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THE KINGDOM PRINCIPLE (Part One)

Greetings my beloved brethren!

We pray that this edition of our Living Logos newsletter finds you walking in His purpose and plan for your lives!

Speaking of the plan and purpose of God, what a wonderful mission's trip Shannon and I had to Guadalajara, Mexico this past month! We saw wonderful things happen as well as experienced in yet another nation the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit in full force. Amen!

We arrived in Guadalajara on Wednesday evening, July 13th, and were met by our missionary friend, John Whitener, along with our newest friend, Pastor Gerardo Gaxiola.

We then travelled to John and his wife Judy's home in the town of Chapala, just outside of Guadalajara, and what a beautiful area this was...

Chapala is a beautiful mountainside terrain with a large and gorgeous lake positioned by our marvelous Creator between the mountains. The landscape reminded me a little of the North Georgia mountains and it certainly did not hold the traditional view we have of Mexico. It was of no surprise to me to see so many retired US and Canadian citizens living there either. Heck, if I ever planned on retiring, I might choose Chapala too! Of course, as Brother Kenneth Hagin used to say- I don't plan on retiring; I plan on re-firing! Amen!

Well, on Thursday, Shannon and I spent the day in Chapala- first, having breakfast with a group along with me giving my testimony there and then, in the evening, I taught in the Bible School that John and Judy Whitener have organized in Chapala.

At the end of my two classes that evening, I felt that the Holy Spirit would have me to pray for those who needed healing in their bodies. Friends, we saw wonderful results! Most of the people that we prayed for that night had pain in their backs, knees etc. and, with the vast majority, we saw 100% of the pain go immediately! Glory to God!

One particular lady we prayed for had major damage done to her right shoulder from a fall she had and she was unable to lift her arm above her rib cage area. Well, after we spoke to the infirmity, she was able to lift her arm as high up as she possibly could and gave my six foot self a high five! All glory to the Healer Himself- Jesus Christ!

Then on Friday, we had no ministry obligations, so we were able to enjoy a fun day of adventures...

After enjoying a lunch with some of John and Judy's friends, we took a boat ride to what is called, "Scorpion Island" and later that afternoon, we took a hike up one of the small mountains in Chapala to get some exercise. It's a tough job, but somebody has to do it! ☺

But I have to say that one thing I definitely appreciated the most about this trip is that, even though Shannon and I were certainly busy doing the work of the ministry for the four days we were there, we also got to enjoy some much needed rest and relaxation at the same time.

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Friends, the Lord never ceases to amaze me at how He positions His children for His blessings! In this case, He knew that Shannon and I needed a getaway and so He disguised it in the form of ministry to get us to take the bait, and then He slipped a wonderful anniversary trip on us at the same time. We serve a good, good Father, amen?

Well, there is certainly much more to tell from the second half of our trip; so, next month, I will get into what we did on Saturday and Sunday. So make sure to be on the lookout for next month's *Living Logos* which will contain the rest of the details from our Mexico mission's trip.

But I have a truth from the Word of God that I would like to deliver to you this month as well. So let's get into what I believe the Lord has for us this month, amen?

THE KINGDOM PRINCIPLE

You know, we all have things we desire to see change in our lives. Some of us are believing to see change in our physical bodies. Others are believing to see change in their finances. Still others are believing to see our loved ones come to know Christ. There are various things that we all desire to see change in that range from the natural to the spiritual.

It is for this reason that I believe the Lord would have us to spend a couple of months talking about what I call- *The Kingdom Principle*.

I emphatically call what I am about to share with you *the* kingdom principle and not just a principle of the kingdom because the Lord has taught us again and again in His Holy Word that there is a specific process that the kingdom of God operates by, and that is the law of seedtime and harvest.

We see this all the way back in the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth and all that is within them. Repeatedly, the Lord said that everything was to reproduce after its own kind. Therefore, we saw in the Book of Genesis that everything with life in it reproduces after this eternal, kingdom principle. Amen!

Therefore, since we all have things we desire to see change in our lives and want to experience the kind of life that God has for us, the best and most consistent way to experience the God-kind of life in our lives is by operating according to this kingdom principle. Amen! This means that if we want to see change in our bodies, our finances, our marriages or ourselves becoming the fruitful believers we are called to be, this kingdom principle is the best way to get there!

Now I know we all have our own ideas about the way God does things, but we would be wise to let the Word dictate and determine our beliefs- not our experiences, our traditions, or our own understanding. But what we must understand is that similarly to how we have natural laws that govern how things work here on the earth, there are also laws that govern how things work in this kingdom of God. Therefore, this kingdom principle is how we see God's kingdom come and His will be done in our lives.

