

I. KINGDOM CULTURE

- A. Like every kingdom or nation, there is a culture and lifestyle that identify the nature and character of the king, and his people.
- B. The culture of the Kingdom of God has been displayed/portrayed in such varying ways throughout recorded history; both in positive and negative ways.
- C. Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7), Upper Room Discourse (Jn. 13-17) and Olivet Discourse (Matt. 24-25) would represent the most condensed overview of his teachings presenting a lifestyle culture by which his people would be seen as different from the rest of the earth.
- D. Jesus was announcing a revolution (not a revolt) in offering this culture. It was a manifesto; a violent radical shift in the way people were to live their lives. This culture would act as salt and light, it would expose darkness in the souls of men and call them into a grace empowered lifestyle that was focused in eternity.
 - 1. And Jesus anchored it all to his definition of love. It was this lifestyle and culture Jesus lived as his love gift to his Father as a man on the earth.
- E. Paul declared that our citizenship is in heaven, making the central focus of our lives spiritual in nature, anchored to Kingdom values.

²⁰ For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself. Phil. 3:20

- F. Paul also tells us that it is only by the empowerment of the Holy Spirit (grace of God) that we can be saved and continue to live in the righteousness provided by Jesus.

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast. Eph. 2:8

- G. Jesus was not looking for passive followers. His grace empowers those who look deeply into his teachings and for love's sake, seek to live it out.
- H. Jesus was providing a 'roadmap' of how to find Him in the teachings. As believers would seek first the kingdom lifestyle culture (Matt. 6:33), they would encounter Jesus through Holy Spirit and he would provide the necessary grace to live/walk it out.

II. THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT – MATT. 5-7

- A. Jesus calls us to live out the eight Beatitudes (5:3-12) as we pursue 100-fold obedience (5:48). The Beatitudes are like 8 beautiful flowers in the “garden of our heart” that God wants to fully blossom. They define love, godliness, and spiritual maturity and describe the kingdom lifestyle. Implied in all of God’s commands is the promise of His enabling grace to walk out the command.
- ³Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ⁴Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. ⁵Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. ⁶Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled. ⁷Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. ⁸Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. ⁹Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. ¹⁰Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (Mt. 5:3-10)*
- B. These 8 flowers must be cultivated as we “weed our garden” by resisting 6 common temptations (Mt. 5:21-48) and as we “water our garden” by pursuing 5 kingdom activities (Mt. 6:1-20).
- C. Jesus did not come to destroy the law, but to make a way to fully express God’s original intent. Jesus highlighted six areas in which we wage war against sin in our hearts. They are **anger** (spirit of murder, Mt. 5:21-26), **adultery** (spirit of immorality, Mt. 5:27-30), **disregarding the sanctity of marriage** (disloyalty in relationships, Mt. 5:31-32), **false commitments** (spirit of manipulation to promote ourselves, Mt. 5:33-37), **retaliation** for personal inconveniences (spirit of revenge Mt. 5:38-42), and **inactivity** when mistreated (refusing active love, Mt. 5:43-47).
- D. Jesus described 5 activities that position our heart to receive more grace and strength as we consistently serve and give (charitable deeds: giving service and/or money (6:1-4, 19-21), pray (6:5-13), bless our adversaries (fullness of forgiveness, 6:14-15; 5:44), and fast (6:16-18). These are spiritual disciplines that position our heart before God to receive more grace.
- E. This exhortation to prayer is in the context of asking God to intervene in our relationships (7:7-12), to give us wisdom, to touch the hearts of those we relate to, and to intervene with good circumstances. Jesus calls us to pray at times when people do not treat us in the way we want (v. 12). We must not trust our natural strengths to war against them. We must be careful not to neglect prayer, knowing that the spirit of prayer is our best tool (not our only one) (Mt. 7:7-12).

III. THE UPPER ROOM DISCOURSE – JOHN 13-17

- A. The night before Jesus went to the cross, he sought to help secure the hearts of his disciples with one final critical teaching regarding kingdom culture.
- B. John 13-17 otherwise called the Upper Room Discourse, Jesus in my view gives the “why” behind the “what and how.” If the SOTM shows us the what and how of kingdom culture, John 13-17 reveals to us “why” – the heart behind the lifestyle.

- C. Jesus shares the Passover and institutes the Lord's Supper (Jn. 13). He talks to his disciples of how to deal with challenges and the correct orientation in this evil generation (Jn. 14). Jesus reveals his relationship with the Father as the central theme of his earthly journey – it's all about loving God (he calls this 'abiding'), and loving others as lead by Holy Spirit (Jn. 15-16). And finally Jesus prays that all he has shown the disciples would be given to the disciples by his Father; and that unity (oneness) and love would be the primary values of kingdom culture.
- D. We were born with the capacity to receive God's love but were not born with God's love in us. We must all receive the Father's love before we can impart it to others. (1Jn. 4:19). ***"We love Him, because He first loved us."***

IV. THE OLIVET DISCOURSE – MATT. 24-25

- A. During Passion Week, before the Passover, Jesus prophesies about his return (Matt. 24) and the conditions on the earth as he judges the nations (Matt. 25).
- B. In this third segment of kingdom culture teaching Jesus is giving us the context or the theatre in which our love for God grows and matures.
- C. Jesus shows us clearly that we will have constant pressure in this evil age as our earthly context seeks to fight against our desires to live kingdom culture.

V. SUMMARY – BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

- A. Kingdom Culture is motivated at its core to love God with all our hearts and love others well (Jn. 13-17).
- B. The lifestyle (SOTM) that the grace of God empowers in us, leads us deeper in relationship with God and acts as salt and light in this world (Matt. 5-7).
- C. And the arena in which my life matures and grows is this present age which is filled with choice to love or reject God (Matt. 24-25), and shows us the fruit and consequences of those choices.