

**Sermon Series: “When Heaven Invades Earth”—Lord of Life Lutheran, Westfield, IN 4/29/2007**

**Title: “The Kingdom of God Is Within You”**

**Text: Luke 17: 20-21**

**Intro.: Ills.: “It” Commercials — everyone kept guessing for several months – Information Technology**

**Theme:** Because of the risen Christ who indwells us with his Spirit, we become the living presence of God’s Kingdom to our world as we live in it.

***Jesus tells us what the kingdom of God won’t be and what it is***

- *“The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed.” vs. 20*
- Frustrating the skeptical pragmatist in our midst
  1. The Pharisees wanted signs to prove that Jesus was who he said he was
  2. *As the crowds were increasing, He began to say, “This generation is a wicked generation; it seeks for a sign, and yet no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah. “For just as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so will the Son of Man be to this generation. Luke 11:29-30*
  3. Repenting of a “pay as you go” relationship with God
    - a. **Ills.: New track phone — no commitments, no contracts**
- Decertifying our self-proclaimed saviors and salvation plans
  1. *“Nor will they say, ‘Look, here it is!’ and ‘There it is!’”*
  2. A fascination with trying to get the scoop on Jesus’ return
    - a. **Read Luke 17: 24-37 – four analogies: lightning, Noah’s flood, Lot’s Sodom, vultures and road kill**
    - b. A front for insidious self-idolatry and man-made hopes
    - c. *For false Christs and false prophets will arise, and will show signs and wonders, in order to lead astray, if possible, the elect. “But take heed; behold, I have told you everything in advance. Mark 13:22-23*
  3. A kingdom which is not advanced by human shows of power and bravado
    - a. *Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place.” John 18:36*
    - b. *For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ. 2 Cor. 10:3-5*
    - c. The power of the cross and resurrection is our message, purpose, and hope
  4. The point: Being careful who you hook your salvation train to—test out the philosophy and leaders who lead you

***Jesus says the kingdom of God is seeing and trusting the unseen (“The kingdom of God is within you.”)***

- A Kingdom requiring you to be born again
  1. Not something which you do to yourself but what God does in you — “in Christ” and “Christ within you”
    - a. **Illus.: The case of a missing God**
  2. Like the wind you can’t predict, prognosticate, manipulate, and box God in — letting him be in the driver’s seat
    - a. **Print and read John 3: 5-8**
- A Kingdom requiring a new set of eye – spiritual eyesight transplant
  1. How we view Kingdom life and our participation in it
    - a. *Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ. Col. 2:16-17*
  2. What view of Kingdom life we give to others through our new eyes
    - a. *For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, Romans 14:17*
- A Kingdom requiring a different set of priorities – no longer thinking like we used to or the way the world does
  1. *“But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Matthew*

6:33

2. **Ills.: the kingdom of electricity**

3. Career choice, neighborhood lived in, activities that you choose to do/not do, how you go about your work at your workplace, your parenting, your care for your health, your view of retirement, what you invest your life in

a. **Ills.: A new and renewed purpose in work**

**The case of a missing God**

A couple had two boys, 8 and 10, who were always getting into trouble. The parents were certain if any mischief occurred in the community that their two young sons were involved. They were at a loss as to what to do about their behavior. Then the mother heard about a clergyman who'd been successful in disciplining children, so she brought the boys to him. The minister asked to see the boys individually, and the youngest went first. The clergyman sat the boy down and asked, "Where is God?" The boy made no attempt to answer. The question was repeated in a sterner voice but still no answer. Then the minister shook his finger at the boy and asked in an even sterner voice, "Where is God?" At that the boy ran from the room and into a closet and slammed the door. His older brother followed him in and asked what happened. The younger brother replied, "We're in trouble this time. God is missing, and they think we did it!" **The Bridge; submitted by Owen Bourgaize, Castel, Guernsey, United Kingdom**

**The Kingdom of Electricity**

Dallas Willard writes: As a child I lived in an area of southern Missouri where electricity was available only in the form of lightning. We had more of that than we could use. But in my senior year of high school the REA (Rural Electrification Administration) extended its lines into the area where we lived, and electrical power became available to households and farms. When those lines came by our farm, a very different way of living presented itself. Our relationships to fundamental aspects of life—daylight and dark, hot and cold, clean and dirty, work and leisure, preparing food and preserving it—could then be vastly changed for the better. But we still had to believe in the electricity and its arrangements, understand them, and take the practical steps involved in relying on it. You may think the comparison rather crude, and in some respects it is. But it will help us to understand Jesus' basic message about the kingdom of heaven if we pause to reflect on those farmers who, in effect, heard the message: "Repent, for electricity is at hand." Repent, or turn from their kerosene lamps and lanterns, their iceboxes and cellars, their scrub-boards and rug beaters, their woman-powered sewing machines and their radio with dry-cell batteries. The power that could make their lives far better was right there near them where, by making relatively simple arrangements, they could utilize it. Strangely, a few did not accept it. They did not enter the kingdom of electricity. Some just didn't want to change. Others could not afford it, or so they thought. To be sure, that kingdom [God's] has been here as long as we humans have been here, and longer. But it has been available to us through simple confidence in Jesus, the Anointed, only from the time he became a public figure. **Dallas Willard, The Divine Conspiracy, (HarperCollins Publishers, 1997), pp. 30-31; submitted by Gerald Deguire, Westbank, British Columbia, Canada**

**A new and renewed purpose in work**

I am a surgical assistant—the surgeon's right-hand man. At one point in my career, I lost my passion. I wanted a job with spiritual significance, and I prayed for that. Imagine my shock when God led me to a position in plastic surgery. *Why would God want me in a hotbed of vanity?* I wondered. During my quiet times, the Lord assured me that this was part of his plan, and that I should wait upon his direction. So I obeyed, continuing to pray that the Lord would use me in this job. The first thing I heard him say when I started my new position was, "Gather and pray in my name." There were only a few Christians who worked in the plastic surgery department, but I started with them. "I'm going to start praying for our workplace each Monday, 15 minutes before we clock in," I told them. "I'll be in Operating Room 2, and I hope you will join me." We met each week, praying for our work, our colleagues, and our patients. Soon we were praying boldly for opportunities to witness. By the end of that

year, God had answered many prayers, which included 10 friends who accepted Christ as their savior! God has blown me away with his answers, and he has given me a purpose far beyond patient care. He expanded my circle of influence by transferring me to the main surgery department, where I now rotate through all four surgery departments in the hospital campus. I have been able to start several prayer groups throughout the hospital. Each group focuses on inviting the Holy Spirit to move in their department. They encourage each other in Christ, pray for opportunities to witness, seek God's will, and ask that Christ be glorified in their work. I don't know if I'll always work in a surgery department, caring for patients who are under anesthesia most of the time I'm with them. But since I realized that I could advance the kingdom of God through praying at work, I have found renewed passion for my job, as well as for the opportunities for ministry it provides. **Used by permission of Pray! magazine. Copyright © 2006, The Navigators. Used by permission of NavPress. All rights reserved. [www.praymag.com](http://www.praymag.com) Brandon A. Bradley, "Prayer at Work: Surgical Assistant," Pray! (July/August 2006), p. 23**

### **Luke 17:20-21**

<sup>20</sup>Now having been questioned by the Pharisees as to when the kingdom of God was coming, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed; <sup>21</sup>nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or, 'There it is!' For behold, the kingdom of God is within you."

### **John 3:5-8**

<sup>5</sup>Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. <sup>6</sup>Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. <sup>7</sup>You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' <sup>8</sup>The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."