

Notes for the Ones Called-Out to Meet

Info: (651) 283-0568 Discipleship Training Ministries, Inc. www.dtmwebsite.org Today's Date: June 22, 2025

Whose Kingdom? Which Spirit?

by Dan Trygg

"Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not of this world... If My kingdom were out-from this world, My servants would fight... As it is, My kingdom is not from here.'" John 18:36

"Calling them to Himself, Jesus said to them, 'You know that those who are recognized as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great men exercise authority down upon them. ⁴³ But it is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant; ⁴⁴ and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all. ⁴⁵ For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.'" Mark 10:42-45

"Do nothing from rivalry or empty pride, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; ⁴ not looking out for the things of yourselves, but also for the interests of others. ⁵ Think this among yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, although being in the form of God did not regard equality with God a thing to be held on to, ⁷ but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of people. ⁸ Being found in human appearance, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross." Philippians 2:3-8

"Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law."

Romans 13:10

Last week, I wrote about our privilege as children of God to hear His personal words of counsel, direction, encouragement and instruction. The scripture is full of examples of people who heard from God. **One of the reasons people don't talk about this more is because of self-deception and abuse that can sometimes follow**, when people think they are "hearing from God". ***Fear of misuse, however, is not a good reason to ignore what is plainly presented as our inheritance as children of God.*** Instead, we should teach people to be discerning, ...to learn to recognize when what is being suggested to them is inconsistent with the heart of God. **We need to understand who we are as redeemed people, and Who we are called to follow, and be sure that our attitudes, perceptions and decisions are consistent with Him.** We need to take responsibility to help one another grow and be discerning, ...and point out the error we see. **Our fear to trust people to be responsible adults only keeps them as children, dependent upon "teachers" and "leaders" to tell them what to think.** It is like not encouraging people to learn to drive, because someone had a car accident. No, we need to teach people to be responsible and careful drivers.

It is doubly tragic when someone who claims to be following Jesus does something that is clearly and plainly **not consistent with the character of Jesus**. Their foolish words and actions present Jesus in a terrible light. We are seeing this happening on an epic scale in our country today. People who name the name of Jesus are spewing hate, judgment, threats and condemnation. ***They are not bringing the light of love into the world of darkness.*** They are adding fuel to the fire, confirming misperceptions of what it means to follow Jesus, and driving people away from Him who loved them enough to die for them. Many news anchors, podcasters and talk show hosts will present points of view based upon spin, speculation, questionable "facts", or fear. They seem to make their living from riling people up to keep them engaged with them. It is their business, and they are good at it. They captivate the minds of people and subtly direct them away from Jesus to something else, ...some other cause, or a different heart and spirit than Jesus demonstrated. And **people are so committed to their talk show host, or their "news source", that they can't step back enough to see that they have been led astray from their true calling.** What happened to "following Jesus"? What happened to "becoming like Him"? ***What happened to "love your neighbor", ...or becoming a servant like Jesus was?***

We are in a world with **two kingdoms**. There is the "kingdom of this world", which is characterized by selfishness, ...driven by lusts and desires for pleasure, wealth, comfort, and self-importance. The ruler of this "age" is Satan, and he captivates people by fear, addictive pleasure, materialism, pride, and domination of others. Those caught up in this worldview are anxious, never satisfied, always wanting more, and use others for their own ends.

The "other kingdom" is the kingdom of God. Those who have truly come to know God, and are walking with Him, realize that they do not need to be anxious. Jesus has already overcome the world. The peace of God, which surpasses understanding, guards their hearts and minds in Christ. They can look with clarity and sober-mindedness upon the chaos of the world around them, and still **they know that God is their Shepherd. He will guide them and care for them.** They find contentment and satisfaction in God's provision. They look for the overflow that He provides so that they can minister to others, ...not to endlessly store away for themselves. **They look upon others with compassion and love. They are willing to come alongside and serve.** As they grow in Christ (and as Christ is formed in them), ***they come to see that listening, loving and serving are the ways to tangibly reveal Jesus to others.*** The opinions of others are not their concern, or their agenda. They will win the right to speak, when they succeed in revealing Jesus by their lives.

The problem comes when the people of God are caught up in the values, propaganda and agendas that come from the kingdom of this present evil age. When individuals, leaders or groups are led to embrace attitudes,

beliefs, practices and methodologies that conflict with the heart and clear teachings of Jesus, tragedy ensues. **Jesus is misrepresented. People are mistreated.** And those who are deceived boldly proclaim that they are serving the Lord, when they are actually being duped into serving the devil. They say they are proclaiming truth, but they promote a lie. They say that they are building the kingdom, but they drive away the ones who need Jesus the most. **They proclaim love, grace and life out of one side of their mouths, but speak hate, rejection, judgment and death out of the other side.** They are like the blind guides Jesus spoke of, but they *cannot* see it (Matt. 15:7-14). **They don't look like Jesus, or act like Jesus. They do not value what He valued, ...people.** They may go to church, and may be religious, but the main characteristics of their lives are devoid of love, compassion, mercy and grace, ...the very things that Jesus stood for.

