

The Church – The Agent to Advance the Kingdom

Dr. John Carmichael

[Mat 4:17 NASB95] 17 From that time Jesus began to preach and say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

[Mat 6:10 NASB95] 10 'Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven.

[Mat 4:23 NASB95] 23 Jesus was going throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people.

[Mat 9:35 NASB95] 35 Jesus was going through all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.

[Mat 16:18-19 NASB95] 18 "I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. 19 "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven."

- Think of an embassy in a foreign land. It represents the authority, culture, and interests of its homeland. The Church is Heaven's embassy on earth!
- Jesus' central theme: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 4:17).
- The Kingdom = God's rule, God's reign, God's will done on earth as it is in heaven.
- The Church = God's gathered people, filled with the Spirit, chosen to announce and manifest His Kingdom in the earth.
- So, if the Kingdom is God's rule, then how does it advance today? Through the Church.

How does the church participate in the advancement of the Kingdom?

Here are four truths about how the church participates in the advancement of the Kingdom.

I. The Church Proclaims the Kingdom

- a. [Mat 24:14 NASB95] 14 "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.
- b. [Act 28:30-31 NASB95] 30 And he stayed two full years in his own rented quarters and was welcoming all who came to him, 31 preaching the kingdom of God and teaching concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all openness, unhindered.
- c. The early Church didn't just preach forgiveness of sins; they preached the Kingdom. The reign of King Jesus over every area of life.
- d. The Church's first assignment is proclamation: declaring the reign of Christ.
- e. John Wesley said, "I look upon all the world as my parish." That is Kingdom vision.
- f. Expand our mindset. We are not just inviting people to church; we are inviting them into God's Kingdom rule. Every sermon, testimony, and outreach is a Kingdom proclamation.

II. The Church Demonstrates the Kingdom

- a. [Rom 14:17 NASB95] 17 for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.
- b. The early Church lived out generosity, unity, miracles, and joy. [Act 2:42-47 NASB95] 42 They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. 43 Everyone kept feeling a sense of

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awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. 44 And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; 45 and they [began] selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need. 46 Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.

- c. The Church is the living model of what the Kingdom looks like.
- d. Outsiders should taste the Kingdom when they see our love, peace, and Spirit-filled joy.
- e. Salt and light (Matthew 5:13–16). You don't eat salt by itself, but when it's sprinkled, you taste the difference. The Church is the seasoning of the Kingdom in the world.
- f. Ask: "When the world looks at our church, do they see a foretaste of God's Kingdom?" Let the world see unity, holiness, generosity, and Spirit-led living.

III. The Church Advances the Kingdom in Power

- a. [1Co 4:20 NASB95] 20 For the kingdom of God does not consist in words but in power.
- b. [Act 1:8 NASB95] 8 but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."
- c. The Kingdom is not just words or ideas; it is demonstrated in Holy Spirit power.
- d. Healings, deliverances, bold preaching, signs, and wonders are marks of Kingdom advancement.
- e. In Acts 8, Philip preached the Kingdom in Samaria. People were healed, demons fled, and great joy filled the city.
- f. Expect God's power in your everyday life...not just in church services, but at work, at home, and in the community.

IV. The Church Is Destined to Reign with Christ

- a. Jesus gave the Church the keys of the Kingdom. [Mat 16:18-19 NASB95] 18 "I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. 19 "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven."
- b. [Rom 5:17 NASB95] 17 For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.
- c. [Rev 5:9-10 NASB95] 9 And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood [men] from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. 10 "You have made them [to be] a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth."
- d. The Church is God's advancing army, not a defeated remnant.
- e. Christ gave us authority to bind and loose, to push back the kingdom of darkness, and to prepare the way for His return.
- f. Think of a king who entrusts his ambassadors with authority. When they act, it is as if the king himself is acting. That's the authority Christ has given His Church.
- g. We are not called to retreat. We are called to reign and advance until Jesus comes.

- **The Church is not the Kingdom itself, but it is God's chosen agent to proclaim, demonstrate, and advance His Kingdom on earth until Christ returns.**
- **We proclaim it, we demonstrate it, we advance it in power, and we anticipate its fullness when Christ returns.**