

## The Kingdom Of God Is In Your Midst

Sermon - May 22, 2022

**Scripture Readings:** Matthew 13:31-35 & Matthew 22:1-14

**Golden Verse:** “*The kingdom of God is in your midst.*” Luke 17:21/b

Dear Beloved, today Jesus invites you to the kingdom of God!

A few weeks ago, we analyzed the conversation our Lord Jesus Christ had with a well-respected teacher, Nicodemus, who learned that he had to be born again if he wanted to enter into the eternal kingdom of God, in heaven.

Last Sunday, we learned that, with Jesus Christ, God’s Kingdom came on earth, and we are all called to be part of His kingdom. We also learned that by submitting ourselves to God’s rules, obeying our God, we are part of His kingdom here on earth. The kingdom came with the King. If you receive the King, you are part of His kingdom.

Today, we will focus on another deep sentence when Jesus Christ said that “*The kingdom of God is in your midst*” Luke 17:21/b.

Analyzing the original text, this can be translated as: “*The kingdom of God is IN YOU.*” Based on the Heidelberg Catechism, this means that the Children of God, who accepted Jesus Christ into their hearts, will feel the joy of the kingdom of God in their hearts.

Let us see today how we can get to that point.

### **I. They forsook all and followed Him.**

In the Bible, we read that people, who met Jesus, left everything behind and, for the rest of their lives, they followed and served Jesus and served their neighbours.

Peter and Andrew were fishermen. They loved the sparkle of Lake Gennesaret and the thrill of fishing. They loved their families and their friends. Once, they had just thrown a net into the water. Jesus went and said to them, “*Come with me. I will make you fishers of men.*” And they left their nets and joined him (Matthew 4:18-20).

Members of the community of St. Clare, which was established in the city of Assisi, Italy, in 1253, still live in many parts of the world today. This community was founded by Clare from Assisi. Clare was a rich and beautiful girl. When she heard St. Francis preach about the love and kingdom of God, she was converted.

She left her property and her family and went to join St. Francis' group. When St. Francis asked her: "Daughter, what do you want?" "God!" Clare replied.

Mary Charky had achieved the dream of her life in Sydney. She became world champion in high jump in 1938. When she returned home, all of Canada celebrated her. But, in just a few months, she suddenly disappeared. After a while, news exploded like a bomb among sports fans: Mary Charky lived in an Indian leprosy farm like a nursing nun. Her explanation when questioned by journalists was: "I found everything I was looking for in God. I found happiness."

I read about a young girl, called Susan, who never received a religious education; she was not baptized. At the age of sixteen, she announced to her parents that she believed in Christ Jesus and, from that moment, her life was filled with unknown joy. As a result, several members of her family soon became active Christians.

What moved these people, and the other tens and hundreds of thousands, throughout history? Who was God to them that transformed their whole lives?

The answer can be short: Jesus Christ moved into their hearts through the Holy Spirit, and they felt in their hearts the peace and the kingdom of God.

## **II. Repent! The Kingdom of God Has Arrived (Mark 1:15)**

### **1. The kingdom of God arrived in Christ.**

When Jesus started His mission, He announced that the kingdom of God's love has arrived with Him. We heard about this last Sunday.

### **2. The kingdom of God is in you.**

God loves us beyond all our imaginations. He loves us as the best mother or father on earth could love. This is why we can call Him our Father, our heavenly parent. Our God is taking care of us. He arranges everything so that His most beautiful plan can be realized in our lives. The Father sent us His Son Jesus, and He gave His life so that we could live a new life.

This is the good news of Jesus about the kingdom of God. His love has come to earth and we all can begin a new life in the kingdom of God here on earth. We can live with Christ and for Christ.

The love of God is present in the world. It surrounds man like light or the rays of the sun. But only those who respond to divine love enter the kingdom of God. For those who begin a NEW LIFE according to the will of God, according to the laws

of love, proclaimed by Jesus, God begins to live in their hearts, and they experience the peace and joy of this kingdom. So the kingdom of God is not tied to a geographical location, but tied to our hearts. *“The kingdom of God is in you; It is with you,”* says Jesus in Luke 17:21.

### **3. The kingdom of God is like treasure.**

The Lord Jesus shared with us two parables about the kingdom of God in Matthew 13:44-46:

*“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.”*

Those who have Christ, and the joy of His kingdom in their hearts, are devoted people. God comes first in their lives. They are ready to give up things that are preventing them from following Jesus. They subject everything to a relationship with Christ. If God really is God in our hearts, He cannot be anywhere but in the first place in us. With a living faith we say: Lord God, You are the most important thing in my life.

As we progress along the path of our Christianity, we are sometimes faced with new challenges. Often, we can discover that we have not given up everything that God expects us to give up for a better progress. When we are ready to lose our selfishness over and over again, we are constantly getting much more from God. *“And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life”* Matthew 19:29. Conversely, whoever is not ready to put God in the first place, the seed of the divine life dies. *“A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path; it was trampled on, and the birds ate it up.”* (Luke 8:5)

### **4. The kingdom of God is like a mustard seed.**

The kingdom of God can grow in us. *“The kingdom of God is like a mustard seed,”* says Jesus. *“Initially smaller than any other seed, but when it grows up ... it grows into a tree.”* Matthew 13:31.

The kingdom of God is growing in the world. The kingdom of God is like yeast which leavens the dough (Matthew 13:33). It is like salt that gives food a taste and

permeates it. If God lives in us and amongst us, God's presence will touch and invite many into His kingdom. Thus, the mustard seed grows into a large tree.

Let's answer a few questions, here and now:

- Do you trust in God with your whole being?
- Have you discovered that God is calling you?
- Is God first in your life now?
- Did you answer His call?

You are called to witness the presence and kingdom of Jesus in your family and among your fellow people. You are called to be "*the salt of the earth, the light of the world*" Matthews 5:13. You are called to invite people into the kingdom of God.

We have to examine ourselves. What is the reason that the presence of the kingdom of God does not shine in us and through us? Maybe we do have to make a new decision to invite and receive Jesus in our lives and to follow Him. Maybe we have to make a decision to read the Bible regularly and to pray more regularly.

Jesus promised that those, who will give up their earthly lives for Him, will find their eternal life. Let it be. Amen