

Kingdom Progression – Part 8

Welcome to Kingdom Progression, Part 8, April 2, 2008. We're in the series called Kingdom Progression. We're continuing to approach our last stage of understanding Kingdom Progression. There are three key components required to understand this last stage. We're in session 8; we began with this poster. I simply called it Kingdom Progression because it summarizes the entire life of the Christian on Earth. It depicts us as progressing from the unsaved to the saved condition by being drawn by God and receiving spirit life from God bringing about a series of blood bought changes. After receiving the gift of spirit life from God, it shows us then seeing the love of God. We then love God. To love God also means to love ourselves; because if I have a passion to be one with God, that is to love God. And if I have a passion that I become one with God, that is to love myself. So the love of God and the love of myself are simply two aspects of the same love. Our love is then expressed toward others as we love others as we love ourselves. And we love ourselves to become one with God. We then love our neighbor by having a passion that he become one with God; which is then to love our neighbor as ourselves. That love is then expressed as fruit of the Spirit and that fruit of the Spirit manifest in our lives begins to draw others toward God to continue the whole process. So this poster depicts us as living entirely as God intended. That is to say living entirely out of our new spirit, our new creation self and not living at all out of our flesh. This poster was simplified because it is an overview poster. It omits the functional aspects of our Christian walk and by that I mean it omits the will, the mind, and the functional connections between the will, the mind, the flesh, and the spirit.

Next poster. Then last week we went to the second of the three key components. Here I omitted the overview that we just looked at and included that which was omitted on the overview poster. Here I draw only the will, the mind, and the functional connections between the will, the mind, the flesh, and the spirit. This shows us not the overview, but how we are to function in our Kingdom Progression. Self determination is the root of self on the throne. Self on the throne is the root of what's called the flesh. The flesh is the pathway of all sin. And as Romans 7:18 tells us – in my flesh dwells no good thing. In prior stages of our Christian walks such as babes in Christ and double-mindedness, the will habitually followed the habitual well worn ruts into the flesh as the frame of reference for all analysis, interpretation, and decision making. This led to the fulfillment of Romans 7:24 – Oh wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from this body of sin? But now in our greater understanding we engage in the battle. We begin a new approach. We now have the will turn into the spirit where Jesus is the basis for all things. He becomes the object of our gaze and the basis of all analysis, interpretation, understanding and decision making. This change in this functional connection is what takes us from Romans chapter 7, which is here, into Romans chapter 8 which is here. And all of this represents blood bought change purchased by Jesus Christ on the cross and shows us functionally how we're to walk that out. When we do that by turning into the spirit, this looses the Holy Spirit to do what the Holy Spirit came to do; because He came to bear witness of Jesus and to bring glory to Jesus. He did not come to bear witness of us and to bring glory to us.

The mind then begins to get renewed to the mind of Jesus Christ which is in the spirit accessed through the Spirit of truth, the Holy Spirit. We now become holier almost by accident than we previously did through primary intent while we were focused on self using self to improve self to

the point of denying self. The illustration that I used to conclude last time is this. We are told to deny self; however self can never deny self. Self gets denied, but not by having us deny self in a direct way. We enter the spirit by gazing at Jesus constantly. The Holy Spirit then begins to produce the fruit called self control. The Holy Spirit then empowers the roadblock to shut off the will turning into the flesh. Thus, self control occurs and self gets denied, not by our willpower, but through the fruit of self control. This occurs only if we're gazing at Jesus Christ, not gazing at ourselves in our impossible attempt to deny that which is the root of the problem to begin with. So in an ultimate sense, the meaning of deny self is to deny that we can deny self. When we have finally acknowledged that we cannot deny self, we're then on the way to having self denied. This isn't double talk; this is simply how God views reality; because self gets denied, not by our willpower, but by being in His will, we access His power. His power then provides the fruit of self control by the Holy Spirit. His will is that we look only at Jesus and not look at our efforts to mimic Jesus.