THY KINGDOM COME

You know, Jesus taught us to pray this way in His model prayer (see Matthew 6:10). Therefore, it is certainly God's will that His kingdom comes in our midst- that is, that we see people set free from the influence of the

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kingdom of darkness (this including ourselves). It is also God's will that His will be done in our lives.

Now let me interject a question here: **Why would Jesus tell us to pray for this if God's will was automatically going to happen in our lives?** You understand that many people think this, don't you? They think God's will just automatically happens in all of our lives irrespective of the choices we make, but that's simply not true.

The fact that we are told to seek for His kingdom to come and His will to be done in our lives proves that it evidently does not just automatically happen. Amen? No, if you want to see God's kingdom come in your life, you have to operate according to the laws of God's kingdom.

You see, this is a major misunderstanding in the lives of many Christians- that if God wants our needs met, they will be met. How many of you know that if this is how it worked then all of the needs of the world would be met? Why? Because it is clear in the Word that God wants us to walk in victory, wholeness and success more than we do!

No, friends, it is evident that God is not moved by need; however, what His Word does teach us is that God is moved by seed. More accurately, **God is not moved by need; we are moved by seed.** I say "*we* are moved by seed" because, although there are those who teach that we "move" God through things like prayer and fasting, that simply is not true! Saints, God is not the one who is stuck and needs moving; we are the ones who need to move in order to line ourselves up with the will of God. Sure, things like prayer and fasting certainly can get results, but the belief that we are somehow twisting God's arm to doing something is absolutely wrong.

No, if we want to consistently see God's kingdom come in our lives, we have to operate according to the laws (or, principles) of His kingdom. It is that simple. Let me say it this way: **God's kingdom does not come by hoping and praying; God's kingdom comes by sowing and reaping.** Amen!

Now sure, there are times where God will suspend natural laws in order for His kingdom to come and His will to be done in a situation, but these are the exception and not the rule.

For instance, God extended the day one time in order for Israel to win a victory; but that is not going to happen every day. Sure, the Holy Spirit might desire to manifest one of His various gifts in a situation, but we can't live off that fruit. And, don't get me wrong, it's great when that happens, but just as a parent does not want his or her children to always wait for them to bail them out of every crisis they have, likewise God wants us to grow up spiritually to where we recognize how God has arranged His kingdom and operate according to its principles. Amen!

And this is why I believe that Jesus' kingdom parables- specifically the ones contained in Mark chapter 4 that refer to this seedtime and harvest principle- are (for a lack of a better example) the "skeleton key" of God's kingdom. In other words, this kingdom principle is the key to unlocking the consistent and abiding fruit of the kingdom of God in our lives. Amen?

THE SERMON BY THE SEA

So this week, let's begin looking at these parables listed in Mark chapter 4 by looking at the first and

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foundational parable that we need to understand in order to see how God's kingdom works. Let's begin in verse one...

Mark 4:1 says, "And again He began to teach by the sea. And a great multitude was gathered to Him, so that He got into a boat and sat in it on the sea; and the whole multitude was on the land facing the sea."

Now most of us are familiar with Jesus' Sermon *on the Mount* contained in Matthew chapters 5-7 (see also Luke chapter 6), but this Sermon *by the Sea* was, what I consider to be, the most significant series of messages that Jesus ever taught. And the reason I believe this, is because, on this day, Jesus gave us parable after parable concerning the operation of God's kingdom. In other words, in this one sermon, Jesus taught us how the kingdom of God works, and how could there be a more vital message than that!?!

In Mark 4:2, Jesus began by saying, "Then He (Jesus) taught them many things by parables..."

Now we know that Jesus specifically taught them 10 different parables on this day. You won't see this if you just read one of the gospel accounts of this event, but if you combine together Matthew chapter 13, Mark chapter 4 and Luke chapter 8, you will see that there were actually 10 kingdom parables in all that Jesus taught them in this one day's series of messages.

THE FOUNDATION OF THE KINGDOM

Now Jesus begins His Sermon by the Sea by giving us the Parable of the Sower...

Now there is a reason that Jesus began with this particular parable in this series on the Kingdom Principle, and I believe it is because the Parable of the Sower is the most important parable concerning God's kingdom.

Now before we get into the details of this parable, let's skip down to verse 13 and see what Jesus had to say about this parable and its importance to our lives...

After Jesus' disciples asked Him for the interpretation of this parable, Jesus said in Mark 4:13- "Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables?"

Now Jesus was not saying they should have understood this parable because it is the simplest to interpret. The reason I say this is because there were other parables that Jesus taught throughout His ministry that were certainly easier to understand their meaning. No, He is asking the question "How will you understand all the parables?" because the Parable of the Sower is a fundamental parable in the kingdom. In other words, it is the foundational principle of the kingdom of God and must be understood in order to go further in the kingdom of God.

