

A RICH ENTRANCE INTO THE KINGDOM

Nearly all the writers of the New Testament, including Paul, John, and Peter, had something to say about the kingdom. Luke also said something, and James, even in his short book, has a very sweet verse concerning the kingdom. “Listen, my beloved brothers: Did not God choose the poor in the world to be **rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom**, which He promised to those who love him?” (2:5). Not only are we those rich in faith, but we are also heirs of the kingdom, which **God has promised to give to those who love Him. The kingdom is a matter of God’s promise, and as such, is a gift. The kingdom is a free gift! God will give us the kingdom according to His promise.** Luke, in his Gospel said the same thing: “Do not be afraid, little flock, because your Father has been well pleased to give you the kingdom” (12:32). Not only did God promise to give the kingdom to us, but He has been well pleased to do so. God is so happy to give us the kingdom. It is His good pleasure, His good intention, and His joy to give us the kingdom.

WILLING TO RECEIVE THE KINGDOM

Although God is happy to give us the kingdom, are we willing to receive the kingdom? **This gift is a matter of giving and receiving.** It takes both sides. If I have a gift for you, but you are not willing to receive it, what can I do? I am helpless. God is happy to give us the kingdom, but are we ready to receive the kingdom? It is like salvation—God is happy to give His salvation to people as a free gift, but so many worldly people have not received His salvation. Why? It is because they are not willing to receive it. God is ready to give, but they will not receive it. Are you willing to receive the kingdom? God is ready to give the kingdom, and **we must be willing and ready to receive it.** We all must say, “Hallelujah! **Thank You for the kingdom, Lord. I am so willing to receive it.**”

SEEKING ONLY THE KINGDOM

If we are willing to receive the kingdom, Luke gives us another verse: “Jesus said to him, No one who puts his hand on the plow and looks behind is fit for the kingdom of God” (9:62). If we put our hand on the plow, taking the kingdom, and look back, we are not fit for the kingdom. If we are willing to take the kingdom, we must go on. We must not look back. **We should not seek the same things the worldly people are seeking. We should not be concerned with what we eat, what we drink, and so many other things.** Rather, **we must seek the kingdom of God, and God will add these things to us. If we seek the kingdom of God, surely God will give us the kingdom plus all our needs.**

Do not consider that it is such a high and difficult thing to receive the kingdom. Because it is something of God’s promise and free gift, it is not that difficult to receive. To give us the kingdom is God’s good pleasure. He is happy to give us the kingdom. The only need is that we would be willing to receive the kingdom. If we are willing to receive the kingdom, we should forget about all the other things. God will take care of what we need—what we eat and what we drink. We should take no thought about those things. God will take care of them.

THE WAY TO ENTER INTO THE KINGDOM

I love what Peter says concerning the kingdom. In such a sweet, dear, and precious way Peter tells us how we can enter into the kingdom. Second Peter 1:1 and 3 say, “Simon Peter, a slave and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have been allotted faith equally precious as ours in the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ...Seeing that His divine power has granted to us all things which relate to life and godliness, through the full knowledge of Him who has called us by His own glory and virtue.” Here Peter says that **we have all received a precious faith.** Do not think that we can have faith out of ourselves. We cannot have faith. The precious faith is not something that originated from within us; it was **given by God.** We receive the precious faith from God. Then Peter says that God’s divine power has granted to us all things which relate to life and godliness. How marvelous that **God has given to us all things which relate to life and godliness! If we have the Lord Jesus within us as a seed, we have all the things which relate to life and godliness.** As such a seed within us, the Lord Jesus is all-inclusive. Do not forget that the seed of a little plant is all-inclusive. A carnation seed is all-inclusive. Everything of the carnation plant is included in the seed. The root, the stem, the branches, the leaves, the blossom, the color, the substance, and the shape are all included within the seed. Even all the beauty of the carnation life is included within the seed. Once the seed is sown into the earth, everything related to its life is sown there. **Today**

the Lord Jesus is within us as the seed. Within that seed are all the things which relate to life within and godliness without.

Partakers of the Divine Nature

Verse 4 goes on to say, “Through which He has granted to us precious and exceedingly great promises that through these you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption which is in the world by lust.” God has not only given all things which relate to life and godliness, but He has also granted to us the precious and exceedingly great promises that through these we might become partakers of the divine nature. In verse 1 we have received faith; in verse 3 we have received all things which relate to life and godliness; in verse 4 we have received the precious and exceedingly great promises that through these we can be partakers of the divine nature. How marvelous are these items!

Developing the Life Seed

What then shall we do? Only one thing—let Him grow! But we must realize that to let Him grow needs our cooperation. Therefore, verse 5 goes on to say, “For this very reason also, adding all diligence, supply bountifully in your faith virtue; and in virtue, knowledge.” We have received the precious faith, but we need to develop many things by cooperating with His life within us. We need to develop the first thing and then the second thing and then the third thing and then the fourth thing. Again and again we must develop something. How can we develop something? We must learn all the time to open ourselves to the Lord. When we call on His name, “O Lord Jesus,” we open ourselves to Him. Then we need to pray-read the Word and have some contact with the Lord, and go along with the Lord day by day. This will develop so many things within our being.

