

The Kingdom of God Is Not Meat and Drink

- Meaning of “The Kingdom of God”
- What the Kingdom Is NOT
- What the Kingdom IS
- Living as Citizens of God’s Kingdom

The Bible often challenges us, to examine what truly matters, in the sight of God. In a world that focuses heavily on physical things—food, customs, opinions, and outward practices—it is easy to lose sight of spiritual priorities.

In [Romans 14:17](#), the apostle Paul makes a powerful statement:

- He said, “For the **kingdom of God** is **NOT** meat and drink; **BUT** righteousness, and peace, and joy **IN the Holy Spirit.**”

This lesson will help us understand, what God’s kingdom truly is, what it is not, and how that truth should shape, the way we live and treat others.

In this study, we will examine:

- What the Bible means by “the kingdom of God”
- Why outward matters, are not the heart of the kingdom
- The spiritual qualities that define God’s kingdom
- And How citizens of the kingdom are to live every day

Before we can understand what the kingdom is, or is not, we must first understand the,

I. Meaning of “The Kingdom of God”

Which is...

A. God’s Rule, Not a Physical Nation

In Scripture, the kingdom of God means, God’s spiritual rule over obedient people. God’s spiritual rule is exercised within the body of Christ, the church, which is the present form of the kingdom on earth.

Many people think of a kingdom as land, borders, and armies.

Jesus taught that God’s kingdom is different—it is about God’s rule, not geography.

- “The kingdom of God, **cometh not with observation**: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is **within you.**” ([Lk.17:20-21](#))

Explanation:

- “**Cometh not with observation**” means — It does not arrive with visible signs, like earthly kingdoms.
- “**Within you**” means — God’s reign, begins in the heart of obedient people. This does not mean the kingdom exists apart from God’s revealed order, but that its reign begins, in the heart of those who submit to Christ.

If God’s kingdom does not arrive with visible observation, then its nature must be different, from earthly power and rule.

- Jesus said, “**My kingdom is not of this world...**” ([Jn.18:36](#))

Explanation:

- Jesus clearly separates His kingdom, from worldly political systems.
- Just as a Teacher rules a classroom by authority, not land ownership, God rules hearts through truth.
- His kingdom exists, wherever His will is obeyed.

Once we understand the nature of God's kingdom, we can better appreciate that,

B. Entering the Kingdom, Is Through Obedience

God's kingdom is entered by submission, not inheritance or tradition.

- Jesus said, "Except a man be **born again**, he cannot see the kingdom of God." ([Jn.3:3](#))

Explanation:

- Being "**born again**", involves a spiritual rebirth.
- That rebirth takes place through obedience to the gospel—faith, repentance, confession, & baptism; by which one enters the kingdom and receives new life (read [Rom.6:3-4](#)).

Being "**born again**" is not merely a personal experience, it results in a complete change of spiritual citizenship.

- The Bible says that God "...**hath delivered us, from the power of darkness, and hath translated us, into the kingdom of His dear Son.**" ([Col.1:13](#))

Explanation:

- God moves obedient believers into His kingdom.
- The kingdom is not something we get voted into, or grow into naturally—it is something we enter, by obedient faith, according to His Word.

The kingdom of God, is God's spiritual rule over obedient hearts, NOT a physical nation or political system.

With this foundation laid, we can now examine what Paul specifically says,

II. What the Kingdom Is NOT

Paul addressed disagreements among Christians over lawful practices, reminding them that such matters, must never define God's kingdom.

A. Physical Matters Are Not the Core

Paul addressed disagreements over food and customs among Christians.

- When he said, "**For the kingdom of God is NOT meat and drink...**" ([Rom.14:17](#))

Explanation:

- Paul is not minimizing physical needs, but correcting misplaced priorities.
- The kingdom's essence is spiritual, NOT ceremonial and NOT social.

Because the kingdom of God is not 'meat and drink,'

it cannot be promoted or advanced through fleshly appeals or human-designed schemes, that emphasize social functions and entertainment, over spiritual truth.

- "...**true worshippers, shall worship the Father IN spirit and IN truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him.** ²⁴ **God IS a Spirit: and they that worship Him, must worship Him IN spirit and IN truth.**" ([Jn.4:23-24](#))

To further emphasize, that physical matters hold no spiritual merit,

Paul reminds Christians, that food itself has no power to commend us to God.

- The Bible says, "**meat commendeth us NOT to God...**" ([1Cor.8:8](#))

Explanation:

- Food does not make us spiritually better or worse.
- Food fuels the body, NOT the soul.
- Spiritual life, requires more than physical focus.

Paul further warns about elevating externals above faith, by...

B. Avoiding Division, Over Non-Essentials

Disagreements over customs, must not damage unity.

- The Bible says, “Him that is weak in the faith, receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations.” ([Rom.14:1](#))

Explanation:

- “Doubtful disputations” means — Arguments over opinions, not doctrine.

When opinions are elevated, the unity of the kingdom suffers.

- “Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink...” ([Col.2:16](#))

Explanation:

- The kingdom is harmed, when opinions replace love and truth.

