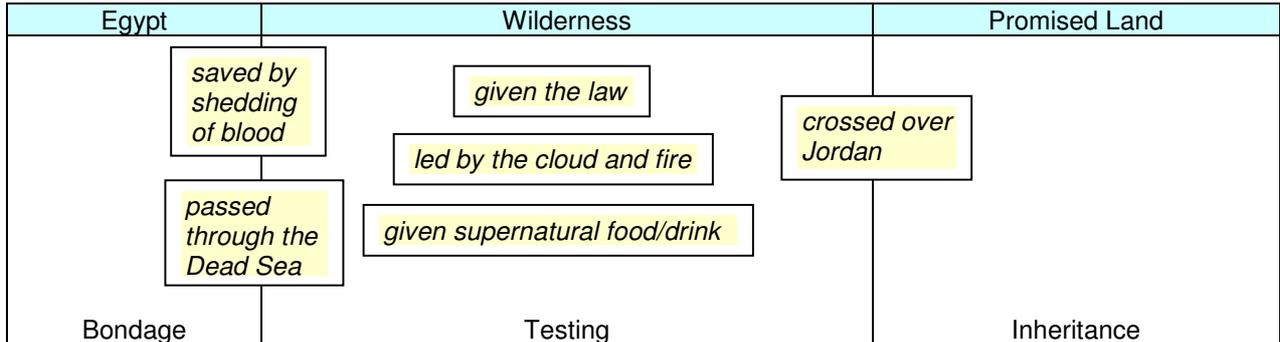
At the end of the age there will be a clear separation of those in the Kingdom (who will continue on into the eternal Kingdom of God) and those who are not (who will suffer eternal damnation).

Therefore everyone who is instructed about the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old. v52

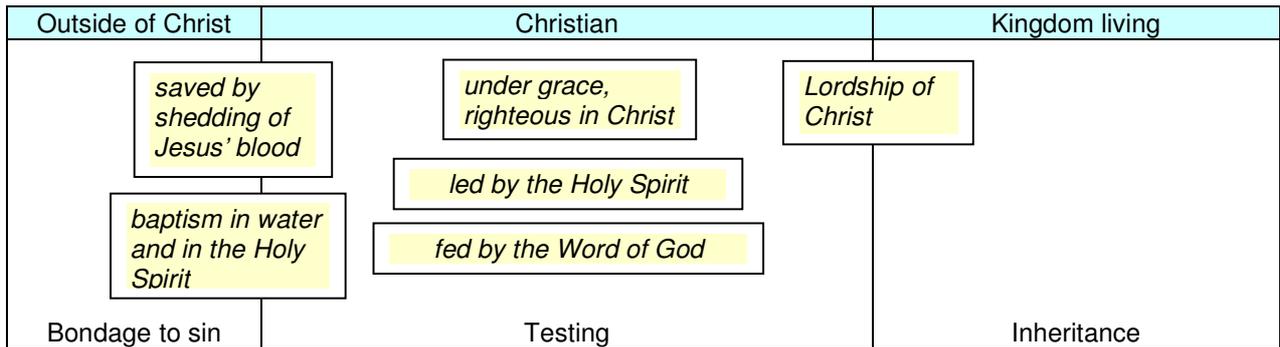
Make sure you listen to Jesus' words about the kingdom, so you are one who is in the Kingdom of God!

Kingdom living is our goal; our purpose; our reason for living.
This is how God designed us to live. This is our inheritance in Christ.
This is how we fulfil God's purpose in creating us.
This is our promised land, now and forever!

Let's follow the analogy of the Children of Israel to see how we can come into Kingdom Living:



Similarly for us:



- In the first part of our Christian lives God saves us (equivalent to getting us out of Egypt). At this stage it's important to get our foundations right.
- We then go through lots of experiences in which we learn how to live in relationship with Him (equivalent to getting Egypt out of us). This involves testing to see what is genuine; what is under the Lordship of Christ.
- We can then experience Kingdom living (equivalent to living in the Promised Land). That's when we be what God wants us to be and do what God wants us to do.



Good foundations

(Getting us out of Egypt)

To enter into Kingdom Living you must have your foundations right.

The early Christian experiences are what God builds on so that we can live our lives His way. They are the foundations for genuine Christian living. But they must all be built on Jesus Christ!

