

Possessing the Kingdom

Part 2

By Hein van Wyk

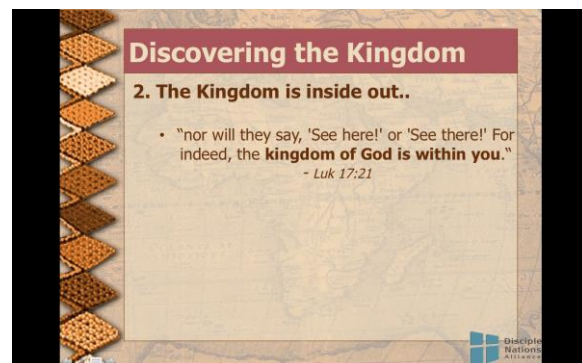
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Here are some characteristics of His Kingdom, but there are many more things that you can add.



The Kingdom is upside down. It's actually the right side up. It does not make sense.

The Kingdom is inside out. Before I can establish the Kingdom, the Kingdom must first be within me. The kingdoms of my life must become the Kingdom of Christ to allow Christ to rule in me in order to rule through me.



The Kingdom is revealed in Christ. Christ didn't come to come give us wisdom, He came to be wisdom for us. He didn't come to give us power, He became power for us. He didn't come to resurrect us from the dead, He became resurrection for us. He is the very essence of what the Kingdom of God is.

Christ is God's ultimate reality. He became the son of

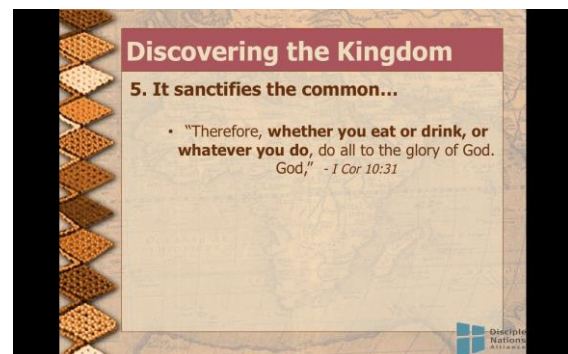
man and the Son of God, our representative in the new covenant and God's representative in the new covenant. All God's fullness dwells in him.

God wants Christ to have the preeminence. The Holy Spirit working in us wants to establish Christ. Paul is saying to the church in Galatia that I am in child birth because I want to see Christ in you. That is the end goal of our discipleship. Not to try to be like Jesus. But to allow the Holy Spirit to conform us toward the image of Christ.

This Kingdom is comprehensive. Everything was reconciled: man with God, man with man, man with woman, tribe with tribe, nation with nation, Jew with Gentile, and man with creation. It's finished. It's done. Everything is included.

Now God is giving us the ministry of reconciliation. Living in South Africa and still bearing the effects of our father, what South Africa needs to make the country really the rainbow nation is for the church to rise up and become ministers of reconciliation. To preach a message that transcends culture, transcends race, transcend all the *isms* that we have in society: denominationalism, sexism, tribalism. It is only the Kingdom that can transcend all of that. For time as this we need the Kingdom.

It sanctifies the common things. That whatever I do I now do for His glory. Work becomes worship. When I do the dishes it's worship. When I sweep the floor it is worship. When I'm a lawyer my work becomes worship. The work of a medical doctor is worship. Living Coram Deo - living before His face - and bring glory to Him.

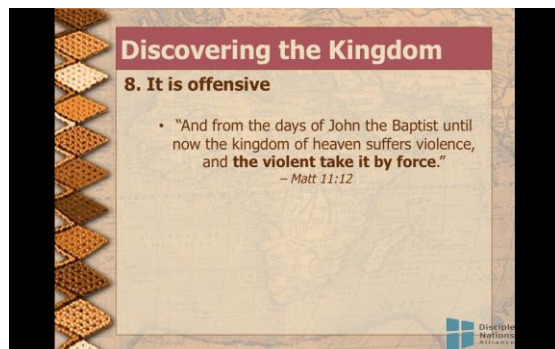
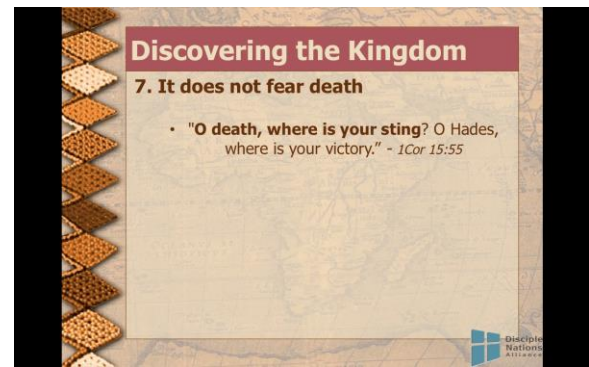


The Kingdom is now and the Kingdom is not yet. The Kingdom came, the Kingdom is coming, and the Kingdom will come.