Next poster. This poster will remain up for the rest of the time today because it is the subject for today. We're moving on to the third and last of the three key components of the last stage, namely the Kingdom Life stage. This is to look at law or grace. Certain things in life do not mix. In the natural realm, we know that oil and water do not mix. In the spiritual realm, flesh and spirit do not mix. This is why we cannot complete in the flesh that which was begun in the spirit as Paul admonished the Galatians in Galatians 3:3. In the spirit realm, flesh and spirit are not only different, they are totally opposed to each other. The spirit is dependent on Jesus Christ and rests in Jesus Christ, stands on Jesus Christ, is hid in Jesus Christ, and so on. The flesh is dependent on self and hostile toward God. This poster helps us understand that explanation. The flesh works by law. The spirit works by grace. This poster depicts the method of functioning of each and the outcome of each. Each has a certain basis of function. I've chosen the word "source" to indicate that. I could just as well have chosen other words such as basis, focus, object of our gaze, and so on. Under the law, the source, the basis, or the focus is works. The means by which our works produce the outcome is by our performance. Under law, the power is provided by self. Thus, the entire frame of reference under law is using the power of self to accomplish our performance to perform works to a certain level.

Now the system works in the natural realm. That's how we compete in business, athletics, in the pursuit of health, or any other endeavor in the natural realm. Quite frankly, we are creatures of law. We are conceived in law, born in law, taught law, and habitually perform by law. Naturally speaking, we're aware of no other system. The natural man, thus, has no conflict. The natural man thinks that if there were another system that he could compete well within that system. What he does not know is that there is another system and that it does not work by competition and that he cannot perform in it at all. But thinking that he can is why natural man makes such statements as "If there is a Heaven, then surely Mother Theresa will be there because she is so good." The natural man conceives a frame of reference that he calls good. He then evaluates himself and others as to whether or not they are good enough to satisfy his frame of reference. Of course his self determined frame of reference and his self determined evaluation of others both represent self performance on his part. He even self-assumes self righteousness in order to self-assume that he's capable of knowing what good is and capable of assessing whether himself and others fulfill the level of goodness.

Satan is the god of this world as we're told in II Corinthians 4:4. All people functioning in the domain of Satan are functioning in the system of this world and the system of this world is law. All people functioning in self determination with self on the throne, which is the sin nature, are functioning in what the Bible calls the flesh. And people functioning in the flesh make up the system of this world which is what Satan rules as the god of this world. The entire system of Satan, this world, the flesh, and the sin nature are all working through law in which the source, or basis or focus is works with the method of success being performance and the power to perform being self. All of that (it is obvious) is accomplished without God. We're told in Romans 8:7 that all of this is hostile toward God as it tells us "The mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God." Those who perform under law can achieve certain victories in the natural realm. However, none of these self-pronounced victories lead to anything victorious eternally. Application of the law, in spiritual matters, leads to defeat, failure, and death. Well, why is that?

It won't stun you when I say Genesis 1:1 tells us in the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth. This is God's universe, it is God determined; God has determined that the system of law based on works, measured by performance, and empowered by self will always result in defeat, failure, and death at least over the longer term. This is because God is holy. No system of law ever produces holiness and holiness is the standard because God determined that it is. It is His universe. So what is the other system?

This is the system of grace. Grace means unmerited favor. God has self determined that it is all by grace and never by law because no human can perform to God's standards ever in any detail no matter how small the charge. If God is to relate to man eternally, it must be by grace. God has ordained in the eternal covenant that the source of all grace extended to man will be through His Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus is the source, thus the basis, for all grace that flows to man. The means by which Jesus provides this grace is through His cross. Simply stated, no Jesus, no cross; no cross, no grace. And it is all by grace. The sinless life of Jesus crucified on His cross is the means (in the singular) by which God has provided grace to mankind for all eternity. This is because all men have sinned, all sin must be dealt with, and only the cross of Jesus Christ deals with sin. This is part of Jesus being "The Way."

The power in the system of grace is the Holy Spirit. But recall a few basic things about the Holy Spirit. Jesus tells us about the Holy Spirit. John 15:26, Jesus says (speaking of the Spirit) – He shall bear witness of Me. In John 16:14 Jesus (speaking of the Spirit) tells us – He shall glorify Me. The Holy Spirit will only glorify Jesus. He will only bear witness of Jesus. He reveals to us the truth about Jesus, reveals to us that Jesus is truth and empowers us to become like Jesus. However, He only does those things when we do these things. Hebrews 12:2 – Fixing our eyes on Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith. I Peter 1:13 – Fix your hope completely on the grace brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit will not join you and help you as you fix your gaze upon yourself and your hope upon yourself and your performance of your self determined works. That fixation on self means you're self evaluated, self empowered, self performance, of self-chosen works, to a self determined standard.

