

The Kingdom of This World Part 2

Romans 14:18c

Sermon Transcript by Rev. Ernest O'Neill

You leave the office and go out to the parking lot and it's 40 below wind-chill and confidently you put the key into the ignition and turn it. There are those glorious click-clicks and your heart drops. But you confidently go back to the rear of the car, open the trunk and there they are not! The jumper cables are in the closet where your wife put them with the vacuum cleaner. So, you go up to the office and you run around the corridors and find somebody who has jumper cables. Half an hour later you come down and at last you get the car jumped. An hour later, you've arrived at the bottom of your driveway and you're running at it for the fourth time to try to get up and then eventually, you bounce into it off your left-hand fender and arrive in the garage and you're off through the door and your wife brightly says, "You're a little late, dear, this evening", and you growl, "I wouldn't be if somebody hadn't decided to keep the jumper cables in the vacuum cleaner closet", and from there on you know, it's all down, down, down, down, down.

You both end up in bed and you both just turn your backs on each other. Really, most of us know a variation of this. The reason you know all that happens, the reason you and I end up saying things to our loved ones or saying things to our roommates that we don't want to say at all. The reason we end up actually spoiling a good evening and sacrificing good, enjoyable hours of which we all have far too few. The reason we end up doing that is because we are operating according to the kingdom of this world. We are. There is, loved ones, around us a kingdom in this world. A kingdom is the domain of the king, it's the rule of a king. Why do we get ourselves into that kind of experience? It is because we begin to operate within the rules and the powers and the pressures of that kingdom. That's why we end up saying the things that we are absolutely amazed at. We cannot understand it. It is as if there is some power that has a grip on us. You know that several times during the evening, you want to make an effort to get out of it. You think to yourself, "This is stupid, this is madness, just because I had no jumper cables, just because it was 40 below wind-chill, just because this happened, why do I have to destroy my own happiness, the happiness of my loved ones, the happiness of my friends?"

We make several efforts to lift ourselves out but it's as if there's a grip or a power upon us. In fact, loved ones, there is, you know. Jesus made it very clear that this world is not governed by him, it isn't. This whole world in which we live, is not governed by him. Now I'd like to show you so that you know it without any doubt. John 14:30, "I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no power over me." The ruler of this world is coming. Even Jesus admitted that the ruler of this world is Satan and the basis of his world, of his kingdom is the premise that there is no God or if there is, He doesn't care about you at all. The moment you turn the ignition key and the thing clicks once or twice, because you're living in your own mind and in your heart under the rules of the kingdom of this world, he pours into you those feelings. He says, "God doesn't care about you. He doesn't even know you're out here in this parking lot with this situation. And even if he did, he can't do anything about it." The moment you accept that, you open yourself to the spirit of the kingdom of this world and that's what flows in upon you. That's why all the powers flow in upon you of self-pity. You suddenly feel, "Yeah, I am on my own here. There's nobody to help me and there's nobody really cares about helping me. And least of all, the people that I depend on, they don't seem to care about me." And there flows into us a whole series of feelings of self-pity and abandonment that come from the spirits of the kingdom of this world.

That's why you find rising within you feelings that you think, "This isn't me. It can't be me. It can't be me saying these things. It can't be me behaving like this." Because in a real sense actually it isn't. It's simply that you're opening yourself to the powers of the kingdom of this world and they're flowing in upon you and you're believing the suggestions that they're making. Such as, there is no God or if he is there, he doesn't care about you or if he does care about you, he can't do anything for you. So that gets into your heart and it begins to dominate you. What I think you and I really need to see is that behind this visible world, there are all kinds of invisible spirits that you can open yourself to. Attitudes, thoughts and feelings will flow in upon you if you live according to that kingdom.

You know there is a verse that I think we used to learn in Sunday school but it's really just almost too deep for Sunday school children. It's Ephesians 6:12. It's a verse that I think we used to use when we talked about putting on the armor of God. Ephesians 6:12, "For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." It's those powers that move in upon you. If you believe the lies that Satan feeds you about nobody caring about you and about you being on your own, then you give ground to these powers and they flood in upon you. You may as well try to stand against a massive avalanche. It's impossible. They just take you and they run you this way and that.

Now, in 26 A.D., a certain man came to earth and announced the arrival of a new kingdom, of a new set of powers. You want to see it? Mark 1:14-15, "Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel.'" Jesus said, "The kingdom of God is at hand", "eggiken" is the Greek word. It means "has arrived". The Kingdom of God has come here to earth. So repent, stop the way you're thinking, change your way of thinking, change your whole way of thinking, stop that. That's what repent means: "Metanoio", it means change the way you're thinking about things and believe the gospel, believe that what I say is true, that there is a new kingdom that has come to earth that actually is more powerful than the kingdom that is in this world and thereupon he began to actually believe that himself and so he began to operate on that basis.

