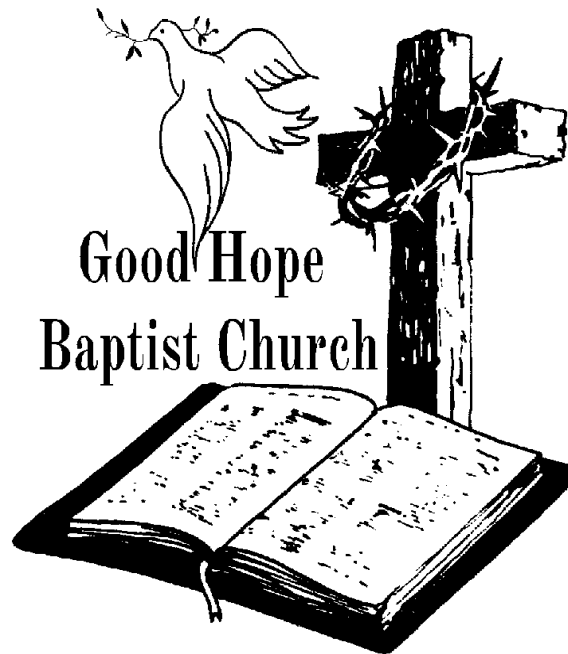


The Kingdom Of God Is Within You

Part Three

Luke 17:20-21



Good Hope
Baptist Church

Living Together In The Love Of God

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FOCAL Read Responsively Luke 17:20-21 And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: 21 Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! **for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.**

ILLUSTRATE Frederick the Great of Prussia was one day walking along the outskirts of Berlin when he came across a very old man walking ramrod stiff in the opposite direction. Frederick asked the old man, "Who are you?" The old man replied, "I am a king!" Frederick smiled, and decided to humor the old fellow. "Over which kingdom do you reign?" The old man said proudly, "Over myself!"

ILLUSTRATE, Video In the video we just finished watching called "Get Service" the young man is like so many of us. He starts his day focused on his needs, his wants, his desires. He is the ruler of his kingdom, and anyone who does not serve him is an intrusion. He never considers the other person, but life is all about him. He is the star of his play, the king of his castle, the master of all he surveys. Then someone gives him a magic pair of glasses. When he puts them on he begins to see - as it were - subtitles underneath those he looks at. These subtitles tell him something that makes that person the way he or she is. Some of the subtitles are:

Avoids relationships for fear of pain.

Discontented with life.

Struggling for a sense of purpose.

Has never known true friendship.

**Recently lost his job.
Works two jobs to feed the kids.
Ran away from home three days ago.
Needs a hug.**

As he sees these subtitles he says, "**What am I supposed to do?**" And he does what most people do. He gets in his car and runs away, doing *nothing* though something has been revealed. Finally when he gets home he sees a child on a bike with the words "**Just needs someone to care**".

He gets it.

Jesus Christ did not come to this earth just to give you a free pass to Heaven. He came to this earth to pay for your sins and my sins *so that we could be adopted into the family of God*. He came to this earth to make people *in His image* who would go out and do what He did.

God did not give us the remarkable gift of life just to squander it. **Though evolutionists and atheists have deluded themselves into believing we're just accidents, life itself shows them to be fools.**

I was with my wife Sherry at the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina in November 2010. I loved the theme for this year, which was:

**Encounter God
Embrace Christ
Enlarge the Kingdom**

Sherry and I were on the lunch break and walked over to a "Discount Store" to look at food processors. I'm a careful shopper, so I was looking over the models and, in particular, looking at the slicing and shredding disks. I picked up on disk a little carelessly and - OUCH - cut the tip of my finger. As the knife entered my flesh:

- Pain sensors in my finger sent a message to my brain at an estimated *two hundred miles an hour*, and my brain responded by saying LET GO!
- Muscle cells contract around the wound as the knife edge leaves it, and clotting factors in the blood simultaneously begin thickening the blood.
- Scavenger cells in the body come and clean any debris that may entered the bloodstream at the point of penetration.
- *Fibroblasts* gather around the wound and begin to reweave the cells of your skin back together.
- The knife edge introduced bacteria into the blood stream. White blood cells immediately begin attacking and eating the bacteria - even if the white cell kills itself in the process.

