

Kingdom Formation

a) Class Shift: From Seeing the Kingdom to Kingdom Formation

- The first sessions traced the purposed, promised, inaugurated, present, and future kingdom.
- The next 3-4 sessions focus on kingdom formation.

b) Two Responses to the King

- The world says, “We do not want this man to reign over us” (Luke 19:14).
- Christ’s disciples say, “Reign over every part of us.”
- Kingdom formation is the process by which Christ progressively establishes within His people the reign that the world refuses.

c) The Lamb-Nature Must Be Formed in Us

- T. Austin Sparks said, “Everything that is a complete antithesis of the Lamb [iniquity, evil, wickedness, sin, hatred, and malice] pervades this order of things. . . . This universe has got to be reconstituted upon the basis of the Lamb-nature.”
- It begins, in the words of François Fénelon (1651 to 1715), with “the death of self and the establishment of God’s throne upon the ruins of self-love.”

d) The Big Idea

- Before Jesus Christ establishes His throne in Jerusalem and reigns openly over the nations, He desires to first establish His throne within our hearts, bringing every part of our inner and outward lives under His reign.
- Before the promised kingdom of righteousness, justice, holiness, glory, peace, joy, healing, and freedom flows from Jesus’s throne in Jerusalem to the nations, He first establishes His throne within us and forms these same kingdom characteristics in our souls.

e) Kingdom Formation Defined

- Kingdom formation is the lifelong work of the indwelling Spirit by which every part of our inner and outward life is brought under the reign of Jesus Christ.
- Kingdom formation means His character is formed within us, and we are prepared to represent Him now and reign with Him in the age to come.

f) Salvation Begins the Journey

- The journey of kingdom formation begins through a genuine saving faith that includes repentance, poverty of spirit, and surrender to Jesus as Savior and Lord.
- Conversion begins a lifelong journey of learning to live under the King’s reign.
- Salvation brings us into the kingdom; kingdom formation brings every part of us under the reign of the King.

What Is the Kingdom of God?

a) The Kingdom Is More Than Going to Heaven

- The kingdom is not merely a future destination.
- It is the present reign of Jesus breaking into hearts, lives, families, churches, cities, and nations.
- The kingdom is present wherever Jesus is welcomed as Lord.

b) The Kingdom Is the Reign of Jesus Christ

- The kingdom of God is the reign of God through Jesus Christ as King.
- His reign is established wherever:
 - His will is done, His authority is submitted to, and His words are obeyed
 - His character is expressed and His power is manifested

c) The Kingdom Is About a King and His Government

- The kingdom is not first about a place.
- Where Jesus is acknowledged, obeyed, and welcomed, His kingdom is present through the Holy Spirit.

We Were Created to Live Under God's Reign

a) Humanity Was Created in God's Image

- God created humanity in His image according to His eternal purpose (Gen. 1:26–27).
- We were designed to:
 - Reflect His character, represent His authority, and live in fellowship with Him
 - Exercise delegated authority and fill the earth with His glory

b) Humanity Was Created to Reign Under God's Rule

- Genesis 1 connects God's image with dominion over the earth.
- Humanity was meant to reign only while remaining under God's rule.

c) Sin Distorted God's Intention

- Sin distorted God's image within us.
- It also distorted our ability to exercise His authority in the earth.

Sin Is the Rejection of God's Government

a) Sin Is Self-Rule

- Sin is more than breaking individual commandments.

