



GCI *Buzz*

Healthy Church: What is the kingdom?



Kingdom

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Noun

Definition: The reign and rule of God, as taught in Scripture, reflecting His authority, justice, and love both spiritually and tangibly in the world.

What is the kingdom?

The kingdom of God is central to Jesus' teaching, embodying the reign and rule of God in the hearts and lives of His people. Biblically, it reflects God's authority, justice, and love being realized both spiritually and tangibly in the world. **Through Jesus' teachings, we can understand the kingdom as "already but not yet"—already present through His life, death, and resurrection but awaiting its full consummation in the future (Matthew 6:10).** The kingdom calls believers to live under God's sovereignty, aligning their lives with His will and purposes.

Metaphors for the kingdom in the Bible

Jesus frequently used parables and metaphors to describe the kingdom of God, offering glimpses of its nature and significance:

- **A Mustard Seed (Matthew 13:31-32):** The kingdom starts small but grows into something expansive and transformative, providing shelter and refuge.
- **Leaven (Matthew 13:33):** The kingdom works subtly yet powerfully, permeating and transforming everything it touches.
- **Treasure Hidden in a Field (Matthew 13:44):** The kingdom is of immense value, worth sacrificing everything to obtain.

- **A Farmer Sowing Seed (Matthew 13:3-9, 18-23):** The kingdom's growth depends on the receptiveness of the human heart, likened to different types of soil.
- **A Pearl of Great Price (Matthew 13:45-46):** The kingdom is a treasure of unparalleled worth, compelling believers to prioritize it above all else.
- **The Wedding Banquet (Matthew 22:1-14):** The kingdom is a celebration open to all, yet it calls for a response and readiness for those invited to experience it.

These metaphors emphasize the kingdom's dynamic, inclusive, and transformative nature.

How Participating in Building the Kingdom with Jesus Affects Us

Participating in the work of building the kingdom with Jesus has profound and life altering effects on our ministry, our daily lives, and the communities around us. The kingdom is about partnering with God in restoring creation and relationships. This transforms ministry from being merely a series of tasks into a sacred participation in God's redemptive plan. When ministries embody the heart of Jesus, they naturally prioritize humility, service, and the inclusion of the marginalized, as highlighted in **Matthew 20:26-28**.

Kingdom living also calls for a complete reorientation of our priorities. Jesus' parables, especially those in Matthew 13, remind us of the kingdom's immense value and invite us to live with radical commitment and joy.

Recognizing the treasure of the kingdom inspires us to let go of lesser pursuits and focus wholeheartedly on living in alignment with God's purposes.

Moreover, the kingdom's values — love, mercy, justice, peace, and reconciliation — shape how we live and interact with others (**Matthew 5:3-12**). These values are not just ideals; they are transformative forces that create a foretaste of heaven on earth. When we embody these values, we become agents of God's grace, and our communities begin to reflect the beauty and power of God's love in tangible ways. This ongoing transformation is both deeply personal and richly communal, bringing us closer to God and to one another.

Next Steps for Members

Here are ways you can orient your life around the kingdom:

- **Reflect on Kingdom Metaphors:** Take time to meditate on the parables of Jesus. Consider what these stories reveal about the nature of God's reign and how they challenge your perspectives and priorities.
- **Engage in Acts of Service:** Participate in ministries that reflect kingdom values, such as serving the poor, advocating for justice, or creating spaces of belonging and inclusion.
- **Commit to Discipleship:** Actively seek ways to grow in faith and spiritual maturity, allowing Jesus' teaching to shape your character and actions.
- **Share the Good News:** The kingdom invites participation and proclamation. Share your experiences of God's transformative love with others.

Conclusion

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The kingdom of God is both a present reality and a future hope. Through metaphors and parables, Jesus invites us to understand its value and significance. Participating in building the kingdom with Jesus transforms our ministry, equips us for kingdom living, and teaches us to embody its values of love, justice, and mercy. As members of the body of Christ, we are called to reflect the kingdom in our daily lives and communities, becoming active participants in God's redemptive plan.

May we continually seek God's kingdom first (**Matthew 6:33**), living as agents of His grace and proclaiming the good news of His reign to the world. Let us go forth, inspired, and equipped to embody kingdom values, and invite others into this transformative journey.

References

Grace Communion International. (n.d.). Parables of the kingdom. Retrieved from <https://www.gci.org/articles/matthew-13-parables-of-the-kingdom/>

