

Kingdom Progression – Part 4

We're in the series called Kingdom Progression. I began with an introduction just to explain my usage of posters and my usage of terms such as soul and spirit. Then we looked at Adam, both in his pre-fall condition and post-fall condition. Then we looked at ourselves, post-salvation as babes in Christ. Today in session 4, we'll go into us, post-salvation in the double-minded state. So this is Kingdom Progression, Part 4, on February 20, 2008. I'll briefly review the posters that we've looked at before just to keep us oriented as to our progression. Adam in his pre-fall condition was totally innocent before his holy God. I depicted that with the color green. At that time Adam was functioning as God determined. His desires were coming from God; he had done nothing contrary to God. He had no—nothing to be guilty about. He had no condemnation and no shame and no fear and had nothing to hide. No change was needed.

Next poster. Then we looked at Adam in his post-fall condition. It's critical that we understand that because that is the same as us, pre-salvation. And it's the same for every human being born who is a son of Adam. Adam, when he chose to eat of the forbidden fruit, after the temptation of Satan, that if you disobey God and eat of that forbidden fruit, you will be like God. In other words, be your own god. When Adam did that, then he did die. What died immediately was his spirit. I depicted that as small and black representative of the fact that his spirit is now dead to God. Although a sovereign God can speak through a spirit that cannot connect with God on its own accord; because death is not limiting to a sovereign God Who is the God of life. The soul at that time which I use to mean mind, emotion, and will is also dead to God. It has now created the sin nature which is self on the throne so that all the desires that flow in the mind of man originate from self on the throne. He cannot reapproach God on his own in his spiritual deadness. At this time we can use soul or spirit or any word of your choice to represent immaterial man because it is all dead to God. In the innocent stage, pre-fall, it was all God determined. So up unto this point, having two different words to represent the two parts of immaterial man is not critical, not a critical consideration. At this stage, man has declared I am my own god. He does not want to change and he knows that he doesn't want to change because he doesn't like submission; he likes being autonomous and making all of his own calls. What he does not know in his lost condition of deadness to God is he cannot change. He is depraved and we explored depravity in that session in some detail.

Next poster. That exchange from the innocent state to the dead state, I call the dark exchange. Now we come to ourselves, post-salvation as babes in Christ. We are newborn as children of God. At this stage our spirit is now alive to God. I've depicted the newborn spirit, the new creation, the new man in red because it is blood bought. It is purchased by the cross of Jesus Christ and then we're given the gift of spirit life by God Himself through Jesus Christ. The sin nature is still here and still operative with self on the throne. There's now been introduced a second pathway from the will which can go into the spirit and then access into the mind. But as a babe in Christ, recall that only a tiny part of the mind is renewed, so only a tiny part of the mind is shown in red. We're still largely functioning using our will to go the pathway that it has habitually gone into self on the throne, which is the sin nature, to access the things of the mind with which to make our decisions and behaviors. At this point we are children of God and our desires are coming from God. We desire to please God, desire to do the things of God, do not desire primarily to sin, but still turn into the sin nature to accomplish the things of God. So the

pathway into the spirit is drawn as broken because it's largely theoretical and largely unused. The newborn babe in Christ tends to think "I will change automatically".

Next poster. This is the poster that will remain up during the remainder of the session today. The subject for today is us post-salvation in the double-minded condition. Notice that all the basic structures on this poster are identical to those on the previous one—namely the babe in Christ poster. What has changed at this point is our awareness. This increased awareness follows our longer time as a Christian. As babes we thought that change would occur automatically; but when we reach this stage, we have been Christians long enough to know that change has not occurred automatically. Now we do that which seems appropriate to us. We resolve to make change occur. This is the behavior that has worked throughout all of our lives on planet Earth. It's the behavior that our capitalistic, athletic, competitive society teaches us to apply in all aspects of life. This is the behavior that virtually every other Christian with greater apparent maturity has counseled us to adopt. We increase our efforts beginning with conjuring up more will power. We resolve with greater resolve to pray more, to pray harder, to read our Bibles more, to memorize more verses, to attend more conferences, to read more books, to listen to more tapes, to attend church more, to listen more carefully, to take notes to that which we listen to, and to study the notes which we take. Our increased efforts are encouraged and applauded by almost all other Christians. We are assured that victory is forthcoming and that we're on the pathway.