The system of law is ordained by man. The system of grace is ordained by God and this is God's universe, not man's universe. The system of grace is willed by the Father, achieved by the Son, and dispensed by the Spirit. God only used the system of law to demonstrate that relationship

with God can never be achieved by human performance. These two systems are anathema to each other. The system of law is anathema to God because it declares that the achievement of Jesus Christ on His cross is insufficient. Jesus said it is finished. When we try to function by law, we say, "No it's not quite finished." The problem is this for us. God has determined that the system of law results in defeat, failure, and death. He has also determined that the system of grace results in victory, deliverance, and life. So how do we know which system is being utilized?

Matthew 12:33 – For the tree is known by its fruit. We simply need to ask ourselves, our churches, and the global church the following question. Am I mostly seeing the fruit of defeat, failure and death as we attempt the Christian life? Or am I seeing the fruit of victory, deliverance, and life? So here are a few additional Scriptures to testify to the role of these two systems and in particular to reveal the perspective expressed by Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles. I Corinthians 1:17 – The cross of Christ should not be made void. I Corinthians 1:18 – For the word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness; but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. I Corinthians 1:23 – But we preach Christ crucified. I Corinthians 2:2 – for I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Galatians 6:14 – But may it never be that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ through which the world has been crucified to me and I to the world. Ephesians 2:1-3 effectively tells us that we were lost, dead in sin, children of wrath, basically servants of Satan. But thankfully, then follows Ephesians 2:4 which tells us the source – But God...but God being rich in mercy because of His great love with which He loved us. That's the source. How does it come to us? Ephesians 2:5 – By grace you have been saved. Why? Ephesians 2:7 – In order that in the ages to come, He (God) might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us. Well what's the pathway by which that is done? Ephesians 2:7 continues – that He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. In Christ Jesus means the person of Jesus, and the performance of Jesus. The performance of Jesus means living a sinless life and dying on the cross to the point of "it is finished." And then coming out of that tomb as the certification that it is indeed finished. So what is finished?

Well one thing that needs to be finished is our trying to approach God through law. Galatians 3:3 again – Oh foolish Galatians having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? Galatians 2:21 – I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died needlessly. We cannot keep the law before salvation or we would not have needed a Savior. We cannot keep the law after salvation or we would not have needed the Holy Spirit. Do we then simply have no regard for law? No. There are certain aspects of law that we do not keep because they were types and shadows pointing to Jesus Christ and Him crucified. They are fulfilled in Jesus. So we do not need the types and shadows except for regarding them as fulfilled prophecy. And you remember the purpose of fulfilled prophecy in the Christian walk is the sequence of foreknown, foretold, for faith. There are other aspects of law that we do regard. The moral law, the Ten Commandments, is an example. It was wrong to kill before Jesus went to the cross and it's still wrong to kill after Jesus went to the cross. This is excepting the command of remember the Sabbath to keep it holy; because we're not admonished in the New Testament to remember the Sabbath to keep it holy. That's because the Sabbath was a foreshadowing of our resting in Jesus Christ. And that has been fulfilled. So we're to rest completely in Jesus Christ every moment of our Christian walk, and not rest in any carved out

particular day of the week. We may do so out of tradition; but we need to remind ourselves that that is not fulfilling the system of grace in which Jesus is the source, the means is the cross, and the power is the Spirit, if we think going to church on a particular day of the week is the way to live a Christian life. It may be a practical reality, but it is not the system. So how do we keep the rest of the moral law?

Well that's a great question because it brings into the focus the whole point about law or grace. Galatians 5:14 – For the whole law is fulfilled in one word in the statement you shall love your neighbor as yourself. So here is the flow of the sum of the Word of God. You do not keep the law by keeping the law. To do that is to have it based on works performed by you, under the power of you, with you bearing witness of yourself and your performance and obtaining glory for yourself. That is Romans, chapter 7 which you'll recall ends with oh wretched man that I am, who will save me from this body of sin as you end up frustrated because you can't keep the law. The one sure way to lust is to say I will not lust. What then? I want to keep the law. I can't keep the law. I'm frustrated that I can't keep the law. And love fulfills the law. You keep the law by loving. Well, can you conjure up love? No. That would be a work performed by you, under the power of you, and bearing witness of you, and bringing glory to you. But love fulfills the law; I can't keep the law and I can't conjure up love. So what do I do?