- At its core, sin is self-rule—the rejection of God’s authority in favor of living independently of Him.
- It is placing ourselves on the throne, becoming our own god, our own king, and the final authority over our lives.
- Some have called sin “cosmic treason.”

b) Self-Rule Began with Lucifer

- Lucifer abandoned humble submission and declared, “I will” five times in Isaiah 14.
- Self turned Lucifer into the devil.
- The kingdom of darkness was born from pride, rebellion, independence, and self-rule.
- It became the empire of self.

c) The Two Trees Represented Two Ways of Living

- The choice was between:
 - Self-rule or Spirit-reliance
 - Independence or dependence upon God
 - The self-life or the life of Christ
 - Our wisdom or moment-by-moment reliance upon the Lord

d) Adam Chose Independence

- Adam became his own king and governed by his own thoughts and interests.
- He no longer waited in God’s presence or depended upon Him for direction.
- What appeared to be freedom became bondage.

e) The Kingdom of Self

- The kingdom of self chooses:
 - *My will* rather than God’s will.
 - *My thoughts* rather than God’s wisdom.
 - *My desires* rather than God’s desires.
 - *My interests* rather than God’s purpose.
 - *My control* rather than reliance upon the Spirit.
 - *My throne* rather than submission to the lordship of Christ.
- Adam aligned humanity with self-love, pride, independence, and rebellion.

f) The Kingdom of God Is the Complete Opposite

- God's kingdom reflects the Lamb-like nature of its King.
- It is marked by:
 - Humility, meekness, obedience, and selflessness
 - Self-control, generosity, servanthood, and submission to Jesus
- The kingdom of darkness is the empire of self; God's kingdom is the empire of sacrificial love.

g) The Gospel Calls Us Under the King

- The King rescues us from darkness and brings us under His lordship.
- God begins reconstituting our selfish nature into the nature of the Lamb.
- Sin says, "I will govern myself." The gospel calls us to relinquish the throne.

Two Thrones Example

a) The Throne of Self (Left)

- Every person is born sitting upon the throne of self.
- You say, "I decide what is right. I decide who receives my time, how I spend my money, what my moral boundaries will be, and what I will do with my future. I determine what God may and may not ask of me."

b) Christ Enthroned Within the Heart (Right)

- Salvation is not Jesus sitting beside us while we remain on the throne.
- Salvation is not Jesus sitting in the passenger's seat. He takes over driving the car altogether.
- Salvation yields the throne to Jesus as rightful Lord and King.

c) Life Under Christ's Lordship

- We begin to pray:
 - Lord, help me make decisions that please You.
 - Teach me to use my time for Your purposes and my resources to advance Your kingdom.
 - Establish the moral boundaries of my life.
 - Show me what I should and should not do.
 - Direct my steps and determine my future.

d) The Difference Between the Two Thrones

- The throne of self keeps me as final authority.

- Christ's lordship acknowledges that my life belongs to Him.

We Must Be Born Again to Enter the Kingdom

a) Jesus Spoke Clearly to Nicodemus

- "Unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3).
- "Unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5).

b) Human Credentials Cannot Bring Us In

- We do not enter through:
 - Our parents' faith, church attendance, tithing, or service
 - Good works, Bible knowledge, admiration of Jesus, or mental agreement

c) We Must Receive New Life

- We must receive new life from the Holy Spirit.
- Natural life cannot produce kingdom life.
- Only the Spirit can cause us to be born from above.

Salvation Is a Transfer of Kingdoms

a) An Incomplete Gospel Can Produce False Conversions

- John Wimber said, "Now that we've got the kingdom, all of our books will have to be rewritten."
- Applied to the gospel, salvation has often been detached from the gospel of the kingdom.
- I am afraid that there have been countless false conversions through the preaching of an incomplete gospel.
- The message is frequently reduced to forgiveness and going to heaven.
- Too little is said about God's reign, Christ's lordship, and a transfer of allegiance.
- Much of the way salvation has been presented in Western Christianity has been detached from the gospel of the kingdom.

b) The Gospel of the Kingdom Announces the King

- Jesus Christ is the risen and enthroned King.
- He defeated sin, death, and the powers of darkness.
- The gospel calls all people to repent, believe, and come under His rule.

c) Salvation Remains a Free Gift

- We do not earn salvation through obedience or complete submission.

