

The Kingdom and the Church

Introduction

In our previous lessons in this series we have seen how the Kingdom of God has always existed. It is the divine order, the government of Heaven and is eternal in its function. When the Enemy rebelled against God the Kingdom was 'fractured' and a portion was, in one sense of the word, 'captured'. The Enemy established the kingdom of darkness and is seeking to overthrow the Kingdom of God or at least to thwart God's purpose in His Kingdom. However, all of this has been allowed by God and He is using it to accomplish His will and purpose.

God covenanted with the Son in order for Him to become Man's redeemer and the restorer of the breach in the Kingdom. Jesus, by His resurrection, was made both savior and Lord. God established His King who would rule until all things have been brought into subjection to Him. Then He would turn over the restored Kingdom to the Father [I Corinthians 15:24-28].

The Kingdom and the Father's Business

The Scriptures seem to present the Kingdom and the work of the Kingdom as a particular concern of the Father. This is brought out when Jesus was twelve years old and the families went up to Jerusalem for the Passover.

Luke 2:41-49 NKJV His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. (42) And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast. (43) When they had finished the days, as they returned, the Boy Jesus lingered behind in Jerusalem. And Joseph and His mother did not know *it*; (44) but supposing Him to have been in the company, they went a day's journey, and sought Him among *their* relatives and acquaintances. (45) So when they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking Him. (46) Now so it was *that* after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. (47) And all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers. (48) So when they saw Him, they were amazed; and His mother said to Him, "Son, why have You done this to us? Look, Your father and I have sought You anxiously." (49) And He said to them, "**Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?**"

When Mary and Joseph left Jerusalem to return home, Jesus was left behind. This was only discovered after a day of travel. They returned to Jerusalem and looked for Jesus for three days before finding Him in the Temple discussing things with the teachers. Of course, like any mother, Mary gets on Jesus' case about His actions and how anxious they were about Him. Jesus' answer is straight forward, "Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?"

While his natural parents didn't understand, Jesus was saying that He had come because of the purpose

of the Father, that His life centered around that, and that He must get on with it. Later, when Jesus entered into His ministry, we find that “the Father's business” was exactly what Jesus was about.

Jesus' first public message echoed that of John the Baptist's, “repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.” As His ministry progressed, He continued to unfold aspects of the Kingdom of God. In the Gospels there are around a hundred references by Jesus to the Kingdom of God; so, it would seem clear then that the Kingdom of God is “the Father's business”.

We have focused all of our attention on the Church and neglected completely any aspect of the Kingdom that might vary from our understanding of the Church. While Jesus referred to the Kingdom about a hundred times, He spoke of the Church only three times and two of those were in the same scripture. So, we have Jesus speaking about the Kingdom of God in about 100 scriptures and speaking of the Church in only 2 scriptures. This, in itself, should tell us about the relative importance and priority of each.

Anything that the Lord referred to over a hundred times deserves some diligent study. Obviously, Jesus placed much more emphasis on the Kingdom than He did on the Church. Why have we reversed the emphasis? What possible reason do we have for changing the Lord's priorities? Can we even do that?

Could it be that the answer to these questions lies in the fact that we believe that we understand “church”. We have made church to be a building, a program, an institution. We have said that the people of God are contained in the building or institution; therefore, it is the kingdom of God.

The Church and Jesus' Business

Just as the Kingdom seems to be of particular concern to the Father, the Church seems to be of particular concern to Jesus. This is evidenced by what He said to Peter about it.

Matthew 16:18 NKJV And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

The 'rock' to which Jesus is referring is the revelation of who He is—the Christ, the Son of the Living God. Upon this revelation, Jesus will build His church. This construction project is uniquely centered in the work of Jesus—He is building His church and no one else.

However, Jesus has appointed some construction foremen as helpers. These are those who have understood the plans of the Lord and received instructions from Him.

Ephesians 4:11-12 NKJV And He Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, (12) for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,

Those men given by the Lord to His people are to do two things: [1] equip believers for work; [2] edify (construction term, means to build up) the body of Christ. But the Lord still holds the architect's plans and directs through the Holy Spirit all building functions.