Let's also make sure that when we lead others to Christ we help them build their Christian lives on strong foundations).

By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames.
1 Corinthians 3:10-15

Here are some of the major experiences, attitudes and actions that we experience and develop in the early days of our Christians lives. Let's make sure that we have our foundations right!

Good foundations include:

Accepting Christ as Saviour and Lord

Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God - children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.
John 1:12, 13

And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. 1 John 5:11, 12

Repentance

Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord. Acts 3:19

Water baptism

Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off - for all whom the Lord our God will call.
Acts 2:38, 39

Baptism in the Holy Spirit

In a few days you will be baptised in the Holy Spirit ... You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.
Acts 1:5, 8

Witnessing for Christ

Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.
Matthew 28:18-20

Obedience, holiness

As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy." 1 Peter 1:14-16



Worship

God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth. John 4:24

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is true worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is - his good, pleasing and perfect will.
Romans 12:1, 2



Prayer

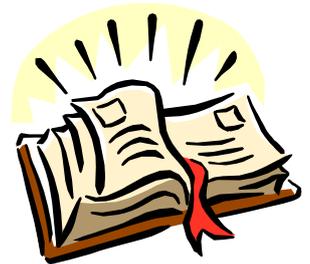
Pray continually. 1 Thessalonians 5:17

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.
Ephesians 6:18

Feeding on the Word of God

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that all God's people may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:16, 17

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. 2 Timothy 2:15



Fellowship

We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. 1 John 1:3

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. 1 John 1:7

Love

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. Love your neighbour as yourself. Mark 12:30, 31



Service

Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave - just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. Matthew 20:26-28

Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people. Ephesians 6:7

Justice

"Listen to me, my people; hear me, my nation: Instruction will go out from me; my justice will become a light to the nations. My righteousness draws near speedily, my salvation is on the way, and my arm will bring justice to the nations.
Isaiah 51:4,5

This is what the LORD says: "Maintain justice and do what is right, for my salvation is close at hand and my righteousness will soon be revealed.
Isaiah 56:1



Being led by the Holy Spirit

So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.
Galatians 5:16-25

These initial Christian experiences lay a foundation for what God will do in and through us in the future.

To enter into Kingdom Living you must have your foundations right.

How are these foundations in your life?

The key to Kingdom Living is the state of your heart. Are you really willing to let God be your King? Do you really have a heart after God? Will you let Him do what He wants to do in all of these areas of your life? If so they will be tested!



Wilderness experiences

(Getting Egypt out of us)

Living in the Kingdom of God means that Jesus is Lord of all aspects of your life.

Let's make sure that our lives are built on the only foundation that will last when it is tested: Jesus Christ.

If your life is built on good foundations you will start to grow in Christ. You will become more and more mature as a Christian (which just means that Jesus is Lord of more aspects of your life!). You will become more and more useful in the Kingdom as God uses you to bless others. You will gradually becoming more like Jesus.

And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. 2 Corinthians 3:18

But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen. 2 Peter 3:18

Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. 1 John 3:2

The Holy Spirit will work in your life to make you like Jesus.

- It doesn't happen instantly.
- It's a life-long process as aspects of your life change from you in control to Jesus in control and you experience more and more kingdom living.

But it is likely that you won't relinquish control of your life easily! There will be a battle.

And that's why Christians go through 'wilderness experiences'!!!!!!

Wilderness experiences

You will go through 'the valley of the shadow of death' so that God can 'restore your soul'.

He restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. Psalm 23:3,4

- The purpose of a wilderness experience is to restore your soul; to make you righteous; so you are like Jesus.
- God is in control. He is leading you through the experience! (It may not feel like it at the time!).
- You have to go through death: the death of your control over some aspect of your life.
- As you die Jesus' life comes flooding in (and you experience righteousness, peace and joy). He is then in control. He is Lord of that area of your life.

(And then you think *At last I've made it!* And He thinks *What area can I deal with next?*). !!!!!

The Greek word *peirazo* and the Hebrew word *nacah* mean to test, tempt or try.

In a wilderness experience **God tests us, satan tempts us and we call it a trial.** But it is all the same experience!