These are just things that you can start to create some hooks in your studies that you can use as framework. What are the characteristics of the Kingdom that we are to seek because it's worth seeking, because it's worth finding?



It doesn't fear death. First Corinthians 15, "Oh death, where is your sting?" *Although I go through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil* because this Kingdom conquered death.



It's on the offensive. I take every thought captive because the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but strong and mighty in God to pull down arguments, to pull down forces that set itself against God. It moves forward. The armor of God is all offensive weapons. There is not one weapon that's defensive. In the Kingdom we don't run backwards. We go forward. We take stumbling blocks and make them stepping stones.

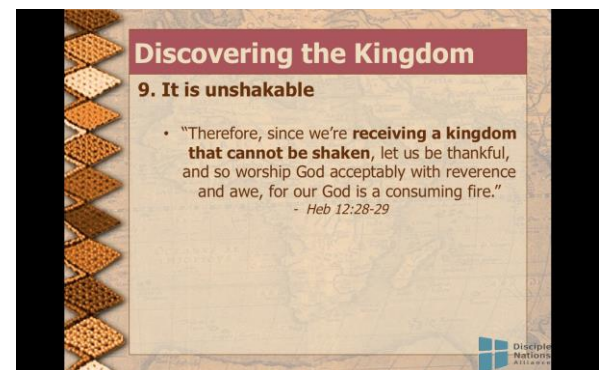
The seven letters to the churches in Asia that Christ wrote in Revelation is saying if you *overcome*. We need to move forward, constantly moving forward. Invade enemy territory.

This Kingdom is unshakeable. We received an unshakeable kingdom, the strongest force on earth.

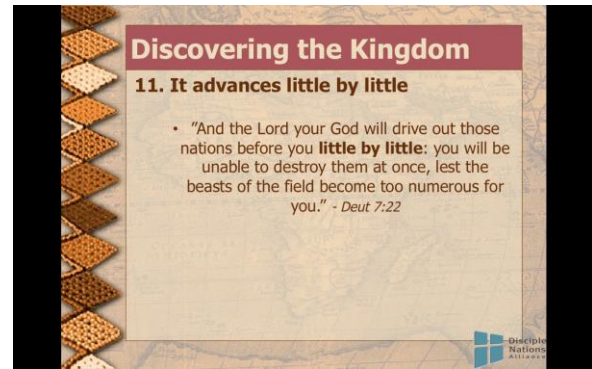
The Kingdom is open to all. Everybody is welcome. Nobody is excluded. In the same way that we said that the Kingdom sanctifies the common, the Kingdom goes into the byways and the highways



and invites those that have been cast out. We're the broken, the poor, and the hungry because the Kingdom is open to them.

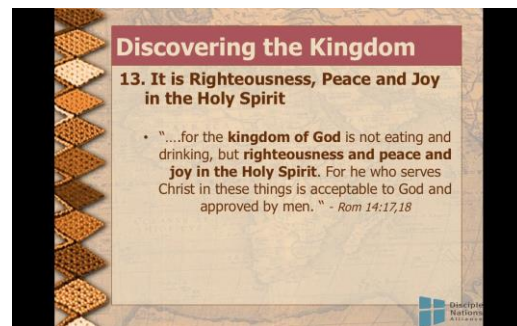


The Kingdom advances little by little. The Kingdom goes forward in small steps. In Deuteronomy 7:22 God gave the land to the Israelite to possess, but He only increased them little by little. Do not underestimate that they have small beginnings. It's the principle of the seed. The mustard seed, the smallest of all the seeds, becomes this big tree where the birds come and nest in the branches. It doesn't move forward quickly, but it moves forward.



It is based on covenant because it is based on the constitution (the Bible). This book is about covenant. I wish we had time to talk more about this.