Also, His plans include appropriate or approved construction materials. He puts all building materials to a test of approval by fire.

1 Corinthians 3:11-13 NKJV (11) For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. **(12)** Now if anyone builds on this foundation *with* gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, **(13)** each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is.

The foundation has been laid. We are the construction workers. We have been trained by the five fold ministry. We are selecting the building materials. We are building a temple as directed by the Lord, a habitation for the Spirit of God made of living stones made of gold, silver and precious stones. At least, this is the way it is supposed to be. In practice, this is not being done.

Men have usurped the Lord's position and instead of following the Architect's plans have built according to their own understanding, using materials that look good to the natural man but are unapproved and inappropriate to the Lord. We have moved from a spiritual building built of living stones to natural buildings built of brick and mortar. We have moved from Kingdom workers to "Church" workers.

In this we can begin to see some differences between the Church and the Kingdom, not in essence but in terms of function with the Kingdom relating to the overall purpose of the Father and the Church relating to the Body, the Bride, the Family of God.

Church and Kingdom NOT Synonymous

We have lost sight and understanding of the differences between the Church and the Kingdom because we have been taught by our traditions that they are the same. However, even a cursory reading of the Scriptures that speak of the Kingdom reveals the fact that the Holy Spirit speaks of the Kingdom differently than He does the Church.

If the Church and the Kingdom were truly synonymous then we could substitute "church" for "kingdom" in the scriptures without changing the meaning. Does it make sense if we do that in these verses [*the only change I have made is "church" for "kingdom"*]:

In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, "Repent, for the *church* of heaven is at hand!" (**Matthew 3:1-2 NKJV**)

From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "**Repent, for the *church* of heaven is at hand.**" (**Matthew 4:17 NKJV**)

In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your *church* come. Your will be done On earth as *it is* in heaven. (Matthew 6:9-10 NKJV**)**

And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the *church*

and the power and the glory forever. Amen. (Matthew 6:13 NKJV)

But the sons of the *church* will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Matthew 8:12 NKJV)

Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the *church* prepared for you from the foundation of the world: (Matthew 25:34 NKJV)

Jesus answered, "My *church* is not of this world. If My *church* were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My *church* is not from here." (John 18:36 NKJV)

. . . strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, "We must through many tribulations enter the church of God." (Acts 14:22 NKJV)

Well, you get the picture. Doesn't make sense does it? That is because Jesus meant something different when He said "kingdom" than when He said "church". We need to understand the difference.

That the Church is not the Kingdom is clear. The kingdom has always existed while the church is seen through about 2000 years of history. The Kingdom, as the government, the divine order of God, encompasses all of creation including many being who are not human; whereas, the Church only includes the redeemed of mankind. When looked at in this manner, the Church is a subset of the Kingdom—the Church is in the Kingdom but it is not the whole Kingdom.

To manifest the Kingdom we must stand in the Kingdom and have the Kingdom in us. When the kingdom is seen in us visibly, then the freedom, the provision and the power of the kingdom can be demonstrated. The weakness of the church is in her lack of the Kingdom and Kingdom functions.

In fact the church, without the Kingdom, is irrelevant. The reason is simple. The church is relative while the Kingdom is absolute. The church is relevant only so far as it is related to the Kingdom. The church has power and position only as it receives from the Kingdom. The church is significant only as far as it obeys the laws of the Kingdom. Disobeying the King or the Kingdom disenfranchises the church. If the church is not born again of the water and of the spirit and if the church is not doing the will of God, it is false, irrelevant and worthless to the Kingdom of God. The church has nothing of it's own and can do nothing on it's own, except as it is empowered by the Lord. Jesus said "Without me you can do nothing." Nothing means nothing.

The Priority of Jesus

After His resurrection from the dead, Jesus spent 40 days speaking with His disciples before He ascended to the Father. In His last days before His ascension, He spent His time with the disciples speaking of the Kingdom.

[Acts 1:3 NKJV](#) to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the

kingdom of God.