Your body contains some *fifty billion active white cells*, with over 100 times that many cells standing by in reserve in your bone marrow. God designed your bodies and these little soldiers. If they weren't there you would not live even one day. One study found *fifty thousand bacteria* on the rim of a supposed clean glass, and a billion bacteria in a teaspoon of saliva.

Psalms 139:14 I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works; and

that my soul knoweth right well.

Life is a gift from God, a wondrous gift. You don't appreciate life until you appreciate its complexity. **You are not junk. God doesn't make junk.** Your body should prove that.

You are a walking miracle, a creation of God. Jesus wants the kingdom that is within you to be surrendered to Him, not to aimlessness. He came to give you Eternal Life and to enter you into the Family of God as a **joint heir with Christ.**

4. If The Kingdom Of God Is Within Me I Am To Follow Christ and Christ Alone

It is possible to follow Christ and *not* be a Christian, but it is impossible to be a Christian and *not follow* Christ!

The Bible bears this truth out. The Lord Jesus was preaching one day - and as was always the case Jesus preached hard truth. He said:

John 6:47-51 Verily, verily, I say unto you, **He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. 48 I am that bread of life. 49 Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. 50 This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. 51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.**

This was a shocking message to those listening. Up to this point Jesus has spoken of **believing on Him (John 3:16)** as the way unto salvation. Faith in Christ *is* the way unto salvation. But there are differing degrees of faith. Some people followed Jesus because they wanted to be fed every time He did a food miracle. Others followed Jesus because they wanted to be healed.

Salvation in Christ is no light hearted, easy believism sort of faith. Jesus described true faith as **"eat My flesh and drink My Blood"**.

John 6:53-58 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, **Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. 54 Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. 55 For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. 56 He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. 57 As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. 58 This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.**

Now Jesus wasn't talking about eating Him like you would eat a turkey at a Thanksgiving feast. Jesus was talking about *spiritual things* in this passage. He was talking about having a profound faith in Him and Him alone, letting Him be your spiritual sustenance. **He that**

eateth of this Bread shall live forever. He was not advocating cannibalism, but teaching that His Death and shed Blood *alone* purchases us life. He also taught that **he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.**

Jesus Christ taught His followers that He alone is our Spiritual Sustenance. He is *the* Way unto Life. He *is* King of My Kingdom.

Because Jesus died for our sins, we live. Because His Blood was shed, we are adopted into God's Family. Because He rose again incorruptible, we ourselves will rise again incorruptible. The Bible says:

John 6:66 From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.

Many of Christs **false disciples walked no more with Him.** Dear friends, it is possible to follow Christ and *not* be a Christian, but it is impossible to be a Christian and *not follow* Christ! If I am born again by faith in Christ, my works did not save me - but I will work for Christ because I am saved. The Kingdom of God is within me. I will follow Christ my King!

CONTEXT Luke 17:22-23 **And he said unto the disciples, The days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see it. 23 And they shall say to you, See here; or, see there: go not after them, nor follow them.**

A Christian is a Christ follower - but he is careful to follow no false Christs. Jesus told His disciples "**There's**

going to come a day when you will long for these days, the days when I walked in your midst. Those days will be gone. Jesus said, "**THEY**" shall say unto you "see here" or "see there". Who is the "they" that Jesus is speaking of? He's talking of false Christs, people who will come to try and take Christ's place in your hearts. Jesus said of these "**go not after them, nor follow them**". In another place Jesus said:

Matthew 24:23-24 Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. 24 For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

We are, I believe, approaching the end of time. As we are entering this stage of the Plan of God **false Christs abound.** Jesus said "**do not go after them, nor follow them**". What are we as Christians to do?

a I will ignore the false Christs and their teachings, and keep on doing what my King has told me to do.

Ask yourselves, "What is my goal?", and then keep your eyes on the goal!

CONTEXT Luke 17:26-27 **And as it was in the days of {Noah}, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. 27 They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that {Noah} entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all.**

Two Kingdoms were in place in the Days of Noah. In the Kingdom of Man **"they did eat, and drink, and marry wives, and were given in marriage"**. What does that mean? Every person who was not saved went about his business as if the Promised Judgment of God was not going to come. Many of those who were saved departed from God's ruling Word.