Then, the last one on our list - the Kingdom is righteousness and peace, shalom. When I think about the word Shalom, three words come to mind. I just call it WOW - wholeness, oness, wellness. So, the vision for our community is shalom - wholeness, oneness, wellness. That is the Kingdom of God. Then it is joy in the Holy Spirit. The one transformational indicator that excites me is 'joy.' Because when people experience joy it becomes the power of God within them. That's exactly where the Kingdom is. It is righteousness, peace, and it is joy. And there are so many things else that the Kingdom is.



E. Stanley Jones was a missionary to India many, many years ago. He wrote a book, *The Unshakable Kingdom and the Unchanging Person*. He captured a few thoughts that I would like to refer to.

But before we do that this is the summary of everything that we said just now.

The Kingdom we need to receive and possess: It's the Kingdom that's upside down and inside out. It's comprehensive and revealed in Christ.

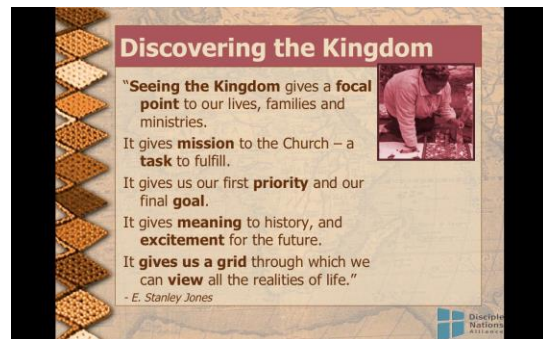


It sanctifies the common. It now and not yet. It's on the offensive and it doesn't fear death. It's unshakeable and it is open to all. It advances little by little and it is based on covenant. It is righteousness, peace and joy. And for a time as this, that's what we need to seek, that's what we need to possess.



The Kingdom is God's total answer to man's total need,
- E. Stanley Jones.

He said *seeing the Kingdom gives a focal point our lives*. It gives a mission to the church. It gives us a first priority and a final goal. It gives meaning to history and excitement for the future. The Kingdom gives us a grid, a set glasses, through which we can view all the realities of life. It gives us a worldview, a worldview that's victorious.



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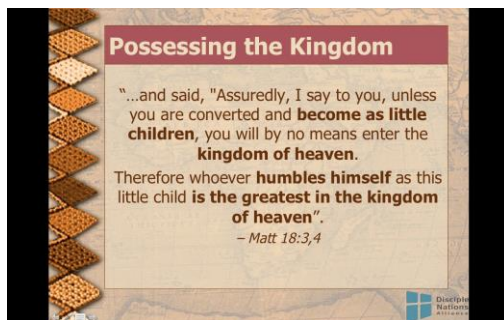
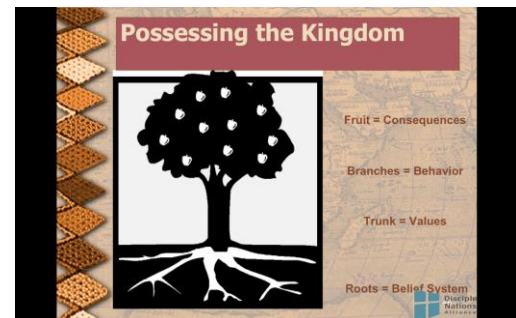
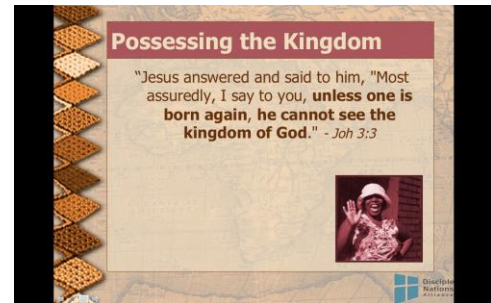
He (E. Stanley Jones) concludes by saying, *discover the Kingdom. Surrender to the Kingdom. Make the Kingdom your life, loyalty, and your life program. And in everything and everywhere you will be relevant*. It must be our first priority. The first thing that we must do is seek the Kingdom. That alone will bring perspective, God's perspective.

Possessing the Kingdom. Again, in Daniel 7 that's the keyword, it is to occupy, to take hold. I've met many people in my life that received the Kingdom. But for them it was like receiving the Kingdom but standing on the porch. They reached the door of the Kingdom, they were looking through the window, but they didn't go in. They didn't enter the dome of the Kingdom. Justification brought us to the door. Sanctification is calling us into the house. It's teaching us the household rules. Sanctification allows us to dine with the King, to have fellowship with Him, to receive the privilege of His Son and be an heir of the estate. Sadly, many people are standing out there justified. They are standing at the door and they thought *this is it*. But we are only justified so that we can be sanctified. We are called to the door of the dome of the king so that

we can enter. Oh, there's so much more. I haven't seen nothing yet. You need to live in the household of the King. But in entering the Kingdom in order to possess the Kingdom, Jesus is saying some real things. To Nicodemus, He said, "One must be born again."

