

Closing Thoughts

We have seen that the kingdom of God is very much in the heart of our Lord Jesus. God the Father sent Him into the world to proclaim His kingdom and to draw all men into it. He came into the world and, by His teaching, life, death and resurrection, laid the foundation for the kingdom and the basis for its advancement.

The Lord Jesus sets the perfect example for us. By His life and teaching, He shows us what the kingdom is like and how we are to live in this world for His kingdom. And He has entrusted to us the solemn responsibility of continuing to build His kingdom.

To fare well, we must abide in Christ and He in us. We will then be able to learn and grow well, and be increasingly conformed to the image of Christ. As we learn to take our proper place and fulfil our individual part as members of Christ's body, in fellowship with the brethren, the ministry of light and life will flow forth from us. Our lives will manifest the true meaning of the advancement of God's kingdom, which is primarily in the hearts of men. God's kingdom advances when more and more people affirm loyalty to Him and submit to Him, and when there is a deepening quality and meaning of God's reign, power and glory in and through the lives of His children. This must be the primary concern and burden of our hearts.

We will encounter adverse circumstances and suffer various afflictions, and our lives may appear a failure in the eyes of the world. But we must persevere in this path, learning to see beyond the outward manifestations to the ultimate meaning and reality of all things from the perspective of God's kingdom. Just as the Lord Jesus despised the shame and endured the Cross, we too must deny ourselves, take up our cross daily and follow Him. This is the path of true discipleship and fruitfulness.

For personal reflection

Do you have a longing to know the Lord Jesus more deeply, abide by His teaching, follow His example and walk in His steps?

It is helpful to take time to reflect on what the truths in these eight messages mean to you. How deeply have you identified with what is upon the Lord's heart? Is advancing God's kingdom your all-consuming passion? Have you been seeking to advance God's kingdom according to your own way and strength instead of His? Are you concentrating on nurturing moral and spiritual qualities in your heart, that Christ may be formed in you, or are you enticed by earthly riches, worldly success, power, status and recognition? Are you the salt of the earth and the light of the world, a positive influence in this fallen world, or are you being influenced by its trends and values? Can you, like Paul, affirm from the depth of your heart: "For to me, to live is Christ"?

Let us be mindful that we are ambassadors for Christ, living in a fallen world with its many temptations and pitfalls, and relentlessly opposed by a formidable and crafty enemy. Let us always be prayerful and alert. Let all we are and do commend us as trustworthy servants of the Lord. Let us encourage one another in this path. As we persevere in doing our part to fulfil God's eternal purpose, we can rejoice that we are truly living the successful life.

Beyond *The Two Kingdoms*

As the Lord Jesus is at the heart of the fulfilment of God's purposes, it is my prayer that the Spirit of God will kindle within our hearts a deep longing for a fuller and more wholesome understanding and appreciation of:

- the Lord Jesus Christ, His life, teaching and ministry
- how we can identify more deeply with what is in His heart
- what Christ has accomplished at the Cross and what this means to us
- the unfathomable riches of Christ and what God intends for us in Christ and through Christ
- how we can perceive and respond to people and situations in fellowship with the Lord, reflecting His character, values and concerns.

May God always lead us in His triumph in Christ and manifest through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place.

A personal word

My heart's burden has been to help believers gain insight into what God intends for His children and to enable them to enter into a rich experience of that reality. This has undergirded my preaching and counselling ministry. It was with this in view that I preached the series of messages on *The Lord Jesus Christ* and *Reflections on the Death of Christ*. Fresh angles of appreciating these issues are being considered in another series of messages on *The Fulfilment of God's Purposes*¹.

¹ The messages on *The Lord Jesus Christ* (AR118-172), *Reflections on the Death of Christ* (AR173-274) and *The Fulfilment of God's Purposes* are available on the website www.godandtruth.com.