But after a longer period of time, the return on our investment in the spirit realm seems to be meager. Notice that the spot of red in the mind of man is slightly larger than it was during the phase of the babe in Christ; but it's not much larger. That indicates that our mind, in the double-minded condition, still remains largely unrenewed. We, of course, have the mind of Christ; but that is in our spirit. The mind of Christ has not yet been transferred into our minds to renew our minds. We constantly compare our efforts and results with others. If others appear more spiritual, we do two things. We feel a bit condemned at our apparent failure by comparison and we ask them their secret of spiritual growth. If they appear less spiritual than ourselves, we feel pride in our spiritual progression and are quick to look for ways to tell them our methodology so that they can reach the level of maturity that we are. After awhile we notice that we are more or less like other Christians. We begin to wonder if this is all that there is to the Christian life. But we're still bothered that so little change has occurred. There is precious little fruit of the Spirit. We notice that we are better at faking the abundant life than we are at accessing and experiencing the abundant life. We have no deliverance. If we were alcoholics when we got saved, we're still alcoholics. If we were addicted to internet pornography before we got saved, we're still addicted to internet pornography. We have no deliverance. We experience defeat. Frustration increases. This is when we cry out as Paul cried out in Romans 7:24 – Oh wretched man that I am who will deliver me from this body of sin? We're not hypocrites because a hypocrite is untroubled by sin. But this person is deeply troubled by his persistent sin and lack of deliverance from his sin. So the person who has a huge fall such as Jimmy Swaggart, but is deeply troubled by the lack of deliverance and by the fall, is not a hypocrite because he's ripped apart by the state of old wretched man that I am. The person who is a charlatan is untroubled by the mismatch between what his spirituality would call for and what he exhibits. That's the person who's the hypocrite. But the person who says oh wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from this body of sin has failed, but is not a hypocrite. And we need to be careful to

make that distinction. At this stage we hate sin; but we cannot stop sinning. So what in the world is going on?

Well, here's part of what's going on. Reaching this state of "old wretched man that I am," actually represents Christian progress because we have gone past the babe in Christ stage of thinking that transformation would occur automatically. That is progress. In fact we're in good company. That's why the apostle Paul followed exactly this trajectory and wrote Romans, chapter 7 so that we would recognize this stage which follows the babe in Christ stage. The problem fundamentally is this. We have tried to use the flesh to produce spiritual results. Remember on the "babe in Christ" poster there was a dark line from the will into the sin nature, and from the sin nature into the mind. It is a solid black line because that's the pathway that we followed before salvation and that's the pathway that we follow habitually after salvation. Notice on this poster that the solid black line from the will into the sin nature and then from the sin nature into the mind is even bolder and thicker than it was before. This reflects all of our increased efforts to use willpower and self power to bring about transformation. Recall that the sin nature is fundamentally self on the throne. Self on the throne is the root of what the Bible calls the flesh. What we've been doing up to this point is what the Galatians had been doing that provoked the Holy Spirit to inspire Paul to write in Galatians 3:3 – are you so foolish, having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? We are using self to try to improve self. We're using self to promote self esteem so that we feel better about ourselves. We're using self to not sin. We're using self to do self works. We're using self to deny self. We're going to counseling to try to help self feel better about self. But it is all self on the throne. Our foolishness is in turning to the sin nature to try to control the sin nature. We're trying to use self to control self and we're trying to use self to deny self. From the Spirit we do have godly desires. But we again follow the path of Paul who wrote in Romans 7:19 – the things that I want to do I don't do; and the things that I don't want to do I do. That's not hypocrisy, that's the stage of double-mindedness of "oh wretched man that I am." We are truly double-minded because we still have the sin nature that we're operating in; but we also have the new self which has the mind of Christ and in some small part has begun to renew our minds. We are born again. We are new creations. We are new men. We are children of God and we are destined for eternity future with God. We do have godly desires; but we're incapable of walking out those godly desires. Acts 17:28 speaks of – in Him we live and move and have our being. In the double-minded condition, in Him we do have our being; but we do not yet in Him live and move. Philippians 1:21 says – to live is Christ and to die is gain. Well in our double-minded state, in Him, we do not yet live. We're not in Christ in our functioning; but to die is gain because our eternity future is assured as a newborn creature, as a child of God.