You see it in Mark 1:23, "And immediately there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, 'What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God.' But Jesus rebuked him, saying, 'Be silent, and come out of him!' And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him." Jesus started to operate in the faith that this kingdom of God was all around and that its powers could flood in upon us if he simply acted in accordance with that fact. So he went, you remember, to Simon Peter's house and Simon's mother-in-law was sick with a fever. Jesus regarded that as something that was brought about by the kingdom of this world and he simply rebuked the fever and laid his hands on her and in the name of God, he healed her and she was made whole. He operated simply in faith that the kingdom of God was all around and that if you operated on that basis, it would flow in upon you.

In other words, he said it's as if there are two voltages here on earth. There's 110 volts and that's what we've all been brought up with here in America. But it's very limited and it's very inadequate. There are many things in our lives that it will not operate successfully, and then there is a 220 voltage that he has brought to us. That 220 voltage is more powerful than the 110 and it can make up for all the inadequacies that the 110 brings about in your life. But it's up to you to decide which you're going to live under.

Loved ones, that's it, really. You've to decide which one you're going to live under. If you believe that the things that normally govern your mind and your emotions in this world are the only things available, then that's what will govern your life from this day on. But if you believe that there is a 220 voltage that is available, and you begin to act in the light of that, that 220 voltage begins to operate in your life, that's it. There is no mystery about it. That's why there is no mystery even about healing or being healed. It simply depends on which you exercise faith in. That's what determines, what governs your life and what fills into your mind and emotions.

It's like we've talked about before, you remember, in snorkeling or in scuba diving, it's just exactly like that. You can be on the surface of the water and really it can be quite rough -- so rough that if you stay up there, you could get sea-sick. But if you're scuba-diving and you go down, deep, deep into the depths, you find a new world there, absolutely different. It seems connected with the surface of the water and it seems part of it but it's a new world. It's a world filled with magnificent colors. It's a world that is free from all kinds of sudden movement. It's a world where beautiful plants just sway quietly and gently in the currents. It's a world that is quiet and filled with peace. Now that's what the kingdom of God is. The kingdom of God exists all around us since Jesus came. The kingdom of God is around about you. The rule of the king, the domain of the king is surrounding your body and your mind at this very moment. The rule of the king is able easily to free you from the dominance of the kingdom of this world. It can free you in a moment from it, but you have to decide which depth of life you're going to live at and it affects everything.

One of the things we're all concerned about in these days is this business of, "Oh, am I worth anything?" So many of us feel we're worth nothing. We feel we have no self-esteem or self-image at all. Many of us feel, "Yeah, I am not worth anything." And of course, the whole kingdom of this world presses in upon us and says, "Yeah, the only way to prove that you're worthwhile is by works. You must work at it. You must prove to these other people that you're worthwhile. You must prove to your boss that you're valuable. You must prove to your parents that you're worth something. You must prove that you have a right to be here in this world, that you have a righteousness of your own." The whole kingdom of this world swamps in upon you and presses you to do that.

If you rise to that, you very quickly find that you're in a no-win situation because everybody else is trying to do the same thing. Moreover, you open yourself to the Satanic action of the prince of this world and that Satanic action loved ones, just goes one way and if you'd like to see the way it goes, it's in Revelation 12:10, "And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, 'Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God.'" If you rise to the prince of this world and his challenge, "You must prove yourself. You must prove that you're valuable by your works. You must do it by your achievements in this world, that's the only way to establish your value", then you open yourself to him and he never lets you go. He accuses you before God, day and night. He continually says to you, "It doesn't matter how well you did yesterday, you're worthless anyway. You can't ever make it. You're worth nothing." He continues to press that in upon you.

That's where the envy and the jealousy comes from. You know, I am sure you at times, have felt as I felt in past years, "Where does such bitterness come from? I don't feel such envy and jealousy towards that person. I don't really. It's as if that envy and jealousy is so bitter, it's coming from somewhere else." It is. When you open yourself to the kingdom of this world to prove your value and your worth and you fail to do it, it's Satan that fills into you envy and jealousy of other

people who are better thought of than yourself. So what you're doing is linking yourself with the whole kingdom of evil that governs the kingdom of this present world.

Now, God's way is utterly different than this business of your value or your worth or your self-esteem. He says, "Look, be honest. Be honest about it." He says, "Be real about what you are. You aren't right, in many ways you aren't right." In fact he says if we say we have no sin, the truth is not in us. So he says, "Look, be real about it. Don't rise to this trick of Satan to try to prove that you are good. Accept that you aren't good, accept that what I said through Paul is true. There is no good thing in you, accept that. And then accept that I have utterly remade you in my Son Jesus. Just believe that. Turn away from Satan's temptation to try to prove that you're good by your works and try to win other people's approval by your efforts. Just accept that you aren't good, you aren't right. But believe that I have destroyed you in my Son Jesus and I have remade you completely in him and I have taken his righteousness and I have put it into you, believe that. Believe that I have given you the righteousness of my Son. Just believe that and act in accordance with that."

You know, as soon as you begin to do that, there comes a great relaxation into you, a great peace and relaxation. You begin to sense that you can afford to be just honest and you begin to respond to God in an honest, open way and you say, "Lord, thank you that you have remade me in Jesus. Now, there's an area of my life that I know you've changed in Jesus and I know you want to manifest it now, Lord will you show me how I come into that?" And you begin to openly and willingly repent of things, not in a fearful way but in a glad way, because you begin to sense there is a whole kingdom of righteousness that God is pouring into you through his Son Jesus.

