

Series: ...**THY KINGDOM COME!** – October 5, 2008

YOURS...OR HIS?
Matthew 6:9-13; 31-33

I. INTRO

- A. I have been watching out my window with some interest these days as they've been building **Castlemore**—the road alongside the parking lot that you see under construction. It's been a mess out there for a long time. Know what has complicated it? They have had to run a water main from Anderson Avenue—down the road and **under** the GO train tracks. They dug a big hole, braced it with steel, and bored an 80 foot long tunnel, about 2 feet in diameter.
- That was fascinating! They put the auger inside this steel pipe—and as they bored, pushed the pipe inch by inch through that hole! I probably spent too much time watching them—so I had to use the story so I wouldn't get docked in my pay!
1. Now, here's the point—and there is a point. I looked at all that mess—and how it just looks like a bunch of piled up dirt and big yellow noisy machines and turquoise colored pipe. Who would **ever** think—just looking at all the mess—that it will ultimately supply water—and a road to people who need it?
 2. We've been talking about what Jesus is up to in this world to restore **everything**. To reconcile people to God and people to each other; to bring the goodness of Heaven to every part of this planet. It's like this road. Messy, sometimes. Hidden. Behind the scenes and under the surface.
- I thought about what Jesus is up to right now in this world to restore everything. A **lot** of what goes in is messy. Hidden. Behind the scenes and under the surface. And sometimes people get discouraged by this. "I thought this was a **powerful** mission? That we were bringing **life**. This looks like, well—kinda messy. Kinda like **nothing!**"
- And to that, Jesus would say...? "What I'm up to is **really** good! It's powerful! It's happening. But--It's not done yet!" And that's why making a difference anywhere **always** takes faith. And hope!
- B. Today, I want to talk about the specific place where Jesus' Kingdom gets **very** personal for you and me. Where the cost cuts most deeply—and where we also feel the power of what He's doing.
- And that's where His Kingdom—His plan—His authority and leadership bumps up against ours. See, you have a kingdom—and so do I. And the specific issue Jesus **always** raises is whether or not **we** will let Him be King in all the little kingdoms and fiefdoms in our sphere of control and influence. Just so you know—today you'll feel His authority nudge yours. Every person **must** decide, "Is it **His...or Mine?**" And your choice **will** chart your future!

II. HE IS GOOD, HE IS RIGHT, HE IS LORD!

- A. You've heard the phrase, **familiarity breeds contempt**. I think it's more likely that **familiarity breeds apathy**. It happens to everyone. We drive by a building every day for 10 years—and never notice it. We sit down at a meal every night with one of our children and don't think much about it—until they leave for university.
- The Lord's Prayer** is a great example of that. Let's read it:

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
 Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
 Give us today our daily bread.
 And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.
 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.
 For thine is the kingdom and power and glory—forever. Amen.
 (Matthew 6:9-13 TNIV, KJV)**

A lot of times people just rattle it off—over and over and over again—and never think about what they're really asking God for. For example—Did you notice that Jesus teaches us to pray that God will forgive our debts or sins—just like we are forgiving our debtors—those who hurt us, take advantage of us—do stuff to us! That's quite a prayer!

1. Tucked away in there is perhaps one of the most profound things a person can pray. Have you ever thought about what it means to pray, **Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.** That prayer is basically saying something like this. God, I realize that the best thing that could **ever** happen to me and to this planet and all the people on it is if your grace and reconciliation and power and love would pour into every situation, ever building, every marriage, ever home, every relationship—and **You** would lead. I want **up there** to come **down here**—and I know that will only happen if your will is done in every situation.
 - Remember the definition of a kingdom? It's the sphere in any person's life where their will—what they want--gets done. Your kingdom is where what **you** say...goes! This is a prayer that what God wants done will in fact get done **everywhere!** And when you and I pray that, guess whose lives that includes? Yours—and mine.
2. There's another piece to this that's important. It's where we pray that God's will be done in our lives and in every part of this planet—just like it's done in Heaven all the time. How many people on this planet, if asked, would say that they want to go to Heaven? How many of **you** want to go to Heaven?
 - From everything the Bible teaches, Heaven is this perfect place where there's perfect peace, perfect harmony, perfect goodness—a place where there is absolutely no sadness—no pain—no hunger—no bad drivers. There are no breaking news reports in Heaven telling us that stock markets lost and estimated 1.4 **trillion** dollars!
 - Anyone know what makes Heaven the place where **everyone** wants to go? God's will is done—all the time in every part. Now, here's the strange thing—everyone wants to **go** to Heaven; how many people do you think are willing to ask that God's will be done in every corner of their lives? Have you ever wondered why someone would hope to go to a place for eternity where God's will is done all the time—but are scared to **death** to have it that way here? If God's will being done up there makes everything good—why wouldn't God's will being done down here make things incredibly good?
3. Something else. Does it make sense that a person would pray this prayer, begging, "Oh God! I you're **Your** Kingdom to come here—and your will to be done! Please!" and never invest their resources and time and energy to see it happen?

