

June 6, 2021  
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## Seeking The Kingdom

### A Hard Thing – A Glorious Thing – A Promised Thing

**Matthew 6:33** <sup>33</sup> "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

It is not an easy thing to seek the kingdom of God. Through the prophet Jeremiah God tells us:

**Jeremiah 29:13** And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.

The kingdom of God is not an easy thing to seek because it must be done with the whole heart. This is repeated also in Deuteronomy.

**Deuteronomy 4:29** "But from there you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul.

The kingdom is hard thing because it demands your whole heart. It is also a hard thing because it demands your whole life. The kingdom of God is not a thing that you can seek one day. The kingdom of God is not a thing that can be sought with the eyes and grasp with the hands. It is not possible to find it and hold it and put it somewhere safe, like a bank or a vault. It is not possible to grasp it and say now it is mine and I will keep it safely in this place and then I will know that it will always be there.

Rather the kingdom of God is always before you. A thing to be sought each and every day, each and every decision you make. Every morning will I today seek God and his kingdom, or will I seek my own desires? Will I rejoice in Christ and his forgiveness, or will I rejoice in earthly pleasures?

Seeking the kingdom is hard because it takes your whole heart and your whole life. It is hard also because it is not a thing that can be partially sought. As though you can set your heart to have both God's kingdom and all the pleasures of this world.

**Matthew 6:24** "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

It must be sought with the whole heart above and to the exclusion of anything else.

This is a hard thing so much so that Jesus reminds us "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle."

### **It is a glorious thing**

It is hard thing but a thing well worth it. It is a hard thing but a glorious thing.

Jesus compares the kingdom to a treasure hidden in a field and a pearl of great price. It is a thing that is worth selling all that we have if we could by that means gain this kingdom. It is a thing worth even our lives.

In Romans 14:17 Paul compares the joys of all earthly kingdoms with the joy of God's kingdom.

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

The highest joy of any earthly kingdom is feasting. The highest joy of this world is eating and drinking. The greatest goal of any earthly kingdom is that all people should have sufficient food and health and be able to enjoy the things of this world. That is the greatest joy that any earthly kingdom can provide.

But the kingdom of God is not this. It is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Spirit.

The kingdom of God offers the joy of walking with God. It offers the joy of peace with God and the joy of being filled with the Holy Spirit. This is a joy that transcends the momentary circumstances of this earth. So that in the book of Philippians Paul is able to rejoice in the Spirit even when alone in prison facing his own death.

When you are young the joys of this world seem all important. But when you are old. When you body does not work right anymore. When your children have left the house. When your senses are failing. When your eyes no longer see, and your ears no longer hear. When your legs can no longer run and dance and swim. Then all the pleasures of this world are useless. But the kingdom of God still gives peace, and the forgiveness of sins. Then God will still walk by your side even in the evening of your life until he takes you to be with him forever.

The kingdom of God gives us a peace that is beyond all earthly desires and continues now and forever.

### **It is a promised thing**

Seeking the kingdom is a hard thing but of such great worth that we may indeed desire to seek it with our whole heart yet who among us is able to do such a great thing.

The Psalmist wrote

**Psalm 27:8** <sup>8</sup> *When You said, "Seek My face," My heart said to You, "Your face, LORD, I will seek."*

And yet immediately he continues in verse 9

**Psalm 27:9** <sup>9</sup> Do not hide Your face from me; Do not turn Your servant away in anger; You have been my help; Do not leave me nor forsake me, O God of my salvation.

Having set his heart to seek the Lord immediately the Psalmist pleads for his mercy knowing how quickly his heart fails and sin enters his mind. The Psalmist does not trust in his strength to seek the Lord but rather stands on the Lord's promise of mercy.

The Kingdom is hard thing, and a glorious thing, but it is also a thing that is our by promise and not by works.

When God made Adam he set him to name all the animals and in doing so to seek one like himself. But no matter how hard Adam sought he could not find one like himself. Yet in his own time God gave to Adam a wife named Eve.

Even though the command is given "seek the kingdom with your whole heart" nevertheless when we pray we do not pray "I will seek your kingdom" but we pray "Your kingdom come to us." The command is given "seek" as it was given to Adam so that when the promise is fulfilled, we might value that which is given and not think it a common thing because it was given to us without price on our part.

The command is given to you to "seek" but the kingdom is given by promise as the gift of God. As Jeremiah prophesied long ago:

**Jeremiah 24:7** `Then I will give them a heart to know Me, that I am the LORD; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God, for they shall return to Me with their whole heart.

You have chosen this day to seek the Lord first above all other things and with your whole heart. It is a good thing that you have done. Yet it is a thing that you have already failed in. Nevertheless be of great joy for the Lord has given to you what you could not find and by the blood of his only Son has forgiven your sins and open to you the gates of righteousness that you may go in and out and find joy in his presence. He has done this by his power, by his mercy and by his promise.

**Matthew 5:6** <sup>6</sup> Blessed *are* those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled.

Amen