What was going on in the Days of Noah? The majority of people had as their goal **eating, drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage**. Though these things were not sinful, they were being pursued *without God*.

They were all "I centered" goals. Because of this believer co-mingled with unbeliever, violating the sanctity of marriage. We read:

Genesis 6:2 That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.

Everyone was "I" centered - and honoring God was not part of their goal. What happened? **Wickedness abounded**.

Genesis 6:5 And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

It looked as if all was lost. Yet in the midst of this, **Noah**

found Grace in the eyes of the Lord (Genesis 6:8). God told Noah that He was getting ready to destroy creation, but He wanted Noah to **build a boat**.

God gave Noah a do-able goal - and asked him to stick with it. The world was chasing the goal of making itself happy. Noah was told **"build a boat to the glory of God"**. Think about this for a moment. God never told Noah *when* judgment was coming. He said "Build a boat". The false Christs run around our world today saying "Judgment is coming. In 2012 according to the Mayan Calendar - yada yada yada. Build a storm shelter. Build a place to hide. Stockpile food." Jesus said **"go not after them, nor follow them"**.

Do what Jesus Christ told you to do. Do His Word. Show His love. Teach His Gospel. Surrender your Kingdom to Him, and teach others to do likewise.

Noah was told **"build a boat, for judgment is coming"**. You are told **"make sure the Kingdom of God is in you, for judgment is coming. Tell others, for judgment is coming."**

ILLUSTRATE When I was in the military, we often had to "mobilize" some 72 aircraft within a certain amount of time. If you were standing on the outside looking at the activity you would get the sense that it was total confusion and mayhem. That wasn't the case. Each work-center had a certain thing they had to do with each aircraft at a certain time. Everyone followed a master plan, and did what they were supposed to do when they were supposed to do it. I and my team leaders did not

worry about whether the tanks were fueled, whether the tires were properly inflated, whether the seats were armed for ejection, or whether the bombs were properly loaded. It was our job to install and test our radar jamming equipment when we were told to do it. It didn't matter whether it was rain, sleet, or snow. It didn't matter what everyone else was doing. We had a goal, and we stuck to it, following the orders of our Commander.

Jesus Christ is your Commander if you are in the Family of God. He is the Boss of you. He has given each and every one of you a Great Commission Goal to "go into all the world sharing His Gospel, doing His Word".

b I will not go along with the false Christs, but will live my life separated unto the Lord Jesus so that I am not destroyed with the world.

CONTEXT Luke 17:28-29 Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; 29 But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all.

In His second illustration the Lord Jesus speaks **of the days of Lot**. Lot wasn't a perfect man, but he was a saved man. He left Ur of the Chaldees with his uncle Abraham. Lot was well off, as was Abraham. At one point in their journey it became evident that Lot's herd and Abraham's herds could not stay in the same place -

the land just wouldn't support them. So Abraham suggested that they separate on friendly terms, and that Lot be the first one to choose his direction.

Lot was not perfect - none of us are - but he was a Child of God who obeyed God.

2 Peter 2:6-8 {God} turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrhah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; 7 And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: 8 (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;)

Though Lot dwelt among the Sodomites, he never became party to their evil ways. We live in a day where Sodomites are considered "born that way", and those who say that such abnormal sexuality is sin are called *homophobes*. Beloved, there is a Judgment of God coming. God is watching. He sees everything we do. Do not be part or parcel with the false Christs. He will come when we least expect Him. Be ready!

When will your time on this earth end? No one knows. Be ready! When will your judgment come? No one knows. Be ready! For Noah it came years after he was told to build a boat, for Lot it came that very day. Be ready!

CONTEXT Luke 17:34-36 I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be

taken, and the other shall be left. 35 Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. 36 Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

Our Lord Jesus used the phrase "the one shall be taken, and the other left" *three times*. Let's put these phrases in context.

When the Flood came, Noah and his family was taken above the Judgment of God, but those who rejected the Gospel preached were *taken by the flood and drowned*. Noah was taken above the Flood not only because he believed, but because the *nature* of his belief was that *it worked*. Faith without works is dead - and leads to death and the inevitable Judgment of God!

5. What I Do Now Will Matter In Eternity!

There is a Latin Proverb that says, "**What we do in life echoes in eternity**". What we do now matters - forever!