God left him to test him and to know everything that was in his heart.
2 Chronicles 32: 31

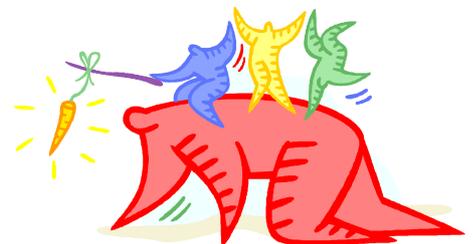
Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. Luke 4:1,2

See, I have refined you, though not as silver;
I have tested you in the furnace of affliction. For my own sake, for my own sake, I do this. How can I let myself be defamed? I will not yield my glory to another. Isaiah 48:10,11

Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.
Hebrews 2:18

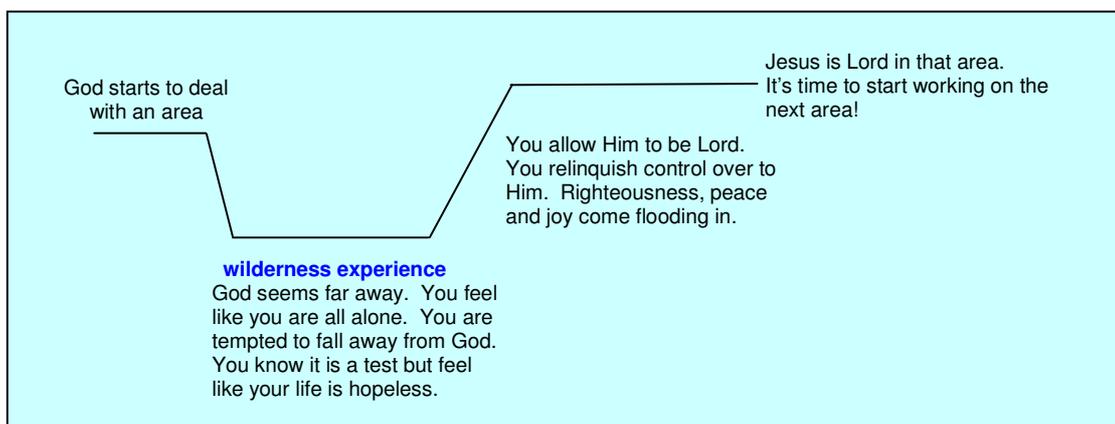
Blessed are those who persevere under trial, because when they have stood the test, they will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him. James 1:12

Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. 1 Peter 4:12,13

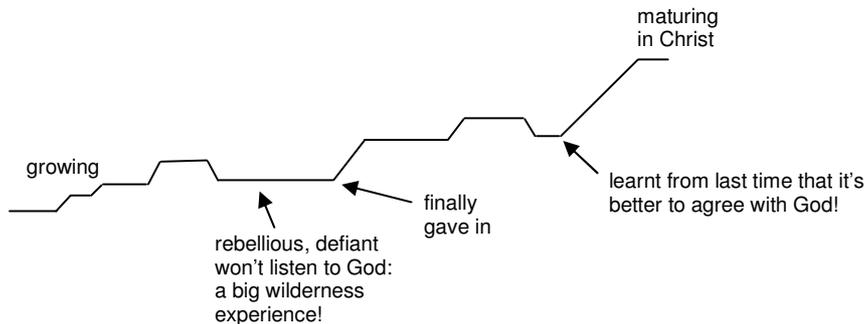


So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to us all. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it. Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry. 1 Corinthians 10:12-14

But he knows the way that I take; when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold. Job 23:10



In the long term the pattern is likely to be something like this (hopefully going upwards!):



So when you are going through a wilderness experience it's good to know that there is a purpose for it.

God is working in your life to change you; to make you more like Jesus.

See Psalm 139 if you are going through a wilderness experience

- Recognise that God is at work in your life. He is searching your heart. He knows you through and through.
- Know that God wants the best for you. He created you; He knows you; His purposes for you are well established.
- He wants you to be like Him: to be righteous in all your ways.
- Ask Him to search out your heart and deal with anything that is not right. Agree with God when He exposes things! Put them right. Hand over the Lordship and control to Him.

Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. Psalm 139:23, 24

But.....

We all go through many problems and difficult times. How can we know if a difficult situation is just part of life's ups and downs, or if it is a wilderness in which God is testing us so that we can hand over more of our life to Him? (You could consider everything that happens in our lives as being part of God's work to make us more like Jesus!).