If the kingdom is not centered on physical matters,
Scripture clearly tells us...

III. What the Kingdom IS

A. The Kingdom is Revealed in the Church

When the Bible speaks of the kingdom in its present sense, it speaks of a people, under God’s rule.

Scripture plainly identifies this spiritual kingdom, as the church OF Christ (or the church belonging to Christ).

- “Who hath delivered us, from the power of darkness,
and hath translated us, into the kingdom of His dear Son:
IN Whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins:
And He is the head of the body, the church...” ([Col.1:13–18](#); also [Eph.1:22-23](#); [1Cor.12:13](#); [Acts 2:47](#); [Heb.12:28](#))

Explanation:

- The kingdom is something people are translated into, by God.
- The church is identified as the spiritual body (the church), over which Christ reigns.
- One ruler, one spiritual body, one redeemed people.

From [Matt.16:16](#), Peter made a **bed-rock** confession

- He said, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

Then Jesus said,

- “And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock (or bed-rock confession)
I will build My church; ...And I will give unto thee, the keys of the kingdom of heaven...” ([Matt.16:18–19](#))

Explanation:

- Jesus did not promise two institutions.
The church built and the kingdom opened with keys — refer to the same spiritual reality.
- A kingdom without people, is just an idea.
God’s kingdom is made visible in the lives of His people,
through the church, as men and women submit to Christ the King.

Understanding that the kingdom, is the church,
helps us appreciate, why Paul emphasized, **spiritual** qualities over **physical** concerns.

B. Righteousness: IS Right Standing with God

God's kingdom is defined by moral and spiritual correctness.

- Jesus said, “But seek ye **FIRST** the kingdom of God, and His **righteousness**...” ([Matt.6:33](#))

Explanation:

- “**Righteousness**” means — Living according to God's Word (see [1Jn.3:7](#); [Psa.119:172](#)).

Seeking God's kingdom, always results in a transformed way of life.

- The Bible says, “**Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.**” ([Rom.6:18](#))

Explanation:

- God's kingdom shapes how we live — not just what we claim to believe.

Righteous living, naturally produces,

C. Inward Peace and Lasting Joy, Through the Holy Spirit revealed Word of God

Spiritual peace and joy, come from reconciliation with God.

- “**for the kingdom of God is NOT meat and drink; but righteousness, and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Spirit.**” ([Rom.14:17](#))

Explanation:

- “**Peace**” is reconciliation with God;
- “**Joy**” is confidence rooted in salvation.
- Both remain, even when outward circumstances change.

These qualities are produced by God's Spirit, as we submit to His revealed will.

- The Bible says, “**the fruit of the Spirit IS love, Joy, Peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,**
²³**meekness, temperance: against such, there is no law.**” ([Gal.5:22-23](#))

Explanation:

- Only God's kingdom provides peace, untouched by circumstances.

God's kingdom produces righteous living, inner peace, and spiritual joy.

These blessings naturally lead to transformed...

IV. Living, as Citizens of God's Kingdom

When the kingdom reigns within the heart, it reshapes how citizens live before God and others,
Which is through...

A. Serving Christ Acceptably

Citizenship in God's kingdom, demands daily faithfulness.

- “**For he, that herein serveth Christ, is well-pleasing to God, and approved of men.**” ([Rom.14:18](#) ASV)

Explanation:

- God values spiritual service, over outward rituals.

Serving Christ acceptably, is not defined by what looks impressive to men,
but by humble obedience, that seeks God's approval FIRST.

- Jesus said, “Therefore whosoever **Heareth** these sayings of Mine, and **Doeth** them, I will liken him, unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock.” ([Matt.7:24](#))

Explanation:

- Acceptable service, begins with hearing the Words of Christ.
- It is proven by doing what He commands.
- Stability in the kingdom, comes from obedience, not activity alone.

Jesus shows, that service pleasing to God, is not measured by visibility, emotion, or tradition—but by submission to His teaching.

Citizens of God’s kingdom, not only live differently—they shine visibly in a dark world.

B. Letting Faith Shape, Our Influence

Our conduct impacts others, in the kingdom.

- Jesus said, “**Let your Light so Shine before men**, that they may **SEE your good works**, and **GLORIFY your Father** which is in heaven.” ([Matt.5:16](#))

The Bible says,

- “**For our conversation** (or citizenship) **is in heaven**; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:” ([Phil.3:20](#))
- “For the **Grace of God** that **bringeth salvation**, hath **Appeared to all men**,¹² **TEACHING** us, that **DENYING ungodliness and worldly lusts**, we **Should LIVE soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;**” ([Titus 2:11–12](#))

Explanation:

- Citizens of God’s kingdom, reflect His character.

Those in God’s kingdom live differently, because they belong to Him.

V. Closing Thoughts

The kingdom of God is not about physical matters, but about transformed hearts and lives.

Lessons Learned:

- Spiritual priorities, must outweigh physical or fleshly preferences
- Unity, matters more than opinions
- God’s kingdom is lived, not merely discussed