Notice what He considered important. He was not going to be with these disciples in this manner any longer; so, He used the time to speak of the Kingdom not the Church. From our perspective, knowing what was coming, He should have been telling them how to establish churches; how to structure and order them; how to conduct proper services; and all of the other aspects of church that we consider so important. However, HE DID NOT DO THAT! He, apparently, didn't speak about "church" at all, but devoted His time to "speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God." Why? Could it be that *He* is building His Church and that *He* knows what He is doing? Could it be that we don't need to understand it just *be* it? Could it be that Church "happens" by the Spirit (because it is the Spirit that *assembles* us)?

Have we twisted the Scriptures to give a place of importance to something that is out of proportion to the Lord's intention? Are we guilty of mis-placed priorities? The Catholics have done this with Mary. There is a proper place in Scriptures for Mary and for her place in the plan of God; however, her place and purpose have been blown out of proportion by the Catholics to the point that Mary is an idol, detracting from the place and function of Jesus. It seems possible to me that we have done the same thing with "church". We have blown it out of proportion to the point that it has become an idol, detracting from the place and function of the Kingdom.

If Jesus' priority was the Kingdom, should it not be our priority also? He told us to seek first the Kingdom of God. He never told us to seek the "church" at all, not first or last or anyplace in between. That sounds to me like He established the Kingdom as our first priority. If we will do that, maybe, "church" will take care of itself.

What is Church?

We need to be able to see what the Lord intended when He said "church". To do this, we have to lay aside our traditions about "church" and look at the Scriptures and let the Holy Spirit bring us revelation, open our eyes so that we might see.

The very use of the word "church" is false. It is not a proper designation of what the Lord intended for His Body. Use of church as this designation was introduced by the King James translators when they used the Scottish word "kirk" as the translation for the Greek word "ekklesia". The Scottish word means "house of the Lord", or "house of God" and to the translators this meant the basilica, that is, the cathedral on the street corner—a place. The Greek language has a word for "house of God" also, but it is NOT "ekklesia". In the Greek language, "ekklesia" cannot mean a place but can only mean people.

Many times Greek words are simply transliterated into English without actual translation. An example is "baptize" which is a transliteration of the Greek word "baptizo". When words are transliterated they will look and sound similar to the original word. We see this scenario for "ekklesia" in languages other than English. For example: "ekklesia" in Spanish is "iglesia"; "ekklesia" in French is "eglise". Notice how similar in look and sound the words are. However, in English we have translated "ekklesia" as "church". It doesn't look or sound like anything similar. Does it? That's because "church" doesn't come from the Greek word "ekklesia" but, instead, comes from the Scottish word "kirk". So,

immediately with the translation of the Scriptures into English, we have a wrong name designated for the Ekklesia. We have to strip this error from our thinking or we will never understand the truth.

Now that we know that “ekklesia” is not a place but a people, we need to further determine what the Scriptures mean when this word is used. Jesus used this word only three times, once in Matt. 16:18 and twice in Matt. 18:17.

The first occasion when Jesus used “ekklesia” occurred when He was asking the disciples who did men think that He was and who did they say that He was. In response to His question Peter had answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God”. Jesus told Peter that this was revelation from the Father, that it did not come from men. Then Jesus made a pun.

And I also say to you that you are Peter [petros], and on this rock [petras] I will build My church [ekklesia], and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. (Matthew 16:18 NKJV)

The word for Peter in Greek is “petros” and means a small rock, a pebble. The word for “rock” is “petras” and means a large rock, a boulder. Jesus used a play on words to make His point—you are a little pebble but upon this boulder (the revelation of “you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God”) He would build His ekklesia.

We see two things in this, (1) the error of those who say that Peter is the basis, the foundation for the ekklesia; and (2) the real basis or foundation of the ekklesia is the revelation of Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God.

A little later in Matthew, Jesus is talking about a situation where your brother sins against you. He said to go to him and confront him with the issue and if he won't deal with it then take one or two more with you and confront him again. Then He says:

And if he refuses to hear them, tell *it* to the church [ekkesia]. But if he refuses even to hear the church [ekklesia], let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector. (Matthew 18:17 NKJV)

The ekkesia, in this instance, serves as a type of judicial function, judging and correcting the situation between you and your brother. If your brother doesn't heed the judicial function of the ekklesia, he is to be treated as a heathen, as if he was no longer a part of the people of God.