It means that we cannot enter the Kingdom in the way that we have come. We need to lay down our lives. We need to change our minds. We need to change operating systems. You cannot run the applications of the Kingdom on Windows. You need a Kingdom operating system to run the apps of the Kingdom. So we need to change our operating system.

Jesus also said that we need to become like little children. We need to humble ourselves. How serious

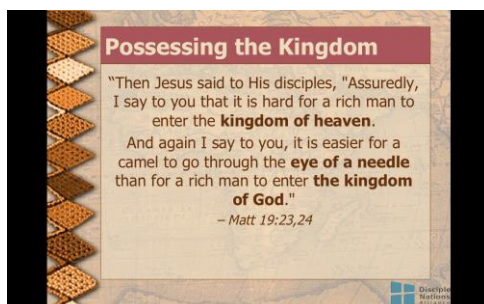


are we? Are we willing to let go of everything like the merchant?

When he found the pearl of great price he sold everything that he had. He didn't come to the Kingdom on his terms. Whatever it takes because this is what I want, this is what I need.

Jesus told the story where the king arranged a marriage for his son. Not only did the invited guest not show up, he sent his servants to the highways and byways to invite people. But one man entered the royal hall without the wedding garment of the king. He came in with his own righteousness, with his own good deeds. And the king said, "Friend, how did you get in here?" If we're not wearing the righteousness which is Christ, our attempts to be righteous are not sufficient.

We need to walk in the Spirit and not in the flesh. In Matthew 19, a well-known scripture, Jesus said to the rich man, "You cannot enter the Kingdom of God because you love your possessions so much." Then He said, "It's difficult for a rich man to enter the Kingdom." There are many explanations for the eye of the needle. Some people say it refers to a small gate within the gate of Jerusalem and the only way for a pilgrim, a visitor, a traveler to enter the city is to unpack his camel and then to get the camel down on its knees. But, there is no archeological proof of this. A few verses later Jesus said, "What is impossible for man is possible to God." If we still worship mammon, we cannot enter because I cannot serve two masters. That's why Christ has come, so I can rest in His completed work.



So, possessing the Kingdom becomes important. God called us out so that we could enter it. And it is

sometimes so difficult. We see it with the Israelites. They were quick to leave Egypt. They were quick to get out. But, they were slow to get in. It's the same with so many Christians. We need to enter in.

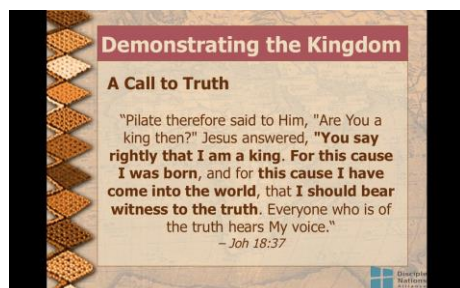
The last part, the ultimate part, is to demonstrate the Kingdom.



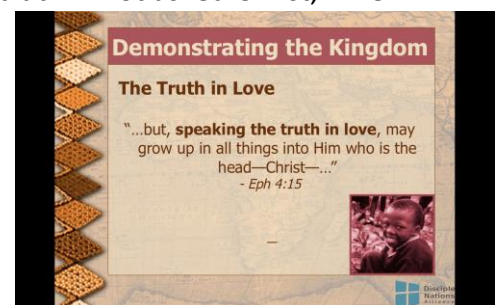
What we said this morning is so important. We need to understand the role of the church, the calling of the church, and the identity of the church. There are many things that we can say (on this topic). We can quote the book of Ephesians when it comes to the role of the church. Here are a few thoughts. In Isaiah 52 it says, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings us good news." And we see the three words that the Kingdom is about, righteousness (salvation), peace, and joy or glad tidings. He brings good news who brings the Kingdom, who says to Zion, "Your king reigns." That's why the feet are so beautiful because they bring a message that is victorious. It is glad tidings. If the gospel that you have heard is not *glad tidings* you have heard the wrong gospel. Your God reigns.