- Salvation is received by grace through faith.
- Saving faith is wholehearted trust that surrenders to the King.
- d) The Gospel of Salvation Is True but Not the Whole Announcement
 - Jesus died so our sins can be forgiven and we can receive eternal life.
 - The gospel of the kingdom also announces that the crucified and risen Jesus is Lord and King.
 - It calls us from rival allegiances to living under His reign.
- e) We Enter a Kingdom, Not Merely a Destination
 - God brings us out of darkness and into the kingdom of His beloved Son.
 - Salvation begins a new life under a new government.
 - Conversion yields the throne and declares, “I am no longer my own.”
- f) Salvation Changes Everything
 - God rescues and transfers us into the Son’s kingdom (Col. 1:13).
 - This transfer changes our:
 - Identity and allegiance
 - Government and King
 - We are not merely forgiven under the same authority; we are brought under Jesus’s reign.

We Enter the Kingdom Through Saving Faith

- a) Saving Faith Is Not Mental Assent
 - Saving faith is not:
 - Cold agreement with Christian facts
 - Merely acknowledging Jesus or accepting facts about His death and resurrection
 - Repeating a prayer while the heart remains unchanged
- b) Biblical Faith Means Trust and Reliance
 - The Greek words for faith and believing describe trust, confidence, reliance, and entrusting oneself.
 - Saving faith places complete trust in Jesus Christ—fully embracing His divinity, faithfulness, finished work, and ability to save.
- c) Saving Faith Defined
 - Saving faith is a firm persuasion that Jesus is who He says He is.
 - It produces wholehearted trust, steadfast reliance, and full self-entrustment.

- Simply put: Saving faith trusts Christ and entrusts everything entirely to Him.

d) Saving Faith Trusts Jesus in Every Role

- We trust Him as:
 - The Son of God who came in the flesh
 - The Savior who died for our sins and rose for our justification
 - The Lord with rightful authority over our lives
 - The King to whom our allegiance belongs

e) Confessing Jesus as Lord Changes Allegiance

- In the first century, this confession could cost family, livelihood, freedom, or life.
- Saving faith believes Jesus, trusts Jesus, and entrusts everything to Jesus.

Our Engagement Illustrates Saving Faith

a) The Proposal Did Not Go as Planned

- The romantic plan became dark, cold, and frustrating, with no Plan B.
- The proposal happened in a car at a senior citizens' center.
- There was no speech or grand moment, but Angie said yes.

b) Agreement Alone Would Not Have Created a Marriage

- Angie could have agreed that I was a good man and marriage was good.
- She still could have refused the ring.
- That would have been agreement without marriage.

c) Covenant Required Self-Entrustment

- The difference came when she accepted the ring and entered the covenant.
- Marriage is more than agreeing that facts are true.

d) Saving Faith Entrusts the Whole Life to Christ

- We place our life, future, and eternal destiny into His hands.
- Because we trust Him, we surrender to Him as Savior, Lord, and King.

Saving Faith Inherently Includes Repentance

a) Jesus Commanded Repentance and Faith

- “The kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel” (Mark 1:15).

- The gospel detached from the kingdom only says “believe.”
- The gospel of the kingdom says, “repent and believe.”
- Repentance and faith form one unified, transformative response.

b) Repentance and Faith Emphasize Two Sides

- Repentance emphasizes the change within us.
- Faith emphasizes the Person toward whom we turn.
- Repentance is the turning *from*; faith is the turning *to*.

c) Biblical Repentance Changes the Inner Person

- Repentance is more than changing an opinion.
- It changes the heart and mind toward sin and produces a new direction.
- Confession admits sin; repentance turns from it toward God.

d) True Repentance Begins Internally

- It transforms:
 - Our thoughts, attitudes, desires, and purpose
 - Our attitude toward sin and our understanding of Jesus

e) Repentance Turns from Something to Someone

- We turn:
 - From unbelief, darkness, sin, idolatry, and Satan’s dominion
 - From self-rule, self-reliance, and confidence in our own righteousness
 - To Jesus Christ as God’s Son, Messiah, Savior, and Lord
- Saving faith is a radical shift of allegiance from every rival master to Christ.

f) Repentance and Faith Are Two Sides of the Same Turning

- Leaving Atlanta for Paris pictures repentance—turning away.
- Flying from Paris to Nairobi pictures faith—moving toward a destination.
- Salvation turns from sin and self-rule toward Jesus in complete trust.

g) Several Expressions Communicate the Same Truth

- Both repentance and faith are required for salvation.
- Repentance and faith form one inseparable condition.