[Note too that an ekklesia is not just two or three gathered together in the name of Jesus because in this instance there was you, your brother, and one or two that you took with you, making at least three or four gathered together, yet if the brother doesn't respond you still have to take it to the “church”. So, the gathering of 3 or 4 could not be an “ekklesia” or you would not need to take the problem to the “ekklesia”.]

I think that in these two instances where Jesus spoke of the ekkesia, we have the seed of what the ekklesia is to be. First, its *basis* is the revelation of who Jesus is. Second, it serves a judicial, governmental function between brethren.

We sometimes forget that “ekklesia” as a word was used before Jesus used it. Would not Jesus use it

with its normal meaning? If He didn't use it that way, then would He not have explained its meaning to us? It is used in the Scriptures with its common meaning in the book of Acts, chapter 19.

The idol makers were upset with Paul and his companions because they were losing a lot of business when people heard Paul saying that “gods made with hands are no gods at all”. Demetrius, a silversmith that made silver shrines of Artemis, stirred up the other artisans to deal with this issue before they lost all of their business. They grabbed Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul's Macedonian companions, and dragged them into the theater, the meeting hall where the group of people were gathering.

Some therefore cried one thing and some another, for the assembly [*ekklesia*] was confused, and most of them did not know why they had come together. (Acts 19:32 NKJV)

Therefore, if Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen have a case against anyone, the courts are open and there are proconsuls. Let them bring charges against one another. But if you have any other inquiry to make, it shall be determined in the lawful assembly [*ekklesia*]. For we are in danger of being called in question for today's uproar, there being no reason which we may give to account for this disorderly gathering." And when he had said these things, he dismissed the assembly [*ekklesia*]. (Acts 19:38-41 NKJV)

*[Technically, if we were to follow the King James translators, assembly here should be “church”, which would make it a ridiculous translation based on our current meaning of “church” since it was a gathering of artisans who were idol makers. **This alone should tell us that the way we have used this word is incorrect.**]*

We can reach some conclusions from the normal usage of *ekklesia*. Many of the people were confused because they didn't know the reason that they had been called together. Therefore, they were in danger of becoming a riot rather than a lawful assembly. So, before that happened they were dismissed as an assembly. This means that a gathering or meeting of a number of people does not, necessarily, constitute an *ekklesia*. There can be an unlawful gathering or a lawful assembly. The lawful assembly are those who have been called out to come together for a reason, a purpose that would deal with governing decisions.

In the usage of “*ekklesia*” that is discussed above, there were certain criteria required to participate in a lawful assembly (*ekklesia*). This assembly was called in the City of Ephesus to deal with the effects of Paul's ministry there and is an example of the normal usage of *ekklesia*. We can learn a couple of things from this instance.

- 1) Not all people in Ephesus were allowed to attend, only those that met the requirements of citizenship and were freemen.
- 2) They came together for the purpose of deliberating an issue and were dismissed when that was no longer possible.

The same is true of the *ekklesia* of Jesus Christ.

This is how the Thayer Greek Dictionary defines *ekklesia*:

Thayer Definition:

- 1) a gathering of citizens called out from their homes into some public place, an assembly
 - 1a) an assembly of the people convened at the public place of the council for the purpose of deliberating

This primary definition fits with its usage in Acts 19. The normal meaning of *ekklesia* can be stated as “people called out to convene for a purpose as a public council.”

This is also consistent with the way Jesus used the word *ekklesia* in Matthew.

1. The **basis** of being called out is the revelation of who Jesus is.
2. The **function** or purpose of convening is governmental.
3. The **result** is the administration of the things of the Kingdom of God.

What is the Kingdom?

The Kingdom of God is the government of God; a society functioning under the authority of the King. The current manifestation of the Kingdom is in the Holy Spirit as a personal application of the Lordship of Jesus (*Romans 14:17*). Later the Kingdom will be manifested physically with Jesus reigning and ruling for a thousand years (*Revelation 20:4-5*). When the last enemy has been put under His feet, Jesus turns the Kingdom over to the Father and it is restored as the Everlasting Kingdom, Eternal in the new heavens and the new earth. (*I Corinthians 15:25-28*)

However, the sobering thought for us is what Jesus said about who would enter the Kingdom.