What we desire is to see the Kingdom of God come in our communities. We want to experience the fruit of the Spirit, of the rule of God. The righteousness and the peace, the restoration of dignity and joy, the wholeness and the wellness, of people stopping crying, the healing of the wound. We want to see God's reign coming to our communities. Because the fruit that we desire is the fruit of the Spirit of God, as the Spirit of God establishes His reign in us and through us.

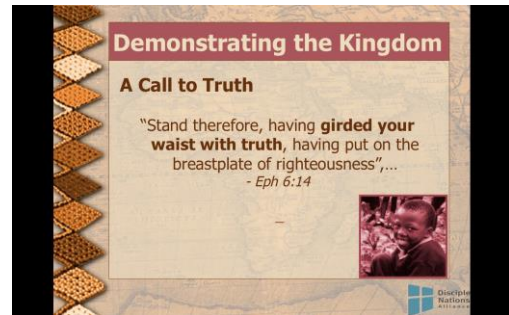
Looking back at our theme, *Possessing the Kingdom*, is a call to truth. The Kingdom we said is revealed in Christ so the call to truth is not outside of Christ. Truth is not a doctrine. Truth is not theology. Truth is a person. And, I have relationship with truth. Pilot asked Christ, "Are you King?" Jesus said, "You have said rightly. I am a King. For



this cause I was born and for this cause I've come into the world that I should be witness of the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice." Christ is the truth. The call to truth is a call to Christ.

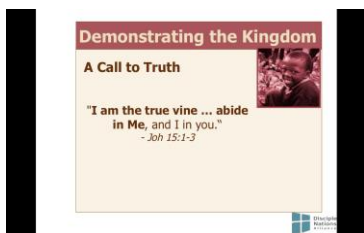


In John 14:6, Jesus said, "I am the truth. I am the life." A call to truth is a call to Christ, the preeminence of Christ, a Christ-centered worldview. In Ephesians 6:14, it says, "Stand therefore having girded your waist with truth."



Having put on the breastplate of righteousness. Let us gird ourselves with the truth. It is like a promise that we need to make, a promise *to tell the whole truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.*

A call to truth, as we said, is a call to Christ. Because in this tree that we are referring to, the tree in our community, the only way that I can be the fruit that God wants is when I have the root that God wants. Christ became for us the root. In John 15 it says that we have been chopped off. Our root system has been removed and we have been crafted in Christ. And He becomes our position. Without Him we can't do anything. In Matthew chapter 3 John said repent for the Kingdom of God at hand. He said the axe is laid again at the root of the tree because Christ came as the root of David, the root of Jesse, and we need to be rooted and grounded in Him. Without Him we cannot do anything. "I am the true vine," He says. "I am the truth. I am the true vine, abide in Me and I in you."



Now when you look at the fruit of God's reign, the fruit of God's Kingdom to come, we put truth in the root. We uproot the lies.



And now we pull down strongholds. We expose ideas and arguments that are being set up against God. We replace our root systems with one root, the root, Christ Jesus. He's not one of many. He's the only one. Then we see the truth is growing because we are aiming at the roots.

Now we see there's another call, not only to truth, but a call to love. In Ephesians 4:15 truth is expressed as love. The church receives the fullness of Christ because Christ is the Head of the church. And the fullness of Christ, the fullness of God, was given to the church. In Ephesians, Paul is saying that the fullness of God equals love. So, for the church to understand its role, we need to know what love is. The question was put to Jesus, "What the



greatest commandment in the law?" Three times He said, "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all you soul, with all your understanding. And you need to love your neighbor as you love yourself."

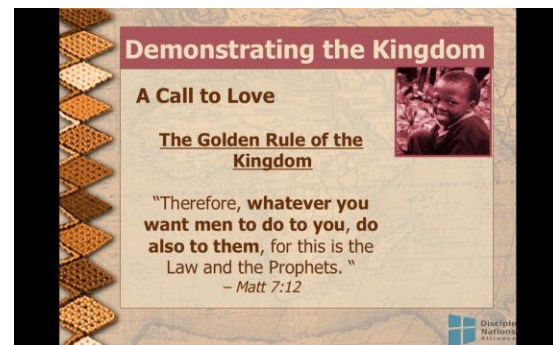
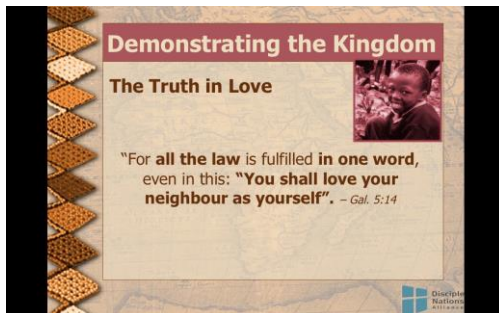
And then three times Jesus even summed this up further in what Bob (Moffitt) termed the irreducible minimum of the law. All the commands, the law of the prophets, the worldview of the Kingdom, is summed up in these words, "you should love your neighbor as you love yourself." Because love is the performance of the law. Because, if I love God I will love my neighbor. But, the opposite is also true. If I do not love my neighbor, I do not love God. Not