- Repentance prepares the heart for saving faith.
- We are saved by faith alone, but saving faith inherently includes repentance.

Saving Faith Includes Heart-Level Surrender

a) Saving Faith Hands Christ the Reins

- True faith turns from sin, turns to Jesus, and hands Him the reins of life.
- Entrusting the whole life to Christ is, by its nature, surrender.

b) Surrender Is Trust in Action

- The seed of surrender is present from the beginning.
- Its ongoing fruit develops after salvation.
- Surrender yields because it trusts; it does not earn God's favor.

c) Surrender Is Not Sinless Perfection

- A person does not overcome every sin before being saved.
- Freedom from sin is a lifelong journey.
- Genuine repentance no longer defends the right to remain under a rival master.

d) Surrender Is Not Negotiation

- We do not say, "You can have most of me, but not this part."
- Saving faith brings every area beneath Christ's rightful authority.
- Practical submission still takes a lifetime.

e) Saving Faith Summarized

- Repentance turns from sin.
- Faith turns to Christ.
- Saving faith entrusts the whole person to Him as Savior, Lord, and King.

Poverty of Spirit Leads to Saving Faith

a) The Lordship Salvation Debate Raises Important Questions

- The Free Grace view emphasizes salvation as a free gift received by faith alone.
- The Lordship view warns against easy believism and false conversions, believing you must become a disciple to be saved.
- I land somewhere between the two positions.

b) We Are Saved by Faith—but Not by Just Any Faith

- Saving faith includes repentance and surrender to Christ.
- This surrender flows from poverty of spirit.

c) Poverty of Spirit Ends Self-Sufficiency

- Jesus said, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 5:3).
- Few, if any, scholars stress poverty of spirit as the soil of saving faith.
- The poor in spirit stop trusting in their goodness, wisdom, ability, resources, or righteousness.
- They become people of continual dependence upon Christ.
- Poverty of spirit says, “Apart from Christ, I am nothing, I can do nothing, and nothing good dwells within me.”
- Surrender responds, “Therefore, I give You everything.”
- Poverty of spirit is the soil in which saving faith grows.

d) The Thief and the Roman Soldier Were at the End of Themselves

- The thief on the cross simply believed because he was at the end of himself.
- The Roman soldier in Philippi was also prepared to trust Jesus because he could be executed for allowing prisoners to escape.

e) The Rich Young Ruler Was Self-Sufficient

- His wealth strengthened self-reliance and self-government.
- His claim, “All these things I have kept,” revealed spiritual confidence.
- Jesus sought the throne of his heart, but he refused to surrender.

f) Poverty of Spirit Prepares the Heart

- Poverty of spirit brings us to the end of self-reliance.
- It is the soil in which saving faith grows.
- Saving faith, by its nature, surrenders to Christ.

