

"Kingdom of God"
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October 3, 2021

"And he entered the synagogue and for three months spoke boldly, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God. But when some became stubborn and continued in unbelief, speaking evil of the Way before the congregation, he withdrew from them and took the disciples with him, reasoning daily in the hall of Tyrannus. This continued for two years, so that all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks." (Acts 19:8-10)

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Pastor Wally said that Paul's "model" of preaching is found in Colossians 1:28-29: "Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me." Speaking on being "mature in Christ", Charles Spurgeon once said that, "[y]ou are not mature if you have a high esteem of yourself. He who boasts in himself is but a babe in Christ, if indeed he be in Christ at all. Young Christians may think much of themselves. Growing Christians think themselves nothing. Mature Christians know that they are less than nothing. The more holy we are, the more we mourn our infirmities, and the humbler is our estimate of ourselves." Ephesians 4:11-16 tells me that "[] he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love. (Emphasis added)" In 1887, Robert Shindler, a fellow pastor and close friend of Charles Spurgeon, wrote in Spurgeon's publication, *The Sword and the Trowel*: "It is all too plainly apparent men are willing to forego the old for the sake of the new. But commonly it is found in theology that that which is true is not new, and that which is new is not true." An example of this is The New World Translation Bible (2013 Revision), which is the Jehovah Witness "bible." In John 1:1 its translators deliberately and dishonestly alter it for the express purpose of denying the deity of Christ. It says, "In [the] beginning the Word was, and the Word was with God and the Word was a god. (The footnote indicates that 'a god' means 'was divine') Have some churches fallen for the fallacy of seeking that which is new or different in their theology and why?

In what way(s), if any, do I "have a high esteem" of myself?

Is it possible to consider myself to be an “expert” in some area without holding myself in “high esteem”? If so, how so? If not, why not?

Genesis 18:27 reminds me that “Abraham answered and said, “Behold, I have undertaken to speak to the Lord, I who am but dust and ashes.” (And the little boy looked up to his daddy and asked him, “Daddy, what is ‘but dust?’”) What does Spurgeon mean when he said that “mature Christians know that they are less than nothing”?

Pastor Wally pointed out that God’s total sovereign (“one who possesses the highest authority without control.” – Webster’s 1828 Dictionary) rule (His Kingdom) is: eternal and universal as well as transcendent (far way) and imminent (close). John Piper, speaking on the topic of the Kingdom of God pointed out that: “I think the most important thing I could say about the kingdom of God that would help people make sense out of all the uses is that the basic meaning of the word kingdom in the Bible is God’s reign — R-E-I-G-N — not realm or people. The kingdom creates a realm, the kingdom creates a people, but the kingdom of God is not synonymous (“Expressing the same thing; conveying the same idea.”, *ibid.*) with its realm or its people. For example, consider Psalms 103:19: “The Lord has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all.” You can hear the basic meaning of the word kingdom as rule. It doesn’t mean that his kingdom rules over his realm; it means that God’s reign or rule governs all things...The new emphasis, which is more explicit in the epistles, declares, “Jesus is Lord.” In fact, if you would have pressed me, I’d say “the kingdom has come” is almost synonymous with “Jesus is Lord.” Or to say it the other way round, “Jesus is Lord” is almost synonymous in the epistles with the kingdom — the reign — “the king has come.” Total sovereign rule means that nothing happens without the king’s consent. Christians will say that “Jesus is Lord” and mean it, but is Jesus my “sovereign” Lord? When I pray the Lord’s Prayer and get to that part in Matthew 6:10 and ask that “...Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven”, do I really, really, really mean for Him to have His will in everything in my life as well? Explain.

In Mark 12:28-34 Jesus has a discussion with a scribe: “And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, asked him, “Which commandment is the most important of all?” Jesus answered, “The most important is, ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your

strength.’ The second is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” And the scribe said to him, “You are right, Teacher. You have truly said that he is one, and there is no other besides him. And to love him with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength, and to love one’s neighbor as oneself, is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.” And when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” And after that no one dared to ask him any more questions” (Emphasis added). C.H. Spurgeon on Sunday evening, October 24, 1875 preached this about being “near the Kingdom”: “The great danger of it is that though you are not far from the Kingdom, you are not in it. A man was in a sinking ship. He almost leaped into the lifeboat, but just missed it and was drowned. The manslayer was fighting for his life and the avenger of blood was close behind him. He had almost reached the City of Refuge, but he was overtaken by his adversary just outside the gate—and so was slain. Almost saved is altogether lost! There are many in Hell who once were almost saved, but who are now altogether damned. Think of that, you who are not far from the Kingdom. It is being in the Kingdom that saves the soul, not being near the Kingdom. If you are just upon the border, yet if you have not actually entered, you are not secure. (Emphasis added)” How about my “Who’s Your One”? Is that person “almost saved, but...altogether damned”? If so, what, if anything, am I going to do about it and when?

Would I attend both a Sunday morning and a Sunday evening church service, if they were offered? If so, why so? If not, why not?

Pastor Wally pointed out that continuing in unbelief (continuing in disobedience) is a reminder that the Gospel is not a suggestion...it’s a command to be obeyed. So...to repeat a previously asked question, Is Jesus my “sovereign” Lord with total, complete control over my life?

Do I have things that I need to surrender to Him? If not, why not? If so, what things do I need to confess and surrender to Him?

Paul, when confronted with strong opposition, simply moved his meeting place and continued to “[speak] boldly, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God.” When confronted with strong opposition, is my tendency to change the venue and continue the mission or is it to become frustrated and give up and why?