If God is dealing with you

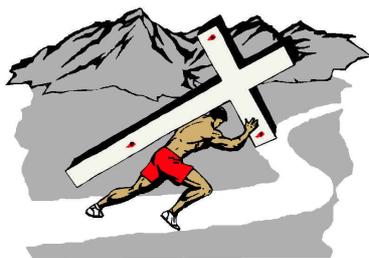
- You will be convicted about some area of sin.

When he (the Holy Spirit) comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment. John 16:8

- You will not be experiencing righteousness, peace and joy or power.

For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Romans 14:17

For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power. 1 Corinthians 4:20



When you give in to God, allowing Him to be your King, back will come the righteousness, peace, joy and power. As you lay down your life God will come in with His life. You will experience kingdom living in that particular area. This is the way to life!

Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it. Matthew 10:38, 39

It's easy for God to get you out of Egypt. It's much harder to get Egypt out of you!

Therefore if you are in a wilderness experience:

- stop moaning
- open your heart to God
- let God do what He wants to do in your life
- obey God
- let Him be King

So, count it all joy when you go through wilderness experiences! God is replacing death with life, so that you may be like Jesus and experience all that He has for you: fullness of Life in Christ.

Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. Blessed are those who persevere under trial, because when they have stood the test, they will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.

James 1:2-4, 12

Overcoming barriers

Most of the Children of Israel did not reach their Promised Land. It remained for them a *promise*.

- Promises can be very frustrating.
- It's much better to experience what the promises promise!

Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. Exodus 19:5, 6

God is not a human, that he should lie, not a human being, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill? Numbers 23:19

The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. In keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells. 2 Peter 3:9,13

- All of God's promises are conditional. He says 'I will, if you will'. eg.

Acknowledge and take to heart this day that the LORD is God in heaven above and on the earth below. There is no other. Keep his decrees and commands so that it may go well with you and your children after you and that you may live long in the land the LORD your God gives you for all time. Deuteronomy 4:39,40

If you listen carefully to the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in his eyes, if you pay attention to his commands and keep all his decrees, I will not bring on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians, for I am the LORD, who heals you. Exodus 15:26

- To inherit the promises you need to fulfil the conditions and obey the Lord.

So be careful to do what the LORD your God has commanded you; do not turn aside to the right or to the left. Walk in obedience to all that the LORD your God has commanded you, so that you may live and prosper and prolong your days in the land that you will possess. Deuteronomy 5:32,33

So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. Hebrews 10:35

To live in the Kingdom we must hear the King speak, do what He says and keep on following Him!



There are many barriers that can stop you entering into Kingdom Living

Barriers to Kingdom living

- | | | |
|---------------------------|------------------|-------------|
| experiences from the past | sins | attitudes |
| circumstances | ways of thinking | temptations |
| satan's influence | habits | world views |
| relationships | behaviours | guilt |
| self esteem | distractions | others????? |

- Some of these barriers need to be dealt with through repentance and forgiveness so they are no longer part of your life. (The Holy Spirit will point these aspects out, one at a time. Agree with Him, and deal with them!).

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9

- Sometimes you will be tempted to sin (ie. to give up on God and not live under His Lordship)

Everyone is tempted! You don't have to give in to temptation, though. You can always choose to resist it and live God's way.

No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to us all. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it. 1 Corinthians 10:13

- Some barriers are part of normal life. You need to cope with them and live victoriously in Christ as you go through them. (With God's help!).

I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength. Philippians 4:12,13

- If a barrier is due to satan it can be resisted in Jesus' name.

Satan's aim is to keep you from having God as King. *The great dragon was hurled down - that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.* Revelation 12:9 He uses or is behind anything that will cause you to retreat from the Lordship of Christ. Sometimes he does this by oppression, sometimes by possession.



- If you are aware of what is going on you can resist satan and surrender to Christ.

Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up. James 4:7,8,10

- You may need deliverance in the particular area.

If so, ask people who are experienced in deliverance to pray for you. Either way make sure that you come back under the Lordship of Christ and keep living His way. See Luke 11:14-28.

For every barrier there is an answer in Christ!

And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:19.

No matter what the barrier God will help you overcome it.

- if you will let Him
- if you will find His way and obey it
- if you will fulfill the conditions for His promises
- if you will come under His Lordship.

God's answers could include:

repentance, forgiveness, obedience, perseverance, humility, healing, deliverance, encouragement, provision, practical help, miracles, change, support, faith, etc.