What Is Poverty of Spirit?

a) Poverty of Spirit Is the Foundation and Doorway

- Jesus begins the Sermon on the Mount with poverty of spirit (Matt. 5:3).
- It is the foundation of the other Beatitudes and the *doorway* into the kingdom.
- It remains the lifelong disposition of those under King Jesus.

b) The Poor in Spirit Are Utterly Dependent

- The Greek word describes an utterly destitute beggar with nothing to offer.
- Apart from Christ and His indwelling Spirit, we are nothing and can do nothing.

c) Poverty of Spirit Recognizes Spiritual Bankruptcy

- We possess no righteousness, merit, or self-sufficiency before God.
- We come empty-handed to receive mercy rather than offer merit.
- The kingdom is received, not achieved.

d) Poverty of Spirit Is Not a Negative Self-Image

- It is not financial poverty, low self-esteem, weakness, or depression.
- It is a Spirit-awakened awareness that we cannot save, transform, or sustain ourselves.

e) The Sinner in Luke 18 Models Poverty of Spirit

- He prayed, “God, be merciful to me, the sinner!”
- He brought no accomplishments, knowledge, or self-righteousness.
- The Pharisee trusted in his fasting and tithing.

f) Laodicea Lost Poverty of Spirit

- Laodicea claimed to be rich and in need of nothing.
- Jesus called them poor, blind, and naked.
- Their central problem was spiritual self-sufficiency.

g) The Kingdom Belongs to the Poor in Spirit

- The Greek does not explicitly say “theirs alone,” but the implication is clear.
- Only the poor in spirit are willing to receive the kingdom.
- We enter through faith and surrender, not strength.

h) Poverty of Spirit Is a Work of the Holy Spirit

- We do not produce poverty of spirit by ourselves.
- The Spirit convicts of sin, exposes pride, and reveals our bankruptcy apart from Christ.
- This gracious work (prevenient grace) begins before our response and continues throughout life.

i) Poverty of Spirit Deepens Throughout Life

- The Spirit exposes every form of self-government.

- Little by little, we stop trusting our independent abilities and resources.
- We become increasingly dependent upon Christ through His indwelling Spirit.

The Difference Between Surrender and Submission

a) Surrender and Submission Are Connected but Distinct

- Saving faith entrusts the whole life to Christ.
- That act of trust is surrender.

b) Surrender Happens in a Moment

- Surrender occurs when faith yields to Christ for salvation.
- It lets go of self-reliance and competing claims upon the heart.
- Surrender says, “My life belongs to You.”

c) Surrender Changes Ownership and Allegiance

- We may not understand every implication of Christ’s lordship at conversion.
- Every area is not yet walking in perfect obedience.
- But the fundamental ownership and allegiance of the heart have changed.

d) Submission Is the Lifelong Outworking of Surrender

- Submission brings each area under Christ’s authority through daily obedience.
- Submission says, “Because my life belongs to You, I will obey You here.”

e) The House Illustration

- You face foreclosure after losing your job.
- A wealthy man buys the house and lets you remain.
- His condition: your belongings go out; his better furnishings come in.
- Ownership changes instantly when a house closes.
- Unpacking your stuff and moving in his stuff takes time.
- Surrender changes ownership; submission packs and unpacks every room of life.

f) Submission Deepens Through Discipleship

- The Spirit progressively addresses our thoughts, desires, relationships, habits, finances, ambitions, bodies, plans, words, and reactions.
- He reveals what surrender means in the details of daily life.

g) Surrender Is Decisive; Submission Is Progressive

- Surrender establishes Christ's rightful ownership.
- Submission brings each area beneath His practical government.
- Surrender says, "I am Yours." Submission says, "Since I am Yours, I will obey here."
- Surrender is the root; submission is the fruit.

Conversion Begins the Journey of Kingdom Formation

a) Formation Is Not a Requirement for Entrance

- We are not formed so that we can enter the kingdom.
- We are formed because we have entered the kingdom.

b) Regeneration Begins Life Under the King

- We enter the kingdom through saving faith that includes repentance and surrender.
- Regeneration begins our life under Jesus's reign.

c) Sanctification Is Lifelong Kingdom Formation

- Sanctification is the lifelong process of learning to live under Christ's reign.
- The Holy Spirit progressively brings every area under the King's authority.

d) The Kingdom Progressively Enters Every Area

- We enter the kingdom by faith.
- The kingdom enters every area of our lives through formation.
- We learn to submit to Jesus Christ as King.