-Think about it this way. Women, what if some guy said to you, “You are the **love** of my life! I grovel at your feet! I am **yours!** I’d climb the highest mountain for you, swim the deepest ocean—filled with sharks—devote my entire life to making you happy! And if doesn’t rain on Saturday, I’ll be over.” Words are cheap. We **invest** in what we truly believe in!

- B. Ever think of **how** the Kingdom of God expands? He’s not buying up real estate. He owns it all anyway. This happens in the interior of human lives—and gets lived out through the power of God in all of our relationships. Which means? God’s will being done and His purposes accomplished happens **only** through the lives of people like you and me. Period.

-And the real bottom line question for you and me is...Is Jesus **worth** following...or **not?** Jesus’ leadership extends to the core of our lives—right in the engine room of where we make our decisions. Decisions on how we use our money and time; decisions on how we treat others; decisions on how we handle power; decisions on how we use our houses, our cars, our bodies.

1. Jesus **is** Lord! The Bible says that in Jesus, God Himself showed up on this planet. His earliest followers totally understood that—and He had their total allegiance. Even when it cost them everything.

-See, sometimes Followers like us **call** him Lord, but we don’t really believe He is. A little further on in what is called The Sermon on the Mount, Jesus’ greatest talk, he says:

Not everyone who calls out to me, ‘Lord! Lord!’ will enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Only those who actually do the will of my Father in heaven will enter. (Matthew 7:21 NLT)

- a. Here’s the deal. We don’t call Jesus Lord because it’s a really nice respectful title—like calling a king, “Your Grace” or a judge, “Your Honor.” We call Jesus **Lord** because that’s **WHO** He is. This wasn’t something His followers cooked up 100s of years after He died. Paul, an early Christian leader writes in 60 AD, quoting an even earlier hymn: **Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation, for through him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can’t see—such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world. Everything was created through him and for him. He existed before anything else, and he holds all creation together. (Colossians 15-17 NLT)**
- b. Let’s just be clear; to believe in the biblical Jesus and what He said about Himself is to believe He is God, that He made everything—and is ultimately in charge of everything. This Kingdom, this restoration of everything He’s involved in right now is not a little pet hobby he developed on the side to see what would happen. He gave his life for it. It is **the most important thing going on here—and throughout the universe! Period!**
- c. So. If this is true, what doesn’t what Jesus is doing seem, well—more powerful and awe-inspiring? Why is so messy? So...incomplete? So **not** under His control? To put it simply—He’s limited Himself to working through His followers—to the actions and decisions of people like you and me. And people’s lives get **very** messy and complicated!