First, a little seed develops the root. Then it develops the stem and later the branches. The branches develop the leaves, and afterward come the blossoms. We do have faith within as the seed, and now we just need to open ourselves. We need to pray-read His Word and to love the Lord and take Him in. If day by day we will follow Him, go along with Him, and obey His inward leading, something will be developed within us. Something will grow within us. This is the growth in life. At the very end of his Epistle, Peter says, “Grow in the grace” (2 Pet. 3:18). What does this mean? This means to develop the very seed that has been sown into us.

Growth in Life

On the one hand, I advise you and encourage you and charge you to seek after the kingdom. But on the other hand, I want to share with you that the wonderful way for you to enter into the kingdom is by developing all the items within you step by step (1:5-11). By this kind of development Peter says that we will have a rich entrance into the eternal kingdom of Christ. The way to enter into the kingdom is to grow in life. I like this term, the entrance...richly and bountifully. This means a rich entrance into the eternal kingdom. It is not that we can simply walk into the kingdom. We must grow and develop into the kingdom. The secret of entering into the kingdom is simply to grow in life. The seed of life is already within us. We simply must develop something with this life seed. We all have a wonderful life seed within us. But we need to grow and develop something with this seed. We enter the kingdom day by day by the growth of the inner life.

Do not consider that you can pray and fast for three days and nights and that will enable you to enter into the kingdom. No, that is not the divine economy. That is not the proper way. The proper way is that since the day you believed in the Lord Jesus, you received a little seed sown into you. Actually, there is no need for you to grow so fast. Just be happy with the Lord and thank Him. Go to the Lord and thank and praise Him. Open yourself to the Lord. Thank the Lord that He has sown Himself into you and that He is growing and spreading within you. The way of the Lord is the way of life, and the way of life is so simple. If you sow a carnation seed into the ground, you do not need to pray and fast. You simply need to sow the seed properly and then go home and rest. Occasionally, you need to come and water the seed. It will grow without your effort. To enter into the kingdom we simply need to grow in life and grow in grace.

HASTENING THE LORD'S COMING

Now let us read 2 Peter 3:11-12: “Since all these things are to be thus dissolved, what kind of persons ought you to be in holy manner of life and godliness, expecting and hastening the coming of the day of God, on account of which the heavens, being on fire, will be dissolved, and the elements, burning with intense heat, are to be melted

away?" The more we seek after the kingdom by growing in life, the more we hasten the coming of the day of the Lord. Surely **the speed of His coming depends upon the speed of our growth; it depends upon our seeking. If we do not seek and we do not grow, His coming is delayed. We may pray for the Lord to come quickly, but He may say to us, "Grow quickly."** There is no problem from His side; the problem is on our side. Surely the Lord Jesus would be happy if we would grow quickly. He is ready, but we are not ready. Where among all the Christians today can you see the growth in life? You can find mission work, church organization, speaking in tongues, and Bible teachings. You can find people seeking power, miracles, and healing, but where is the growth in life? Some Christians who have been saved for twenty years have not changed any at all; they have no growth in life.

May the Lord be gracious to grant us the growth in life for His coming back. Our **growth in life** will speed His coming back. How quickly He comes back depends on our growth. How can we hasten His coming? By **being godly** and **having the reality of godliness**. The proper godliness is just the development of the inner life. The more we develop something in our inner life, the more we are godly. The more godliness we can express, the more we will hasten the Lord's coming.

THE CHURCH BEING FOR THE KINGDOM

The Lord's eternal purpose is to have a kingdom. However, His enemy, Satan, knows this. Satan does everything he can to damage whatever is for the kingdom. **The church is not for the church but for the kingdom.** Therefore, Satan does his best to destroy and ruin and corrupt the church. First, he brings confusion into the church by putting in the tares. Then he changes the nature of the church by causing it to become a great tree, being mixed with the world. Furthermore, he hides much leaven in the church life to corrupt it. Because of this, **the Lord Jesus comes in to call out the overcomers. The overcomers are simply those who overcome the confusion of the tares, the worldliness of the great tree, and all the corruption of the leaven. They overcome everything in order to have a proper church life.** The recovery of the church life today is for the kingdom. Satan knows that God's way to have the kingdom is through the church, so he does his best to damage the church. **We must overcome all the damage of Satan.**

THE LORD'S WISDOM

Here we see the Lord's wisdom. The Lord knows that some of His dear children who have really been saved will not be faithful to Him and will not cooperate with Him. Therefore, He holds forth a section of His kingdom as a kind of a **reward** and **prize** to encourage them to **seek Him in a desperate way**. He urges them to seek the kingdom. Those who are faithful and diligent will participate in the manifestation of the kingdom, but those who are not faithful and not cooperative will lose something and will suffer some punishment. **The Lord will make the heavenly part of the millennium a prize and reward to all His faithful and overcoming ones. The hope of the reward to all the faithful ones is a strong encouragement to seek the kingdom.** Today we may have salvation, but we do not yet have the prize and the reward. Whether we will receive a reward is up to us. May the Lord have mercy upon all of us that we would **seek the kingdom in a desperate way!**

(The Kingdom, Chapter 50)