Our Lord Jesus Christ preached two Kingdoms - a future Kingdom and a present Kingdom. The future Kingdom is the **Kingdom of Heaven**. *Thirty two times* in the Scripture our Lord speaks of the Kingdom of Heaven. The Kingdom of God is within you - but the **Kingdom of Heaven is the place where the Christian goes when he leaves this life**.

Man made righteousness will *not* get you into a God made Heaven. You must have a God created righteousness to get into a God created Heaven! If you

are saved then the Kingdom of Heaven is your *destination*, the Kingdom of God your *determination*.

Matthew 18:3 Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

You must come to God like little children, humbled, seeking His sustaining righteousness. What are children? They are weak, but their parents are strong. They are messy, but their parents put things right. Children do not understand, but they obey, trusting their parents, and so they grow into manhood. Jesus said to His disciples, "**You must become like little children to enter that future Kingdom. You must believe on Me and what I have said if you will enter in.**"

You enter the Kingdom of Heaven by entering into a *relational faith with Jesus Christ in this life*. It's not about what you do, but about what He did - and that you have claimed His promises *for yourself*. Jesus warned us that *entering* that Future Kingdom is not based on performance. He said:

Matthew 7:21-22 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

Who shall enter into that future Kingdom of Heaven? Only those **do the will of the Father which is in Heaven**. What is His will? **That we believe on Him whom He hath sent (John 6:29)**. That we, believing,

may have life through His Name (John 20:31).

The future Kingdom of Heaven is entered only by those who have believed on Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. That future Kingdom is guaranteed to the believer. The future Kingdom of Heaven is a place of great blessing - but also a place of *potential reward*. Reward in the Kingdom of Heaven is based on how you treated the *present Kingdom of God which is within you*.

The two Kingdoms tie together. **The Kingdom of God is within you.** How you respond to the Kingdom of God *now* determines whether you enter the future Kingdom of Heaven, and whether you receive *reward* once you enter.

ILLUSTRATE Jesus was headed to Jerusalem to die for our sins. Right after the Lord shared this with them, **James and John, the sons of Zebedee** came to Jesus and said, "**Jesus, we have a favor to ask of You**". Jesus said, "**What do you want?**" The brothers said, "**We want to sit in the place of honor next to You in Heaven, one on the left side and the other on the right side.**" Jesus said, "**I can't promise that. The places of honor in Heaven are set aside for certain ones.**"

The disciples heard what James and John asked Jesus, and the Bible says "**they were much displeased**" (**Mark 10:41**). I believe they were "**much displeased**" because they weren't the first ones to act on this. There is something - an ego - in each of us that is enslaved to "I". We love to be recognized. We love to be first. We love

to be in control. Jesus used this as a teaching moment. He told His disciples:

"The Gentiles - the unbelievers - they struggle among themselves over who is first and who is preeminent. Don't let it be this way with you, My followers.

Mark 10:43-45 ... whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: 44 And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. 45 For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Do you want to enter Heaven? Then Christ must *enter* your heart by faith! Do you want rewards in Heaven? Then Christ must *reign* in your heart by faith!

If you want to have great reward in Heaven, the Chief Seat, then you must be like Christ in this life. **The Kingdom of God is within you.** Humble yourselves, dear believers, and serve one another and the Lord Jesus in love. **Let God seize control of the Kingdom of God that is within you. Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, and He will exalt you in due season (1 Peter 5:6).** Do not fight over who is chief. Christ is Chief, and as Chief He lived a life surrendered to you.

Let God rule your Kingdom. Let that which is within you truly be **the Kingdom of God**. Someone once spoke of total surrender to the Lord, using these words. They are so precious I wanted to share them with you:

"I asked for strength that I might achieve, but was given weakness that I might obey. I asked for health that I might do greater things, but the Lord gave me infirmity the He might do better things. I asked for riches that I might be happy. But I was given poverty that I might be wise. I asked for power that I might have the praise of men. I was given weakness that I might feel my need of God. I asked for all things that I might enjoy life. I was given life - abundant and eternal life through Jesus Christ my Lord - that I might enjoy all things. I received nothing that I asked for, nor that I hoped for, yet my prayer was answered. I am most blessed."

The Kingdom of God is within me.