only (is this stated) in Romans, but also in Galatians, "For all the law is fulfilled in one word. You shall love your neighbor as you love yourself." There are a number of laws in the Kingdom. One of the laws is the law of reciprocity which is the golden rule of the Kingdom. It goes like this, "Whatever you want men to do to you shall do to them."

That's the

golden rule of the Kingdom because this is the law and the prophets. Do unto others as Christ has done for you.

(Now we are talking about the Kingdom.) Not only is this called the golden rule of the Kingdom,



in James chapter 2 verse 8 James talks about the royal law, the law of the King. If you really fulfill the royal law, according to the scripture, you shall love your neighbor as your self and you do well.

Possessing the Kingdom is calling us to truth. Take all of the truth. Possessing the Kingdom is calling us to love, to understand what love is, to understand our call

and role of the church, to understand the great commandment, the golden rule of the Kingdom, the royal law. But, also to know that we need to abide in Christ because not only is He the truth, John 15 is saying, that I need to abide in His love because He is the love of God. This was demonstrated to us.

Going back to our tree. Our truth has been expressed as love which should be the identity of the church. We are called Christians. If Christ is love, so are we. If Christ is truth, so are we. (Because) Christians means "little Christs." And now the church has a role to express who God is. God is love and his fullness is love.

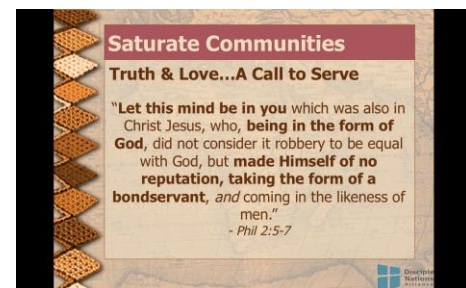


So, when we love, the fullness of God is being made visible. We are the hands and feet of Christ.

The last part is that truth and love is a *call to serve*. The highest reflection of the Kingdom of God is servanthood. That's why Jesus came to demonstrate. God could have shouted, with all respect, "I love you. But God said no. He wants to demonstrate His love and the only way that He could demonstrate how deeply He loves us is to lay down his life and to serve. To say, "This is how I love you. I'm willing to give everything for you." We couldn't understand the concept of His love until we experienced His service to us. He says, I didn't come to be serve, but to lay down my life. If our God and King shows His greatness in His servant heart, why do we want to be different?



First John 3:16-20 is saying this, "This is how we know love. Because He laid down His life for us and we ought to lay down our lives for the other." Let us love, not with words, but with actions. That's not saying that I need to do this in my own ability. My position is to abide in Christ and now is his love flowing through me. Let this mind, these thoughts which was also in Christ Jesus, being in the a form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation taking the form of a servant. That is how we as the church need to express God's love and His truth in the community where he placed us. It's one thing for a leader to serve if the community knows he's the leader.



He's been treated as the leader although he is serving. But, it is something totally different when a leader serves and is being treated as a servant. That is where we need to go, to lay down our lives, possess the Kingdom, not only the words, but with our entire being. To have our minds renewed, our hearts renewed, our spirits renewed, and filled with the spirit of Christ.



Now we have our picture complete. The truth in the roots is expressed as unselfish, Agape, covenant love. And the way we take that into society and community around us is to serve. As a result, the fruit of God, the delicious fruit of God, the nutritious fruit that we need, will flow through us.

Possessing the Kingdom is for a time as this. A call to truth for a time as this. A call to love for a time as this. And we can say possessing the Kingdom is a call to serve and that's what we need in the time that we are living in.

This is the essence of what this movement is about. It's about a worldview, a belief system that's rooted in truth. And out of that worldview flows a group of people, justified, sanctified,

loving their neighbor as they love themselves. And the way they go about doing it is to lay down their lives. It's not I that live but it's Christ living within. As a result the kingdoms of this world will become the Kingdom of our Christ. Amen.