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A publication for the families and friends of Asbury United Methodist Church

SCRIPTURE FOR THE WEEK: MATTHEW 6:33-34 but seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Gaining Concept of the Kingdom of God: by Taffi Dollar

What image comes to mind when you think of the kingdom of God? Do you imagine the kingdoms you may have seen in the movies or read about in fairy tales? We can gain concept of God's kingdom by reading His Word. The Bible is our manual for life, and it gives us accounts of people who have lived according to the kingdom throughout the ages.

The word kingdom is defined as a territory or a country subject to a king or queen. The kingdom of God is above all kingdoms, and it is based in unconditional love. Jesus is the King, and its constitution is called the Bible. When we make Jesus our Lord and Savior, we give Him permission to govern our lives. As a result, He gives us instructions through the written Word. As we follow Him, we become familiar with His voice or His leading. When we obey His voice, we begin to do His will; thereby, establishing His territory in this earth. Ultimately, we experience the good life He has planned for us—a life rooted in unconditional love.

As Believers, we are representatives (or ambassadors) of the kingdom of God. We are influencing the lives of people around us whether we realize it or not. Our lives should demonstrate that we are a peculiar people, set apart from the world system. Therefore, we shouldn't try to operate in both systems. Instead, we must live according to God's system only.

When Jesus came to the earth, He preached about the kingdom of God being available to us (**In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea 2 and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." Matthew 3:1-2, from that time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." Matthew 4:17**). Jesus wants us to partake of all that the kingdom has to offer, which includes eternal life, healing, and deliverance from bondage. However, in order to receive from the kingdom, we must change our thinking from that of a democratic perspective to a kingdom-of-God perspective. In the kingdom of God, we are all preachers. Jesus has commissioned us to go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to everyone (Mark 16:15). Soul winning is the assignment of the Believer, not just for ordained ministers. Therefore, we must refuse to be afraid to

step outside of our comfort zones and win souls. Every day we have the opportunity to share the Gospel with someone.

As you begin to gain concept of the kingdom of God, remember, you have a role to play. I encourage you to make a quality decision to live boldly for God and to spread the message about His way of doing things. If you do, you will make a mark in this world that can never be erased!

And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people. (Matthew 4:23)

And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. (Matthew 9:35)

Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel." (Mark 1:14-15)

[Jesus] said to them, "I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent."

Now it came to pass, afterward, that [Jesus] went through every city and village, preaching and bringing the glad tidings [gospel] of the kingdom of God. (Luke 8:1)

The law and the prophets were until John. Since that time the Kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is pressing into it. And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one title of the law to fail. (Luke 16:16-17)

And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come. (Matthew 24:14)

The announcement of "good news"—the very best news that could be heard today—which the Father gave through Jesus Christ, was about *His Kingdom being established on earth*.

But what is a kingdom? It is essentially a nation, with all of its citizens, land, and laws, ruled by a government.

A kingdom has four basic elements: 1) a king, supreme ruler, or governing agent; 2) territory, with its specific location and definite boundary lines; 3) subjects or citizens within that territorial jurisdiction; 4) and laws and a form of government through which the will of the ruler is exercised. If we ignore any one of these essential elements—if we ignore the message that Jesus Christ brought from the Father—we will have a distorted faith, one that will not bring salvation.