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. (Matthew 7:21 NKJV)

Saying that Jesus is Lord is not enough. Jesus has to become truly King of your heart. Only those who do the will of the Father will enter the Kingdom—practical, experiential Lordship not just words.

We have made this rather abstract and subjective. The “will of the Father” becomes whatever I want to do in the name of the Lord. As long as I subjectively decide the will of the Father, I am still operating under self-government rather than the Government of the King.

So, we see that first I must come to grips with God's government in terms of *who I am* before considering *what I do*. Who I am is a subject of the King. All self-government must die and Jesus must, in practice, become King over all that I am.

After submitting who I am to the Lord, I can then address what I do. Jesus made it clear in Matthew chapters five, six, and seven that His government encompasses our relationship with God and with each other and it adjusts our character, our attitudes, our thoughts, our actions, our disposition, every aspect

of our life. This means that the will of the Father involves more than doing some 'ministry' or obedience in outward work. In other words, it must become subjectively real in us before we can express its objective nature. Doing the will of the Father involves obedience to both the King and His government, which is divine order. Both of these require subjective and objective obedience.

Jesus Christ and the eternal Kingdom are one—it is The King and His Kingdom. The commandment of one is the commandment of the other. We must take these commandments seriously or we may find ourselves rejecting the Kingdom. The tendency of the church is to hear the commandments, determine we can't do them and then forget them. We think, if I can't do it then I am not responsible—not held accountable. But the very fact that the Kingdom gives commandments makes us responsible and accountable. Whether we are able to do it or not is irrelevant, because the provision is in the Kingdom and the supply of the King.

What does this do to our gospel of easy grace—just receive Jesus into your heart and you are saved? Or, what does it say about our “no more problems gospel” being preached in our churches? Look at what Paul said:

And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting *them* to continue in the faith, and *saying*, "We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God." (Acts 14:21-22 NKJV)

Tribulations, that is, problems come when we seek to do the will of the Father. As we seek to do His will, His Kingdom comes in us just as Jesus said it should—we begin to lay aside self-government and submit to His Government. Any gospel that leaves out obedience to the will of God is not a gospel at all. Any gospel that neglects obedience is not the gospel of the Kingdom

The Kingdom is both a fixed order in heaven and an unfolding order here on earth. It is historical, contemporary, and future. It is normal and easy to focus upon one aspect of the Kingdom and ignore the other aspects. Since the Kingdom really is both now and future, if we focus on the future then we may miss the current fulfillment of the Kingdom in our lives now. For centuries this has been the emphasis of the Church—the Kingdom someday, and by this Heaven was meant. However, the Kingdom is the stability of the universe in every generation for those who submit to its government. The Kingdom is the purpose of our existence both now and in Eternity and it is preparing us to fulfill our destiny.

Chores or Work?

The way that I have begun to understand the difference between the Kingdom and the Church and the functions of each is in terms of job and family. Let me explain that from the natural first.

I was born into a family in the United States. By birth then I am a citizen of the U.S. However, as a child, that has little or no practical meaning—the only thing important to me is my family. I learn who I am by growing up in the family—I learn character, work ethic, relationship functions, care and loyalty.

I also learn how to work. At first, my work is just chores—the mundane things that are necessary for the family to function. Since I grew up on a farm, chores started at daylight—milking the cows, feeding the hogs and chickens, etc. After the chores, we had breakfast and went to the fields to work. This was the normal routine of the family.

Now, let's make some spiritual applications. We are born into the household of God, the family. Our birth into the family makes us citizens of the Kingdom, but in name only, without any real function. We begin to grow and mature in the spiritual family. We learn relationships and our need for each other. We learn proper character and loyalty. We learn to love and care for one another. We learn to do the chores associated with our spiritual family—confessing our faults to one another, praying for one another, providing help to one another, bearing burdens for our brothers and sisters, etc. We do the spiritual chores that are necessary for the proper functioning of our spiritual family. But, as it is with every family member, there comes a time when we go to work—get a job and become a *functioning member of society*, which in this case means to become employed in the work of the Kingdom of God.