Nothing is too hard for Him!

- Sometimes God's answer will be instantaneous, sometimes it will be progressive.
- Sometimes it will be personal for you; other times it will need to be worked through with others.
- Sometimes the answer will be simple; other times it will be complex.

But for every situation in life God has an answer!!

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Hebrews 12:1,2

So, throw off everything that hinders! Run your race with perseverance; look to Jesus!



Jesus has been there! He has triumphed, and so can you!

As God deals with you, a step at a time, and as you co-operate with Him you gradually change to become more like Jesus. You experience more and more of Kingdom Living.

For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ! Romans 5:17

We will in all things grow up into him who is the head, that is, Christ. Ephesians 4:15

And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. 2 Corinthians 3:18

We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. Colossians 1:28

From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it. Matthew 11:12

The Key Question is:

Are you really willing to let God be King in every area of your life?

Choose life! Choose to have Jesus as Lord. Choose Kingdom Living!



Means of grace

Kingdom living is normal Christianity! Doing what God wants you to do, and being what God wants you to be is what Christianity is all about! In fact it is normal human living!

But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him. For we are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. To the one we are the smell of death; to the other, the fragrance of life. And who is equal to such a task? 2 Corinthians 2:14-16



Who is equal to the task? We all feel that we fall far short of living God's way, where He is fully Lord.

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. Galatians 2:20

Is that you????

But..... God is guiding the process of making you more like Jesus! He will help you. He will deal with you in His time and in His way if you will let Him.

Our parents disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.

You have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the Judge of all, to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel. See to it that you do not refuse him who speaks. If they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, how much less will we, if we turn away from him who warns us from heaven?

Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our "God is a consuming fire." Hebrews 12:10,11, 22-25, 28,29

God will help you! There are lots of 'means of grace' that will support you on the journey through the wilderness and into the Promised Land.

God will provide everything you need, each step of the way.

And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:19

Means of grace

Here are some of the main ways that God helps us (again following the analogy of the Children of Israel as they journeyed to the Promised Land):

The Holy Spirit

The Children of Israel were led by the cloud and the fire.

By day the LORD went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night. Neither the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people. Exodus 13:21,22



In the same way the Holy Spirit (the Helper) will lead and guide you.

But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. John 16:7,8,13,14

The Holy Spirit is continually working in your life to honour Jesus and make you more like Him.

You, however, are not controlled by the sinful nature but are in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you. Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation - but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.

For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs - heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. Romans 8:9-17

The Word of God

God gave His Word to the Children of Israel. It was His covenant with them in which He said "I will, if you will....".

Then Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain and said, "This is what you are to say to the house of Jacob and what you are to tell the people of Israel: 'You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' Exodus 19:3-6

God speaks to you by His Holy Spirit and through His Word, the Bible. Spend lots of time in God's Word, listening for His voice and letting Him feed your soul. And then obey what He says!

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that all God's people may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:16,17



Personal relationship with God

When you spend time with someone you feed off them, and become more like them. The Children of Israel had to have a daily encounter with God so they could get even the bare essentials for life (manna, quails and water from the rock).

Then the LORD said to Moses, "I will rain down bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day. In this way I will test them and see whether they will follow my instructions. Exodus 16:4

You are the same! You need to have a daily intimate, personal relationship with God (through prayer, worship, Bible study, waiting on God, fasting, communion, silence, love, discipline, music, etc.). This will nourish your spiritual life and help you focus more on being what God wants to be and doing what God wants you to do. Don't do it as a ritual or a duty. Do it because you love Him!

Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls. 1 Peter 1:8, 9



Fellowship

The Children of Israel didn't go through the wilderness alone. They went together. God provided leaders so that everyone had support, provision, protection and opportunities for service.

God said to Moses: *Teach them his decrees and instructions, and show them the way they are to live and how they are to behave. But select capable men from all the people - men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain - and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. If you do this and God so commands, you will be able to stand the strain, and all these people will go home satisfied.*" Exodus 18:20-23

Take your full place in the Body of Christ. Even though it is imperfect (because everyone is on a similar journey to you!) you can't afford to get outside of God's Church.

Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another - and all the more as you see the Day approaching. Hebrews 10:23-25



Others on the journey

You are not the only one on the journey! You can receive lots of support and help from others who are going through the same things you are going through. (And you can help others in their journey, too).

