

## "The Kingdom Is Within You"

(Our Response to His Coming, Part II - Luke 17:20-21; Mark 1:14-18)

Once we respond in faith to the gracious initiative of the King, Jesus makes each of us a promise, "Follow Me, and I will make you..." (Mk 1:17) "I will show you how My Father and I make kingdom citizens - human beings as God intended them to function. As you learn to repent of your ways, your truths, your life, and, consent to My way, My truth, My life, I will make you - you will be My workmanship (Eph 2:10)." Following Christ the King is to get into step with His operation in us. To follow someone you must focus on them, look to them, behold them (II Cor 3:18). We behold Him, look at Him - not the law, not the culture, not ourselves. We behold Him, look at Him until we see Him, come to know Him (Jo 17:3). We behold Him, look to Him until we see ourselves in His eyes, our "reflection" in His eyes (I Jo 3:2,3; 4:17) And then we say in faith, "I am what You see. I am what You say I am." As we do so, we are being transformed into that same image from glory to glory." (II Cor 3:18)

He is making us into who we actually (already!) are in Himself. Teaching us to possess our possessions and express our true condition to His glory. There will be a lot of repenting (letting go of what is no longer us) and a lot of consenting (embracing our newly created life). Every "yes" to His "Yes", every "no" to His "No", every cooperation with His operation is another step along the road of personal transformation. His river of life and love, of goodness and grace that flows in us begins to flow through us as Jesus Christ Himself fills the tributaries of our lives with His sufficiency. (Jo 7:38)

Take the story of Bartimeus in Mark 10:46-52. In religious circles we still call him "blind Bartimeus". If we were to meet him and say, "There's old blind Bartimeus!", I'd bet he would say, "Whoa, stop! 'Blind Bartimeus' is gone - he died and was buried. A new Bartimeus has come into being - dead to blindness, alive to sight. I'm finished with blind living. I am alive to seeing and following the One Who has made me new." (Mk 10:52)

When the Kingdom of God is within us, we can sit alongside the road of our past identity, or, we can dare to believe our past identity has passed. We may continue to excuse and rationalize un-Christlikeness, or, we can get up and go in the new way, truth, and life of Christ. We may remain in our self-conscious habits from the past, or, set our minds on a consciousness of Christ and follow Him into our liberated future. Just make sure to keep this in mind. Following Jesus Christ and His kingdom within you will not take you where YOU want to go (that is a marketing ploy of the gospel according to man!). Following Christ the King will take you where HE wants you to go - into the fullness of His crucified, risen life... where "Thy will" conquers "my will"... where Light defeats darkness... where perfect love casts out fear... where Life overcomes death... where all things are being made new. He will take us into the forever Kingdom of God - where the King is, where the King rules!

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## Praise Reports & Prayer Requests

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# Greetings

The older some of us get the better we seem to be able to realize that most of our self-made attempts to accomplish anything that lasts are no more successful than building sand castles at low tide on a Florida beach. (See I Cor 7:31 and I Jo 2:17!) I don't think I need to expound upon or illustrate that. Ruing, lamenting, regretting the misuse of resources - time, energy, money, et al - is not terribly therapeutic.

What then? Why not a simple step into God's reality... "but the one who does the will of God lives (lasts) forever." Or, "no longer live the rest of your time in the flesh for the desires of men, but for the will of God"? (I Pet 4:2) Why not "redeem, make the most of the time" that we have left? (Eph 5:16)

It's never too late to stop "binging" on externals - things that are here today but gone tomorrow. It's never too late to invest in God's reality - things that are the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. And you do know that it is never to late to give our "utmost" for His "highest", right? Building sand castles at low tide on a Florida beach is an apt metaphor for the futility of seeking personal security and significance in anything "self-made". Why not invest the rest of our days in that which no temporal tide, no worldly wind, no hellish hail-storm can ever take away from us? (Matt 7:24-27)

# CALENDAR

## JULY



3,24,31 FBCA\*  
8-10 Silver Springs, MD (240-477-9678)  
12 Alachua Study  
15-17 Waymart, PA (607-341-6062)  
26 Ocala Study

## SEPTEMBER

9-11 Louisville, KY (502-664-5622)  
24-30 Ashton, ID (full)

\*First Baptist Church Alachua (For live stream or recorded options, go to [fbcalachua.com](http://fbcalachua.com))

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