The family is the basic building block of any government, including the Kingdom of God. Our natural governments tend to reduce this to individuals but God builds with families. God established the first family with Adam and Eve and has continued His governmental policies from the viewpoint of families not individuals. So, the Kingdom is built from families; whereas, the Church is built from individuals.

From this viewpoint, I see the Church as the family of God and the Kingdom as the work of God—the Church is where we live, the Kingdom is where we are employed. Based on this, it appears to me that the modern church has concentrated on “chores” and neglected any training for “work”. Doing chores is neither satisfying nor fulfilling—there is a reason we call them 'chores'. We only find fulfillment and satisfaction as we begin to do what we have been called to do—the work of the Kingdom.

As I grow up in the family, I am of little practical value to the society. I am a consumer of the things of society without making any contribution to society. However, as I mature and become employed in the business of society, I move from being a *consumer* to becoming a *producer*. I begin to make a contribution to society as a whole.

This is true of the Church and the Kingdom too. As we are maturing we are consumers of the things of the Kingdom. When we begin to enter maturity, we begin to become a producer and a contributor to the Kingdom, the society of God. One way to measure when one becomes mature is when one begins to produce more than one consumers.

Increasing Kingdom

The Church is based on *being*—born of the Spirit, a child of God, being conformed to Him, becoming a son, etc. The Kingdom of God is based on *doing*—“of the increase of His Government and peace, there shall be no end.” (*Isaiah 9:7*) Again, this is family life and work life. The work that we are to do has been prepared by God before the foundation of the world. The work is ready; but, He has to prepare the workers—us. We are prepared for work by growing up in the family of God and doing the chores associated with family life.

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. [Ephesians 2:10 NKJV](#)

Any work that we do that is not in the category of “good works, prepared beforehand” is not our work in the Lord—it is a dead work, a work of our own desire, a work of the flesh. There will be a day of accounting for our work.

Let's look at the Parable of the Talents. (A “talent” was a large sum of money and its meaning is much like our meaning of “endowment”, so keep that in mind as we proceed.)

[Matthew 25:14-19 NKJV](#) "For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. (15) And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey. (16) Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. (17) And likewise he who had received two gained two more also. (18) But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord's money. (19) After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them.

Notice that all of the ones referred to in the parable are servants of the master. This has nothing to do with unbelievers. Each servant received an “endowment” from the master. The amount of the “endowment” was based on the master's evaluation of the servant's ability to manage. So, each servant received the amount for which he had the capability to manage. The purpose was to “trade”, that is, make money, to produce an increase. Each servant managed his “endowment” and produced 100% increase except the servant who had received the smallest “endowment”. He fully protected what he had been given but he produced no increase. This was a problem when the master came to settle accounts with the servants.

[Matthew 25:20-23 NKJV](#) "So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, 'Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.' (21) His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.' (22) He also who had received two talents came and said, 'Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.' (23) His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'

The first two servants account for their work by showing the increase, which was 100%. The master commended them and rewarded them with the same reward. The reward was based on faithfulness not on amounts. The amount did not determine the reward. They were faithful to the Lord to fully exercise all of their ability resulting in an equal percentage of increase and an equal reward.

However, when it comes to the last servant it is a different story. Remember, this is not an issue of salvation but an issue with what we have done with what the Lord has given us. He has not given us more than we are capable of handling. We are only responsible for the amount that the Lord has given

us to manage.

Matthew 25:24-30 NKJV "Then he who had received the one talent came and said, 'Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. (25) And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, *there* you have *what is* yours.' (26) "But his lord answered and said to him, 'You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. (27) So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. (28) So take the talent from him, and give *it* to him who has ten talents. (29) 'For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. (30) And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

The last servant accounted for exactly what he had been given. He had carefully guarded and preserved it; however, he is called the unprofitable servant. The master calls him “wicked and lazy”. His “endowment” is taken away and given to the first servant and the unprofitable servant is thrown into “outer darkness”, which, by the way, is not hell.