We are all part of one Body!

But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. 1 Corinthians 12:24-27

The Holy Spirit ... The Word of God ... Personal relationship with God ... Fellowship ... Others on the journey

These are the main 'means of grace' that God uses to help and support you on the journey.

But you need to use them!

Often, the Children of Israel did not use the means of grace that God provided. They moaned, rejected God, disobeyed, and became hard-hearted. (Sound familiar?). As a result most of them perished in the wilderness.

They had three alternatives, and so do you.

1. Perish

This doesn't mean you lose your salvation. It means you miss out on God's very best for your life (Kingdom Living).

Choose life! Obey God! Do what He says!

2. Take another lap

God deals with the same thing in your life, over and over again. You never seem to get victory. (This happened many times with the Children of Israel and resulted in them spending 40 years in the wilderness, when they could have made it into the Promised Land in about a week).

Give in to God! Agree with God! Obey Him! Let Him be King of your life!

3. Enter the Promised Land

Allow God to deal with you. Let Him be King in every area of your life. Give over control of your life to Him.

In will come righteousness, peace, joy and power! You will experience Kingdom Living.

The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.
Matthew 13:44-46

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.
Matthew 6:33



Kingdom living

In this series we have been exploring the Kingdom of God. We have seen that the Kingdom of God means simply that God is King!

This means you will:

- ☛ **BE what God wants you to be**
- ☛ **DO what God wants you to do**

For you to live in the Kingdom of God (Kingdom living):

- you need to have good foundations
- God will work in your life to get rid of all aspects that are not under His Lordship (which means you will go through 'wilderness experiences' as you learn to give control of areas in your life over to Him)
- God will help you throughout the process. (There are many 'means of grace').

The Promised Land awaits you! (Both now, and in heaven).

So, what is Kingdom Living like? What do you do? What are you like?

Once again, Jesus is our example! When we look at Him we see what Kingdom Living is like.

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." Luke 4:18,19

This was Jesus' mission; His purpose for coming into the world. He fulfilled His mission, and so can you!

Jesus replied, "Go back and report to John what you hear and see: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor.

From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it. Matthew 11:4,5,12

Kingdom Living

The Spirit of the Lord is on me because he has anointed me....

The Holy Spirit will be upon you. You will be filled with the Holy Spirit, empowered by the Holy Spirit and guided by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will reveal God's will to you, and will help you do whatever it is that God wants you to do.

But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth. The anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit - just as it has taught you, remain in him. 1 John 2:20, 27

Those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires..... If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you..... For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. Romans 8:5,11,14

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1:8



... to preach good news to the poor.

You will be continually sharing the good news (gospel) with others.

Salvation is God's top priority for people. He wants everyone to be saved from their sins, live in relationship with Him, live under His Kingship and have eternal life. That's why God sent Jesus!

Sharing of the gospel will be your top priority, too. You will take every opportunity to share Christ with others, lead them to Christ, and help people experience Kingdom living.

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Matthew 28:18-20

Part of this will be bringing good news to the poor.

In one sense everyone outside of Christ is poor (and needs salvation). But God's heart is very much towards people who are poor. *We should continue to remember the poor.* Galatians 2:10

But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous." Luke 14:13,14

... He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners ...

People can be in bondage to all sorts of things: fears, doubts, situations, work, sport, sins, finances, weaknesses, depression, hopelessness, self image, peer pressure, conformity,

If Jesus is to be Lord, He must be Lord of all aspects of your life. And that means freedom! Freedom to live God's way; freedom to be yourself as God made you; freedom to choose God's will; freedom to lay down your life in service of others; freedom from sin; freedom from defeat; freedom to live in victory!

Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. Very truly I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. John 8:32,34,36

But thanks be to God, who always leads us triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the aroma of the knowledge of him. For we are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. To the one we are an aroma that brings death; to the other, an aroma that brings life. 2 Corinthians 2:14,15

Thanks be to God. He gives us victory through our Lord Jesus Christ! 1 Corinthians 15:57

... and recovery of sight for the blind. ...

God will work in and through you to bring about wholeness. You will be ministering life to others. That's what Jesus did. That's what He is still doing because that is what He is like!