So, you sit in the car and you turn the ignition key and the clicks come and the whole of Satan's kingdom flows in upon you saying, "Look, what has happened to you. You're on your own and you now have a dreadful evening to look forward to, nothing will work right." At that very moment, instead look to the kingdom of God and say, "Lord God, I know that I am on my own, I am pretty helpless here but I know that you've put me in your Son Jesus and I know you've put his rightness into me and you've put his power into me. Lord Jesus, I regard this hand as your hand on this ignition key and I regard this heart as your heart and this body as your body, sitting in this driver's seat, and Lord Jesus I trust you to come down now and pour your own life and Your own power and your own faith into me and through me."

Loved ones, as you do that, you open yourself to the kingdom of God and the rule of God and he begins to bring down into you a peace and a patience and then clarity of mind so that you can think what you ought to do. And you begin to live the way Paul did. He said, "Look, I deserve to be destroyed. I am such a sinner and I have been crucified with Christ and it's not I that am alive now but it's Christ that lives within me." As you begin to dwell on that and meditate upon it and think about it and allow it to become part of you every day, so Jesus' own kingdom life begins to flow through you.

That's why Paul writes that the "kingdom of God is not food and drink, but it is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." [Romans 14:17] Because all that kingdom-life flows in upon you, if you bank on it. That's all you have to do. You just have to bank on it. You just have to count on it. It's faith that enables this to take place. It's faith that enables the righteousness of Christ to be poured into your life and through you to other people. It's faith. You actually can choose loved ones, you can.

You can choose whether to live under the kingdom of this world or under the kingdom of God, you can.

You can choose to believe that you are in Christ and you have been crucified with him and you've been raised up with him and he is in you at this moment. You can choose to believe that and see his life flowing through you or you can reject that whole idea and believe that you're on your own here on earth, trying to slog it out as best you can. You can choose at each moment in your life, which you're going to believe, you really can. I would say that even to loved ones here who have been overwhelmed by their own sense of inferiority or their own sense of self-pity or their own sense of loneliness. Loved ones, it doesn't matter what has taken hold of you. You don't need to be under that stuff, you don't need to. The reason you're into that is that you're opening yourself to that whole kingdom of evil. It's not you, dear loved ones, it's not you. Actually in a funny way, you're not as bad as that and that's why God has such forgiveness towards us. In a strange way we men and women did not originate sin. Now, obviously if we align ourselves with it, we bear the consequences of it and we'll have to live in it forever. But we do not originate it, it pours in upon you, if you continue to believe that the powers that work in this world are the powers that govern you.

Could I just say one more thing? I think that we have opened ourselves to this kind of thing by free association thinking and by not disciplining our minds and our thought lives, we have. We've almost been encouraged to just let our thoughts wander as they want to wander and we've almost thought it was a virtue to take any thought that popped into our mind and to dwell on it. Loved ones, this world is still under the kingdom of Satan. And if you let thoughts come in upon you like that, you can be fairly sure that they come only from one source. If you dwell upon them and meditate upon them, you're simply giving more and more ground to that power of evil in you.

We have a responsibility to choose which kingdom we are under. You'll be amazed, but at that moment as you turn that old ignition key with the 40 below wind-chill, it doesn't matter. You can at that moment, govern the way your whole evening goes, by choosing to believe that you're at the mercy of the kingdom of this world and all its powers -- or by choosing to believe that there is a new kingdom of God that has come to this earth. If you open yourself to that this kingdom of God will flood your heart and your mind that evening with the beauty and the love and the joy and the victory of Jesus. I'd pray that you'd begin to do it. Let us pray.

Dear Father, we have been astonished at times at the strength of the feelings and passions that can rise within us and Lord, we see that that strength and power comes from the very heart of Satan himself and that's why it is able eventually to destroy us and Lord we see that it will be unto us according to our faith -- and that if we believe that is the only power that is available in this world and we open ourselves to it, that power will flood us and will destroy us.

But we see Lord that if we believe that in fact You have brought the kingdom of God to earth and that the kingdom of God is at hand around about us and near us and within us and will flood through us and fill us -- if we believe that and act in accordance with that, then we will experience that greater deliverance which comes from your kingdom.

So Father, in the quietness of these moments, we would take stock of our own lives and we would see where we have given ground to this kingdom of evil and the kingdom of this world and Lord we would now reject that. We would put a stop to it now this very moment and we would accept that we are not right.

We're not good. There's nothing very good in us but you have put us in your Son and you have remade us completely. You've remade us with his righteousness in us and you have put his righteousness within us and we want to thank you for that Lord and receive the righteousness of you, Lord Jesus,

into our hearts and we want to let your life begin to flow through us in these crises situations that we face with our circumstances.

We ask you our Father now, to begin to manifest the power of the kingdom of God even in our circumstances this coming week and deliver us from the powers of evil in this present world. We ask this in Jesus' name and for his sake. Amen.