Once you have receive an “endowment”, when the Lord has given you an investment, you must produce an increase in order to be pleasing. It is a question of exercising faith and being faithful.

Now let's look at the Parable of the Minas. A mina is also a measure of money. The 10 servants were each given a mina, which is about one sixth of a “talent”.

Luke 19:12-15 NKJV Therefore He said: "A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. (13) So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas, and said to them, 'Do business till I come.' (14) But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We will not have this *man* to reign over us.' (15) "And so it was that when he returned, having received the kingdom, he then commanded these servants, to whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading.

The nobleman gives each of ten servants a small amount of money with which they were to do business until he returns. The citizens hated him and did not want him to rule over them. When the nobleman returned, he commanded that the servants that had received his money to be called for an accounting of their increase.

Luke 19:16-21 NKJV Then came the first, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned ten minas.' (17) And he said to him, 'Well *done*, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.' (18) And the second came, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned five minas.' (19) Likewise he said to him, 'You also be over five cities.' (20) "Then another came, saying, 'Master, here is your mina, which I have kept put away in a handkerchief. (21) For I feared you, because you are an austere man. You collect what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.'

Each servant had received the same small amount, one mina. The first had a ten fold increase and received a reward that was proportionate to it. The second had a five fold increase and also received a reward that was proportionate to it. The third had no increase. He had hidden and guarded the mina so that he could return exactly what he had been given. This was not pleasing to the nobleman.

Luke 19:22-27 NKJV And he said to him, 'Out of your own mouth I will judge you, *you* wicked servant. You knew that I was an austere man, collecting what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow. (23) Why then did you not put my money in the bank, that at my coming I might have collected it with interest?' (24) "And he said to those who stood by, 'Take the mina from him, and give *it* to him who has ten minas.' (25) (But they said to him, 'Master, he has ten minas.')

(26) 'For I say to you, that to everyone who has will be given; and from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. (27) But bring here those enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, and slay *them* before me.' "

Because the third servant did nothing with the mina that he had been given, he lost what he had received. Now, the last question is what happened to the other seven servants?

Ten servants had received minas. Three servants answered the call to give an accounting and, apparently, the other seven did not come to give an accounting at all. Could it be that they used the mina for themselves instead of doing business for the nobleman with it? Whether that is the case or not, apparently, they were included in the category of “those enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them” and were killed before the nobleman.

As you can see from these parables, increase is important. In these cases, money was used as an example. However, exactly what should be increasing with us from a Kingdom perspective? We can find this answer in the writings of Peter. He tells us, first, that God has given us our “endowment”.

as His divine power has given to us all things that *pertain* to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, **2 Peter 1:3 NKJV**

He has given us all things that are necessary to life and to godliness. The next verse says that he has “given us exceedingly great and precious promises”. Based on the parables above, we should be producing an increase from these things that have been given to us.

Peter continues on by giving us a list of character traits or qualities that build on each other as we grow in the Lord. Then he tells us:

For if these *qualities* are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. **2 Peter 1:8 NASB**

for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you. **2 Peter 1:11 NASB**

Isn't it interesting that Peter links the fact that if these character qualities are in us and that they are increasing then an entrance into the eternal Kingdom of God will be abundantly supplied?

Another interesting fact is that the Greek word, *argos*, translated as “useless” means, according to Strong's Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries, “*inactive*, that is, *unemployed*; (by implication) *lazy, useless*: - barren, idle, slow.” The key meaning then is “unemployed”. In other words, if those qualities are in us and increasing, we will not be unemployed in the Kingdom of God.

So, it is the character traits—the character of Jesus—maturing in us that causes us to be “employable” in the Kingdom. The Father does not allow anyone into His business that is not like the Lord. A worker of the Kingdom expresses the character, actions and motivations of the Son of God. Being “employed” in the Kingdom now is the training required for the Millennium Kingdom—the thousand year physical reign of Christ on earth.

The Church prepares us to be like Christ and to function together as His Body. The Kingdom prepares us to rule with Christ and to function as productive citizens.