2. Question. Do you think Jesus **deserves** that kind of position of leadership—where He leads and I follow? And maybe the underlying question is—“Is Jesus’ way **right? Smart?** “Is Jesus going to screw up my life? Turn me into some kind of miserable weirdo who belongs in a monastery? Will I still be fun? Will I still **have** fun? Can I blossom and grow as a person?
- Does Jesus actually know what He’s doing in an age of computers, hydrogen cars, facebook and Ipods?** The **correct** answer in church is, “Yes! Of course He does!” But that question doesn’t just get answered by our mouths; it gets answered by the things we do and the decisions we make.
- a. Dallas Willard, in his book, ***The Divine Conspiracy***, says, **It is not possible to trust Jesus, or anyone else, in matters where we do not believe him to be competent...And can we seriously imagine that Jesus could be Lord if he were not smart?” (p.94).**
- b. Think about it like this. At the very basic level, Jesus knew how to change the molecular structure of water to make it wine—and multiply a single lunch more than 5000 times over. We marvel when physicians can transplant hearts and lungs and do brain surgery. Jesus knew how to instantly transform diseased tissue into whole tissue—and straighten and grow bones without invasive surgery, casts and rehab. Jesus knew exactly what people were thinking—and predicted the future with absolute precision.
- Weather systems, gravity and deeply ingrained patterns of destructive behavior couldn’t stop Him. The final thing that has stopped every person on this planet—including every prophet from every religious system that has ever existed is death. Jesus didn’t just raise people from the dead; after three days decaying in a tomb—He took his life back with a resurrected body that will live for ever. Jesus isn’t just Master—He’s **Maestro** of every imaginable phase of reality.
- Willard says, **[Jesus]...is not just nice, he is brilliant. He is the smartest man who ever lived. He is now supervising the entire course of world history...while simultaneously preparing the rest of the universe for our role in it (p. 95).**
- c. Right now both Canada and the US are in election mode—and the question **everyone** asks is, “Does this person know what they’re doing? Are their promises real—or just rhetoric designed to get them elected? Can they actually do what they **say** they can?”
- The question you and I have to ask about Jesus is...Is He a leader worth following? Is He worth our full allegiance—or not? You’ve heard the phrase that people **vote with their feet?** Every day, you and I vote on this Kingdom—the character and leadership of Jesus—with our hearts, our time, our money, our attitudes, and our actions. I know Jesus is Lord. I want you to ask yourself this morning, “Is He **my** Lord?”

III. THE TALE OF TWO KINGDOMS

- A. A few weeks ago, I talked about how that the word **kingdom** is a kind of archaic word. What it means is the effective range of a person’s will—the space where what **they** say—goes. Remember? I have a kingdom. You have a kingdom. And because God has created us in His image—with **incredible** freedom—our will gets expressed in those kingdoms.

1. Let me unpack this a little. Sometimes in the Church of Jesus, we **talk** about trusting Jesus. What we mean by that is, “Jesus has made an arrangement for my sin to be cared for on a cross so that I can be forgiven and go to Heaven when I die.” So, I’ll trust him to take me to Heaven—but I’m not really going to trust Him with anything else.
2. Truth is—we spend a **lot** of time and effort building and expanding our kingdoms—the range of our effective will. People have **always** done this. It works kinda like this. In the world system, money and success holds tremendous power. Success gives your words weight; if you’re really successful, people will follow you, quote you, fawn over you and give you your way. If you’re successful in our world, you don’t **have** to be wrong. Even if you’re wrong, people won’t tell you. And you can grow arrogant, selfish—and wield power. You begin to believe your own press.
 - Success usually brings money with it. Money provides the brick and mortar for building a kingdom. Money builds walls and towers and buys servants—and loyalty. In our world, money is a **big** deal—always **has** been. For most people, money is their “savior.” More money means higher walls, more insulation, better service—and creates the visual of being successful and safe.
 - And money means power. The combination of success, money and power equals influence. Stack up enough in this area, you don’t ever have to humble yourself or let anyone close that you don’t **want** to be close. In fact, you can be kinda like a little god of the kingdom you’ve built. “**My** kingdom come. **My** will be done!”
3. And Jesus is **very** clear about the danger of this—and this is just **one** illustration of personal kingdom-building. He says, in essence, “This stuff can be so **addictive** that the thought turning the kingdom you’ve built over to the **real** King begins to sound ridiculous. And it can keep you out of the only kingdom that lasts; the only kingdom that matters. And we in the West are **all** vulnerable to this.
 - What happens when someone mentions giving a tenth of what you make and own to further what God is doing here—bring the Good News to everyone, feed the hungry, heal the blind, set people free? That’s **base-line** stuff—and yet, in a place like Toronto where we have **so** much, even talking like that gives people a headache in the middle of their forehead. Or makes them mad. To make ourselves feel better, we’ll throw a few coins over the wall—but a **tenth**? “I don’t think so!”
 - Think about some of the other kingdoms we have in our lives. The kingdom of our sexuality. We build walls and gates with iron bars and tunnels and secret rooms. Jesus asks, “Would you like me to bring sanity and peace and wholeness to this part of your life? Will you let me lead you and restore you here?”
 - Think about the whole kingdom of our attitudes—especially our hearts. Sometimes the walls of our kingdoms are made with black garbage bags—jammed with grudges and anger and unforgiveness. The pus and inflammation from all these grievances runs just under the surface of life. We think if we can stack these bags high enough—we’ll protect ourselves from getting hurt again. Jesus says, “Would you let it go? I could set you **free! Tear down this wall!**”
 - There’s our relational kingdom—this little kingdom of how we treat others and their reputations. There’s our work kingdom—and the craziness of trying to get

