

“ADJ - Advancing the Kingdom Part 2” (10-9-22)

Series Introduction: The Kingdom - Its definition, value, essence, and ways to participate in & advance it!

Last Week: The Kingdom is of great value & importance; the unique solution to the brokenness of this world. Because of Jesus it is now present and available - will we repent & participate in Kingdom life now?

Today: Advancing the Kingdom is first about its **Expansion** in my life!

Beginning where we ended last week . . .

Matthew 28:18-20 (ESV)

(18) And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. (19) Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, (20) teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Dallas Willard

“By relying on His word and presence we are enabled to reintegrate the little realm that makes up our life into the infinite rule of God. And that is the eternal kind of life. Caught up in His active rule, our deeds become an element in God’s eternal history.”

Obedience is a relational word - I’m obeying the person of Jesus Christ by listening to His word & cultivating a living relationship with the God who is My King . . .

- **Matthew 13 / Mark 4 - Jesus tells the parable of the sower - without explanation!**

Matthew 13:10-11 (ESV)

(10) Then the disciples came and said to him, “Why do you speak to them in parables?” (11) And he answered them, “To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given.

Note: Notice it is only later when Jesus is pursued by his disciples that he gives the insight!

***Obedience** - is the key to an abundant life, and it begins with curiosity & pursuit (i.e. following Jesus)

1) Obedience - Faith in Action

- **The Mustard Seed**

Matthew 13:31-32 (ESV)

(31) He put another parable before them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his field. (32) It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is larger than all the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.”

Note: Start small where you are, trusting in what will grow!

- Obedience is about more than what we are “not” supposed to be doing - it’s about who we are **becoming**
- House Renovation Project - not just about getting out the old / we have a vision for the new!
- **Example: Peter** - Jesus says “Follow me, and I’ll make you a fisher of men” (3 years later - Pentecost)

Obedience is about Trusting God and co-operating with His action in my life!

2) Obedience - Perseverance in Hope

• The Patient Sower

Mark 4:26-29 (ESV)

(26) And he said, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground. (27) He sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows; he knows not how. (28) The earth produces by itself, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. (29) But when the grain is ripe, at once he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come."

Note: Plant & Wait - trust as the process unfolds (daily attentive, but the result is out of his control)

- **This Church Plant** - pre-Covid: 120 our last Sunday / next time in person: 15 people
- Obedience is how we measure success moment by moment. We trust him with the ultimate results!

Galatians 5:22-25 (ESV)

(22) But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, (23) gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. (24) And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. (25) If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.

Note: We persevere in step with the Holy Spirit, and in the process growth happens and the fruit comes!

3) Obedience - an Integrated life

• The Leaven

Matthew 13:33 (ESV)

He told them another parable. "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, till it was all leavened."

Note: The Kingdom of God in my life works slow, but ultimately will permeate my life and change it!

How to Do this - Example: Soak in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew chapters 5-7)

• Anger

Matthew 5:44 (ESV)

But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,

• Money

Matthew 6:24 (ESV)

No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.

• Anxiety

Matthew 6:26-27 (ESV)

(26) Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? (27) And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?

There is great power in the simplicity of obedience to Christ . . .

Dallas Willard (from “The Divine Conspiracy”)

“More than any other single thing, in any case, the practical irrelevance of actual obedience to Christ accounts for the weakened effect of Christianity in the world today, with its increasing tendency to emphasize political, and social action as the primary way to serve God. It also accounts for the practical irrelevance of Christian faith to individual character development and overall personal sanity and well being.”

Jesus closes the Sermon on the Mount with these words . . .

Matthew 7:24-27 (ESV)

(24) “Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. (25) And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. (26) And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. (27) And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.”

Conclusion: Obedience is about proper relationship with Christ - a process that yields much fruit and is the only firm foundation for living!