The love, grace and compassion they speak of are intellectual ideals that exist in their minds, ...concepts..., but not characteristics expressed and exemplified in their treatment of actual people, ...the poor, the resident aliens, the sick, the widow or the orphan. They are like the Pharisees, traveling far over land and sea, putting on meetings and holding crusades to scoop up those who will quickly submit to them. **They are religious celebrities and exalted leaders who are applauded and live comfortable lives, while those in need languish with little or no effective help offered to them.** They easily judge those who do not measure up, or meet their demands or expectations. They do not tolerate those who are slow to respond. By contrast, Jesus spoke of a shepherd who went in search of a lost sheep, to carry it back to safety. A good shepherd establishes familiarity and trust, so that his sheep will come at his call and will willingly follow him (Lk. 15:4-7; Jn. 10:2-5). **Ezekiel 34 describes two very different kinds of leaders, ...those who abandon the sheep in the dark, and gather around their campfire to socialize with the other shepherds, ...versus those who will seek the lost, bind up the wounded, and tenderly care for the distressed and sickly.** Those who treat the sheep with disdain, and rule over them with force and dominance are not following the Good Shepherd. That is not His heart. **We are not to "lord it" over the flock, but serve them as examples of godly character** (1 Pet. 5:1-3). As we make disciples, we are to be raising up care-givers and healers that invest in the hurting and broken, ...counselors who can speak hope to the despised and rejected, and new vision to the depressed and disillusioned. That means *we need to exemplify those skills!* **The world system wants to focus on the best and the brightest. Jesus came for the least and the lost.** The world discounts the least and the lowly. The least, lowly and discounted are often the very ones Jesus delights to use for His kingdom work (1 Cor. 1:26-30). Jesus chose a despised tax collector, Matthew, to write an accurate account of His ministry. Jesus chose a scorned and disdained divorcee of five failed marriages to be the first international evangelist for His movement (Jn. 4). **Why? Because their lives were transformed by knowing Him!** Because Jesus took time to interact with the woman at the well, an entire village came to find out more about Him!

Authentic, transformational faith is what is sorely needed today! Jesus did not call us to simply believe some "faith facts", ...He called us to follow Him, to live like Him, and to become like Him. He is the King of the kingdom of God. He is not just some potentate giving orders, **He is our example, our role model. We are to learn from Him, absorb His teachings, and treat people like He did.** We are to learn to recognize the activity of God, and discern the leadings and promptings of the Spirit. **A disciple is a person who engaged in spiritual exercises to develop their understanding and their sensitivity to God. Jesus was a man of such disciplines.** It is quite clear that He studied the scriptures, because He quoted from them or referred to them many times. He spent regular time alone in prayer to not only *petition* His Father, but also to *listen for* His counsel. He regularly attended gatherings of believers to learn from others, fellowship with others, and to worship. He went off by Himself on personal retreats, to remove distractions and focus more clearly on God. He humbled Himself through fasting, ...again for a *deeper focus*. **Jesus was a serious seeker after God His Father. He also spent time among people, ...teaching, helping, praying for others, and serving. He developed the ability to talk and interact with a wide variety of people.** He also developed deep and warm relationships with people who became His friends, co-workers and supporters. **These things did not just happen. They were intentional choices Jesus made to develop His mind, His heart, His character, and His ministry and people-skills.**

What are you devoted to? Where do you get your values, perspectives and understanding? So many do *not* have a healthy, balanced, thought-out plan to grow in their faith. They are not truly intentional about following Jesus. They may subscribe to some religious sources of information, stimulation or entertainment, ...but, as we have seen, the values of the world have infiltrated the church, ...more than many of us would expect. **I would say that the vast majority of people in this country have no specific plan, or a very limited strategy to grow in Christ.** The exposure most people have toward faith content is slap-dash, hap-hazard and woefully inadequate. **And there are a significant number of believers who are imbibing a mixture of politico-religion that is not consistent with the heart and teachings of Jesus,** ...and they have no idea, ...or, they are simply not interested in change.

Because people get only selected portions of the scripture, which their pastors or "news hosts" emphasize, they do not develop a broader, clearer perspective. It is easy for them to be manipulated by partial truths, ...and agitated by emotional and fear-based rhetoric. Sadly, some have become mouthpieces for the enemy, when they think they are standing up for truth. Some have even laid violent hands on innocent people. This did *not* come from Jesus!