ahead and climb the ladder. There's our reputation kingdom--and the exhausting treadmill of activity—trying to make ourselves appear more sophisticated and younger and more desirable than we really are. There's the kingdom of our mouths—the things we say to others; the damage we cause, the bragging we do, the lies we tell, the shrapnel that flies when we get crossed or blocked.

4. Here's the deal. Walls and kingdoms don't just keep God and others out—they keep us in. Over time we become prisoners in our own kingdom. You have to ask yourself the question—why would we want to keep **Jesus** out? I mean, at some point we **will** in fact lose our grip on it—and have to turn in this empty shell! He's Lord! He's brilliant—powerful—and loves us. He's the One who restores and saves and reconciles and brings peace and hope and life.
 - If Jesus is God—and changed history with his life—why would we not trust what He said about everything else?
5. I'll tell you why. It's because down deep in our gut we clench our teeth and say, **"It's MINE!"** There's this rebellious spirit that chokes and gags at the thought of turning the keys to these little fiefdoms over to Jesus' lordship and Jesus' leadership. We go into a cold sweat! We're control freaks—and we **like** being in control! Even though the anxiety of the whole thing—making sure our butts are covered and insulated—drives us nuts!
 - I've watched this stuff go on for years—and I'll tell you what happens. It's like we set all these tripwires and laser alarms—kinda like that scene in Mission Impossible where Tom Cruise is being let down from the ceiling vent?
 - a. Sometimes we mess with the truth. "Who me? Greedy? Into power? Crossing sexual lines?" Not **me!** Then we get into some blame and defend mode where everyone **else** is really the problem. Or we deny the truth about the downward spiral we're on. "I'm cool! I'm good! I can handle this! Jesus? Lord? Of **course** He is!"
 - b. And sometimes we'll even play games with the Bible and what it says. Instead of us conforming our lives to God's Word—we treat it like Sponge Bob--we twist and shape and morph the Bible to conform to the way we're already living. See what's happening? We will protect our kingdom—doing what **we** want to do—at **all** costs—even at the expense of truth and authenticity. In essence, we'll call God a liar or a cheat to justify what we're doing.
6. Let's just say out loud what we're **really** saying to Jesus when we want Him forgive us—but not lead us. I picked this up in the writings of John Ortberg. Imagine being honest enough to say:
 - "Okay, Jesus, I'll believe in you. I will trust you to get me into heaven, but I want to let you know right now that my money's mine. Don't mess with it and don't expect me to give any of it to you or to anyone else—cause, see, I've got plans. Once I get my things done, we'll see. My money's **mine**—but I will trust you to get me into Heaven when I die."
 - Or, "Yes, Jesus—I'll trust you to get me into Heaven, but don't go asking for me to give up my grudges. These people have hurt me a lot—and I'm not **about** to let them get away with it! And don't ask to lead me in my sexuality, or in how I use my mouth, or in how I use my power—or in how I use my time. Don't ask me for **anything**—but, yes, I do want **everything** you have to offer. And, by the way, could you bless and make me happy in the life I've chosen?"

-How many of you think that sounds rational? Does it sound like someone who truly believes Jesus is Lord—and that he's **right** in everything He says about life?