The key to entering the next stage is to note the following. Recall that once we are saved we have two pathways to follow. One is the habitual path from all our pre-salvation condition that turns from the will into the sin nature. That's what the only pathway we had when we were unsaved. That's because in the unsaved condition, the spirit is dead. There is no second pathway here. Thus only the sin nature pathway was available in our unsaved condition. That means that turning into the flesh is our only pathway prior to salvation. But after salvation a second pathway has opened up. The spirit is now alive. In fact Romans 6:11 tells us – consider yourselves alive to God. The spirit is filled with the Holy Spirit. However, in this double-minded condition, it's critical to note that the red line pathway from the will into the spirit is still

depicted as a broken line. That's because it has still hardly been used. Instead we followed the well worn pathway of the rut which is reaching Grand Canyon proportions from the will into the sin nature and then turning back into the mind. In fact we cut the ruts even deeper because of our increased efforts to use self to deny self. The problem is that the sin nature as a filter into the mind, and the sin nature as a frame of reference for functioning in the spiritual walk, has already precluded any significant progress. That's why we're in a wretched condition. This is why. Recall that self determination is the fundamental problem. Man pronounced himself as self determined. That's the root of self being on the throne. Self on the throne is the root of the flesh. The flesh is functioning in the kingdom of this world. The kingdom of this world is the kingdom of darkness. The kingdom of darkness is ruled by the god of this world and the god of this world, we're told in II Corinthians 4:4 is Satan himself.

We're not possessed of Satan. We're simply doing the work of Satan out of ignorance. We're focused on self performance including self evaluation of our self performance. If our evaluation by ourselves is called by self as good, we feel pride. If our evaluation by self is called poor, we feel condemnation. Satan doesn't really care which; he is content with either. That's because pride brings no glory to Jesus Christ and condemnation brings no glory to Jesus Christ. No one yet has ever won someone to Jesus Christ by functioning in pride or self condemnation. Since Satan's entire purpose is to be anti-Christ, then he wins either way. He only cares that we are using the sin nature to be good Christians. And by using the sin nature to be good Christians, it has prevented any true worship from ever occurring. He is indeed the father of lies. The lie here is that he has us believing at all times that we are either good Christians or bad Christians. But our belief is based on our self evaluation of our self performance as Christians. Thus, we have a desire to worship God; but we spend all of our time worshipping self, while self-pronouncing it as worship to God. We even use self to evaluate our worship as being good or bad. You've heard people say that was good worship; or the worship was weak. We're judging if God should be pleased with it or not. But can you imagine anything more audacious than a Christian judging that which is supposedly offered to God? Only God can judge if it is good worship or bad worship. And when we're doing that, what we're doing is self-evaluating our self performance in supposedly worshipping God while precluding worship to God by relying on self throughout the whole process.

Recall that self is what Adam chose. That choice created the sin nature to begin with. This is the depravity of man. We have been trying to worship God by using that which cut us off from God to begin with. We've been trying to defeat Satan by playing on Satan's home park, playing by Satan's rules, and playing with that which Satan uses to control us—namely self on the throne. No wonder that the child of God who has desires to please God throws up his hands and says "oh wretched man that I am, who will save me from this body of sin?" The things I want to do I don't do; the things I don't want to do I do. We are truly stuck on the tar-baby of sin which has as its roots self on the throne. Well praise God that it doesn't end there. At least it does not have to end there. But if we allow it to end there, then we will simply fulfill Isaiah 56:12 which says – tomorrow will be like today only more so. We are likely to develop an unexpressed low-grade resentment toward God while judging that we tried really hard; but obviously God has not fully delivered or is not fully aware or His promises cannot fully be relied upon because that which He called the abundant life has escaped us. That kind of expression we quickly learn, if overtly made to other Christians, would result in a tidal wave of suggestions coming back to us from