I would call this parable "**kindergarten Christianity**" because it is not until we learn the truths of this parable that we are capable of graduating to the next level in His kingdom. Yes, saints, this principle of seedtime and harvest and how growth occurs in the kingdom of God is essential to producing fruit that endures in God's kingdom. Amen!

So let's now move into the truths in this fundamental lesson of the kingdom...

STOP, LOOK AND LISTEN!

In Mark 4:3, Jesus begins this Parable of the Sower by saying, "Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow..."

Notice the first word in this verse- "Listen!" Saints, I can tell you that this one word "listen" is a word from God for some people!

The Bible teaches us to be quick to hear and slow to speak (James 1:19), but the problem is that most people are quick to speak and slow to hear. And this is a major reason why so many know as little as they do. A wise person I know once said when asked why they rarely said anything and always seemed to be on the listening end- "I already know what I know; I can only learn more by listening to what other people know." There is great wisdom in that, saints!

Then notice that the next word Jesus said was "Behold..." Now, after telling us to "listen", Jesus says "Look!" (For the word "behold" simply means "to look")

I had a teacher when I was younger who would get all the attention of the kids by saying, "Stop, Look, and Listen!" When this man would say this with his deep voice, all of the kids became quiet and stood at attention. Likewise, I would imagine that when the most captivating Preacher who ever walked this planet, the Lord Jesus Christ, said, "Listen and Look!" everyone gave Him their complete attention! Now everything Jesus said was important and should be heeded, but when the Master Himself says to "Listen and Look," you have to know this is something we need to hear and see in our hearts. Amen?

INTENTIONAL AND DELIBERATE

Then notice that in verse 3, Jesus began His Parable of the Sower with- "A sower went out to sow..."

Now I want you to notice in this phrase that this sower was apparently very intentional. In other words, He went out specifically for the purpose of sowing to get a harvest. Now there is a lot of significance in this statement, my friends!

Have you ever noticed that you don't just automatically have roses, corn, watermelons, tomatoes, etc. growing in your yard? No, as a general rule, things we desire and are beneficial do not just automatically spring up in our gardens. But, on the other hand, undesirable plants and vegetation such as weeds and briars seem to just spring up everywhere on their own, don't they?

Well, this natural example illustrates to us how things work in God's kingdom as well...

Do you know what you need to do to be carnal, selfish, and walk in the flesh? All you need to do to produce the fruit of this world is *nothing!* Yes, all one needs to do to produce undesirable fruit in their lives is just wake up in the morning and walk according to the course of this world.

On the other hand, did you know all you need to do in order to produce good fruit in your life is purposefully sow the appropriate seed in your garden? Yes, all one must do in order to see the things that they desire growing in their garden is to intentionally and deliberately sow the right seeds. Amen?

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Therefore, we need to see ourselves as the “sowers” that Jesus described in this parable. In other words, we need to live purposeful lives of going to and fro sowing seed wherever we go.

Saints, this is not just a Sunday thing either! We must see ourselves as more than just someone who sows come ministry time on Sunday mornings; we need to see ourselves as “sowers” 24/7! This is our vocation! This is what we do for a living! Then and only then, will we truly see the areas of our lives transformed by the fruit we want to see!

But oftentimes want to see change, but we are basically doing the same thing as this- looking in our back yard and wondering why we don't have desirable fruit growing there. **We do not do this in the natural, saints; why would we do it in the spiritual?** No, my brothers and sisters, if we want to see the consistent fruit promised in God's kingdom, we have to learn to abide by this law of sowing and reaping.

Now sure, sometimes we do reap from what others have sown. For example, when Shannon and I bought our home in the winter of 2012, we didn't know what we were getting because when spring rolled around we had many beautiful flowers blossoming all over our yard. Then the Lord spoke to my heart a promise from His Word that says, “I will cause you to inherit homes you did not build and vineyards you did not plant.” Friends that is the blessing of the Lord!

But my point is- we can't expect to live on the seeds sown by others. There are spiritual laws that we need to learn to abide by. But so many people try to live their lives contrary. They want to live on the seeds sown by the man of God or others who will teach them, pray for them etc. But, again, this is not how one will see consistent results in God's kingdom. If we want to see abiding fruit in our lives, we need to learn to sow to the Spirit ourselves and not depend on the work of another person.

So I exhort you this month... Become intentional and deliberate concerning what seeds you are sowing. See yourself as a sower and then take that seed and sow it, first into your own heart- letting those seeds take root within you, transforming you from the inside to the outside- and then sow them into the atmosphere around you. And watch God's Word transform you from the inside to the outside! Amen!

We will continue with this message next month and get into more of the details of how this kingdom principle works. So stay tuned!

Until next month- Maranatha!

Victoriously,