Well now you're getting the idea. How do I love in order to fulfill the law? I Peter 1:13 – Fix your hope (optimistic expectation is what hope is); fix your optimistic expectation about loving to fulfill the law completely on the grace brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Do you hope to fulfill the law? Then look at Jesus and not at your performance of keeping the law. Hebrews 12:2 – Fixing our gaze upon Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith. When we fix our gaze upon Jesus, what do we see? I John 3:16 – we know love by this, that He laid down His life for us. That means that you look at Jesus Christ on His cross in order to know the love of God. I John 4:10 – And this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. I John 4:19 – We love because He first loved us. So we love three things all wrapped up in that one love. We see the love of God, but we see it only through Jesus Christ and Him crucified. We then, once we see that love, love God which is a passion to be one with God. But that is the same as loving ourselves since we simultaneously when we love God; we have a passion that ourselves become one with God. It's the same love. We then love like God and love what God loves, namely others. We now have a passion that others become one with God through Jesus Christ. Since we have that passion that ourselves become one with Jesus Christ, and we have a passion that our neighbor become one through Jesus Christ, we now love our neighbor as we love ourselves. When we love God and love our neighbors as ourselves, we fulfill the remaining nine out of the Ten Commandments, excepting the Sabbath day since that is fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

How is all that initiated? By looking at Jesus Christ and Him crucified. How is all that continued? By continuously looking at Jesus Christ and Him crucified. How does love result? By looking at the love revealed by looking at Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Simply put, this is God's prescribed order—namely the system of grace. Love is a fruit of the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit functions only within the confines of Jesus Christ and Him crucified because that is the eternal covenant of how the Holy Spirit is going to work. That's because the Holy Spirit came to bear witness of Jesus. The Holy Spirit came to bring glory to Jesus. He does that by

empowering you to obey by revealing truth to you; thus resulting in Christlikeness, but all flowing out of love. And that love is only produced by seeing the love that God has for you as expressed through Jesus Christ His Son on the cross of Jesus Christ. So the revelation, the power, the love, and the Christlikeness are all fruit of the Spirit. They are not fruit of your keeping law in any form. This includes your attempt to conjure up love or any other fruit such as joy. This includes your trying to conjure up obedience and this includes your trying to conjure up Christlikeness. None of that, when you are attempting to produce it, exalts Jesus Christ. And exalting Jesus Christ is why the Holy Spirit came. All of this is why it is law or grace. Law ends in defeat, failure, and death. Grace ends in victory, deliverance, and life.

So here we go through the sequence again. You get to choose and there are only two choices: Law or grace. But you do not get to choose what the choices are. God did and it's His universe. You do not get to choose the consequences of the choices. God did; it's His universe. And you don't get to not choose; because not choosing is to choose law because this is the system that we're born in, conceived in, and function in our whole lives prior to salvation. And I dare say the way in which most of us try to produce the fruit of the Spirit after salvation. You don't get to mix the two. They don't mix. God has ordained that they not mix. It is either law or grace and adopting law nullifies grace. This is so that God receive all the glory, not some of the glory, not most of the glory, but all of the glory; because anything that you do based on works and your performance of those works under the power of self is bringing glory to yourself and keeping your gaze upon yourself and hoping that others gaze upon you and your self-empowered, excellent performance, of those works.

Now next time we're going to take all three of these key components and put them together on one poster. When you see that poster next week, you will understand why I did the three components before putting up the final poster because had I not done so, the final poster would seem too complicated. But now that we've looked at the overview, Kingdom Progression, and we've looked at the functional connections of flesh versus spirit, and we've looked at the two systems of law or grace; when they're all pulled together on the final poster, it will seem simple to you. And that last stage—namely stage five out of the sequence of seven is the stage of Kingdom Life. And recall my personal testimony about where this teaching series emanated from, it was my pursuit of why I do not have the abundant life. And all of this which will be pulled together on that poster is part of the revelation, illumination, that God has given to me, and I think not only to me, about how to access the greater grace of God in order to access the abundant life that Jesus came to give, in order to bring God maximal glory, bring the world maximal testimony, and bring ourselves maximal abundant life, and maximal eternal rewards in Heaven which we're taught to pursue. But it is done only when we access the system of grace and never when we rely upon the system of law.

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