others. So we keep it to ourselves. We do that because the few times that we tried to be transparent and introduce a description of our spiritual state to others, invariably, we are told by well-meaning Christians to simply do more of that in which we have been unfruitfully engaged for the whole process. A covert tendency to criticize then begins to intrude. We become a bit cynical and a bit suspicious about anyone who seems to be making more spiritual progress than we are. We tend to regard them as simply successfully camouflaging their own spiritual failure. We know that because we've gotten quite good at it ourselves. The unity of the church seems to be more than unity in Christ; it seems to be in unity of faking it till we make it. They must be faking it because if they weren't faking it, the behaviors of the church would not mirror the behaviors of society. Obviously they must be faking it because the pathologic behaviors in the church such as divorce, abortion, and so on match the behaviors of the non-Christian world. So obviously somebody's faking something. The world looks at the church then and views it as hypocritical and understandably so. In some ways we can even become adept at withdrawing from church without appearing to be withdrawing from church; because if we really begin to withdraw, people start to harass us to do more of that which we found unfruitful. That's when we enter what I call the Michael Jackson phase of Christianity. Remember Michael Jackson introduced the concept of the moon walk, while you're walking backwards while appearing to walk forward—the optical illusion. So the moon walk phase of Christianity is when we begin to withdraw from church without appearing to withdraw from church. We appear to be going forward because we're doing so much good stuff; but in fact, we're withdrawing because we're losing faith in the power of God to bring about transformation in our lives.

We have to fight the good fight of faith and fight through the spiritual fog. If we settle into this condition and do not fight the good fight, then God gets no glory. The world gets no effective witness and we get no fulfillment. There's one key stage in our spiritual progression that we've yet to learn to function in. Paul obviously learned it because he did not remain stuck in Romans chapter 7. If he had remained there, then he would have been the joke to the Gentile world instead of the apostle to the Gentile world. Why would anyone pay attention to a message brought by someone who manifested "oh wretched man that I am?" That would not be considered effective marketing by anybody.

The next stage in our Christian progression is the critical one. It seems to be the one that we have trouble accessing and functioning in. It's so important that we're going to explore what lies on the other side of it to help us zero in on this critical state. That's to help maximize the clarity by contrast of that which comes before it and that which follows afterwards. I'm not being coy about this stage. I simply believe that first it's critical for me to understand and explain it to others that we do so. So for these reasons, the next time that we meet, we'll go to the last stage in our Kingdom Progression—namely the eternal state and begin to work backwards from there to come to the next stage. Now even secularists know to do this. In the book, The Seven Habits of Highly Effectively People, one of the seven habits is to begin with the end in mind. We want to at least be as effective as the secularists are at their methodology. Jesus told us as much in Luke 16:8 when He effectively said – that the unsaved are shrewder in using the system of this world than the saved are in using the system of the Kingdom of God. After all, it doesn't matter much where we are if we don't know where we're going. If we don't know where we're going, how can we ever know if we're headed in the right direction? So to help us keep focused on the sequence,

on the plan that I'm following in this series, here's a brief restatement to conclude today. There are seven key stages in our kingdom progression. We have reviewed the first four. These are:

1. Adam pre-fall
2. Adam post-fall (which is us pre-salvation)
3. Us post-salvation as babes in Christ where we think that change will automatically occur
4. And us post-salvation in the double-minded state which represents progress to even know that change is not occurring automatically, except we wrongly conclude that we will now make change occur.

Stage five is what I call the Kingdom Life stage. That's the critical one. And we'll zero in on it and spend several weeks there. But to help us zero in on it, next week we will look beyond it and we'll go to the last—namely stage seven which is the eternal state and then work backward to stage six which is the unattainable perfection state while Christians here on planet Earth. The unattainable perfection is our target; but we never fully reach there because if we did we would be as it is in the eternal state. And the man who says he has no sin in himself deceives himself. So we will never reach perfection; but we are to target perfection and not be satisfied with a certain level that we think is acceptable imperfection.

Then after we've done that, we'll begin our close examination and close dissection of the key stage which is stage five—namely the Kingdom Life stage. And when we do that, remember, we become what we behold. So we are going to behold it in great detail over a period of several weeks and pray in the process that we then become what we behold.

So my time is up for today and I thank you for yours.