- B. And **that's** why Jesus never presented this as an option. Read through what he taught—and you'll find that he invited everyone to come to Him—to be a part of this restoration of all things. He told people to come—just as they are! But he also said: **Repent** of your sins! **Believe** the Good News! Rethink **everything** about your life—about the way you're doing things. It's the best news on the planet that you can have real life **right now**—and live under the good, compassionate, restoring leadership of a God who's **crazy** about you! But you **must** let Him lead. And that's a huge decision. To give up control—and allow Him to be in charge.
1. We make decisions all the time—every single day. In North America we live in the **Land of Choice!** 36,000 choices in every supermarket. Revlon has 158 different shades of lipstick. In Starbucks, there are 19,000 combinations for how you have your coffee! But these are all in the 101 level of decision-making. We make thousands of decisions like this every week.
 - But we also make 201 level decisions—which are a little more complex. Will you use a Mac or a PC? What kind of car will I drive? Things like that.
 - There are also 301 level decisions—big, important life-altering decisions where the stakes are really high. Who will I marry? Will I change career paths?
 - Friends—this decision of submitting to Jesus' lordship—turning **everything** over to Him so that He can make them new and connect them to all He's up to in this world—**that** is a 501 level decision. That's why Jesus said, "You need to **repent!** You need to re-think **everything!** The stakes on this decision are higher than any other decision you will make.
 - In this talk, Jesus speaks to the anxiety of decision-making. "Will I have enough? What about tomorrow? What about next year? What about housing, about clothing my kids?" Jesus says this:

"So don't worry about these things, saying, 'What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?' These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs. Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need." (Matthew 6:31-33 NLT)
 - Here's Jesus' promise. If we put God—and all He's up to in our lives and in this world **first—FIRST--** He will make sure that we have **all** we need. So. Is Jesus a gentleman? Does he keep his promises? There is the part where we **choose** Jesus as Lord—and then there's the part to this decision where we **keep** seeking to know, love and be a part of all God is doing. And it's only at this point that you can invite God into your decision-making.
 - Decision-making in life is critical. It doesn't matter much if you choose the wrong car—but if you choose the wrong **Lord...?** Anyone here ever made a critical decision that was faulty—and let to a whole **batch** of wrong decisions? What God is up to—what God wants to do with your life is **one** area where you don't want to screw up!
 2. Have you thought seriously about where the decisions you're making right now will take you? Like, if you were to just play them out—what will you have, where will you be—and what will **you** be like? This morning I want you to project out from where you are and what you're doing right now—and think, "What if nothing changes with me. Really! What will I have if I live out 20, 30,

50, 70 more years of **this**? With me running the whole show? An existence? More money and stuff? Or...**or...** a legacy of transformed lives. Friends—**time** is the only tangible stuff we have to create an eternity out of. We aren't guaranteed how much we will get.

-If Jesus is real. If Jesus is Lord of all. If Jesus is all-powerful and truthful—and if what he's doing here lasts for eternity—then why not trust Him? See, to say that you **trust** Jesus means that you believe he's right about **everything**. He's right about relationships, about marriage, about anger, about money and possessions, about sexuality, about forgiveness and about love. If you **don't** think He's right...well, then, you **can't** trust Him!

3. You **can** hang onto your little piece of the kingdom—but it's like hanging on to this broken piece of pipe. Water is essential to life—this pipe was **made** to carry water—but it can't do it like this, not unless it's connected to the **source** of water. In fact, this was in the trash.

-Same with you. Your little piece of whatever will **not** do for you what you think it will—and you will miss what God intended to do through you. So. Will you **trust** Jesus—and will you let Him have his rightful place in all the little fiefdoms—all the little kingdoms you have around you—the places where **your** will is done?

*I want you to imagine what it would be like to bring a little bit of Heaven--the restoration, the grace, the hope—and the leadership of Jesus to every part of your life? What if His courage and hope could make it to that little kingdom of anxiety and worry that your insides are churning over?

*What would it be like if you allowed Jesus' kingdom of making all things right to move into your home and into your parenting and your friendships?

*What would it look like if you turned over the kingdom of your sexuality to Jesus—and it was restored to wholeness and grace and respect?

*What if your work—whether it's in a steel and glass tower or a coal mine—became a place where Jesus is Lord instead of money and power?

*And what if your money and stuff, under the power and generous leadership of Jesus, became this amazing tool that brought meaning to you, meaning to you, life to others, and joy to the God of the universe?

-Will you let Jesus be Lord? Will you give up trying to be god of the kingdoms of your life—and let Someone who knows what He's doing—do that and give you peace?