See Matthew 10: 5-42

- We are to go, not expect people to come to us.
- We are to preach the gospel of the kingdom, heal the sick, raise the dead, and cast out demons.
- We are to share freely of ourselves.
- We are to be wise in the way we interact with others, and not waste time on those who won't receive the message.
- The Holy Spirit will help us, and will tell us what to say and do.
- People will hate us and we will be persecuted.
- We are to be as Jesus to them: He is our example.
- We are to speak confidently and boldly; not holding anything back.

Yes, this is how God
loved the world:
He Gave his
Only Child;
So that all
People with faith in him
can Escape destruction and
Live a full life,
now and forever.

JOHN 3:16



- We don't need to be afraid: God loves us and will watch over us.
- God sees what is happening and acknowledges what we are doing.
- There will be conflict, not peace, including within families.
- We will find life as we lay our lives down for others.
- We will be rewarded.

As we go and share the good news of the Kingdom we can expect God to work in miraculous ways, bringing people from death to life; sickness to health, darkness to light.

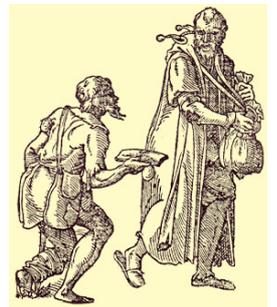
He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well." After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God. Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it. Mark 16:15-20

... to release the oppressed ...

God is always concerned for those who are oppressed.

The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. Psalm 9:9

God presides in the great assembly; He gives judgment among the "gods": How long will you defend the unjust and show partiality to the wicked? Defend the weak and the fatherless; uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked. Psalm 82:1-4



Blessed are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the LORD their God. He is the Maker of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them - he remains faithful forever. He upholds the cause of the oppressed and gives food to the hungry. The LORD sets prisoners free, the LORD gives sight to the blind, the LORD lifts up those who are bowed down, the LORD loves the righteous. The LORD watches over the foreigner and sustains the fatherless and the widow, but he frustrates the ways of the wicked. Psalm 146: 5-9

"Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter - when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?"

Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the LORD will be your rear guard. Then you will call, and the LORD will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I. "If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk, and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday. The LORD will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail. Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins and will raise up the age-old foundations; you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls, Restorer of Streets with Dwellings. Isaiah 58:6-12

As you live under God's Kingship your priorities will be His priorities. You will lay down your life in service for others, especially the poor, the oppressed, the hungry, the hurting, the needy..... You will be focused on justice; on making sure that all people have the opportunity to live in the Kingdom of God, as you do.

This kind of approach to life is very different from the self-centred, materialistic, 'what's best for me' approaches that are commonplace today, even amongst God's people. But remember: Jesus said that the way to find life was to lose it for His sake!

Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it. Matthew 10:38,39



... to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

The Bible (Old and New Testament) continually points forward to the 'Day of the Lord' when God's plan for His world is fulfilled. Jesus will return and bring in the full expression of the Kingdom of God. This will be the "year of the Lord's favor"; the culmination of God's purposes; the wrapping up of history in Christ and the beginning of eternity with Jesus for those who are part of God's family. Heaven!



"The day of the LORD is near for all nations. As you have done, it will be done to you; your deeds will return upon your own head. Obadiah 1:15

See 2 Peter Chapter 3

- In the last days evil people will make fun of God's ways.
- God does not want anyone to perish, but for everyone to come to repentance.
- At the Day of the Lord everything will be destroyed by fire.
- What remains will be eternal. All unrighteousness will be burned up.
- God will bring in a new heaven and a new earth in which there is righteousness.
- In preparation for this you need to be continually right with God, growing in His grace and in knowledge of Jesus Christ.
- You must share God's salvation with others so that they can also be included in Christ.

Then at the Day of the Lord:

And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb." All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying: "Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!"

Then one of the elders asked me, "These in white robes - who are they, and where did they come from?" I answered, "Sir, you know." And he said, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore, "they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them. 'Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat down on them,' nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb at the center before the throne will be their shepherd; 'he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.'"

Revelation 7: 12-17

You will live forever with Him, fulfilling God's eternal purpose to have everything under one Head: Jesus Christ.

The kingdoms of the world have become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever. Revelation 11:15.

And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment - to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ. Ephesians 1:9,10

That will be the fulfillment of Kingdom Living because then you will always:

- ☞ **BE what God wants you to be**
- ☞ **DO what God wants you to do**