

Eternity Daily Bible Study - No. 397

Series: Solution-Focused Faith

Topic: Faith In The Coming Kingdom

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The Acts 1-8 series has been compiled into an ebook, which you can download from: <http://www.aibi.ph/eternity/> (see the link on the right hand side under "New")

Matthew 6:10 KJV Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as [it is] in heaven.

Matthew 25:34 KJV Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

Luke 10:9 MKJV And heal the sick that are in it, and say to them, The kingdom of God has come near you!

Revelation 12:10 MKJV And I heard a great voice saying in Heaven, Now has come the salvation and power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of His Christ. For the accuser of our brothers is cast down, who accused them before our God day and night.

Luke 23:42-43 MKJV And he said to Jesus, Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom. (43) And Jesus said to him, Truly I say to you, Today you shall be with Me in Paradise.

Solution-focused faith believes in the arrival of the Kingdom of God. For when the Kingdom of God arrives all relationships are put right and all problems solved. Solution-focused faith believes in the arrival of the Kingdom both in the present "repent for the Kingdom of God is at hand" and the future "inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world".

One of the keys to this is a well-known phrase that is part of the Lord's Prayer: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." (Matthew 6:10) In this prayer we are asking for God's Kingdom to come "on earth" as in the verse in Luke above: "And heal the sick that are in it, and say to them, The kingdom of God has come near you!" The arrival of the Kingdom had a tangible effect in the real world, in this case healing. When the Kingdom comes there is healing, exorcism, revival and great joy. (see the previous series on Acts 1-8 mentioned above)

Solution-focused faith envisions the arrival of God's Kingdom both in the present and in the future.

The Kingdom arrives in the present most often as a “mustard-seed” – that is in a small group, a church, a rescue mission or a prayer meeting. These mustard-seed beginnings are places where people are totally given over to doing the will of God “on earth as it is in Heaven.”

We need to pray and believe that the Kingdom will arrive in “mustard-seed form” in our midst and renew our lives and bring us great joy and healing. We need to believe for the arrival of the Kingdom even when lukewarmness, friction, division and apathy surround us. We must not ever give in to cynicism or despair.

The Kingdom seldom arrives “all at once” but comes one spiritually hungry person at a time. We need to kneel down and say “Lord I believe Your kingdom will come here, You will send streams in the desert and cause the wilderness to bloom, and the barren lands to rejoice. I ask You to open my eyes to what you are doing and send me people who can join with me in living in obedience to You.”

If all you see when you look at the Church is hypocrisy, politics, and traditionalism, then you are problem-centered and you will remain miserable in your Christianity.

Solution-focused faith looks around for where things are working and seeks to do more of them. It goes to where things are happening in God and joyfully joins in. Wonderful things are happening in missions, in urban ministry, in Internet ministry, in the urban slums of Asia, in house-churches and in many other areas as well. It is frequently when we go among ministries to the poor that the Kingdom is most evident.

When the Kingdom comes there is a marvelous feeling of lightness and joy. There is a releasing of old grudges and bitterness and an outbreak of Christian love. If you want the Kingdom to come you must forgive others and be merciful and compassionate. The kingdom never came to the Pharisees because they played spiritual status games, such games belong in the world , not in God’s house.

Laying hold of God for the arrival of the Kingdom requires a strong interior vision of what the Kingdom will look like when it arrives. The development of this strong interior vision of the Kingdom was part of the purpose of the parables of Jesus and the sayings of the prophets. An example is one of Isaiah’s pictures of the Kingdom:

Isaiah 11:6-9 MKJV Also the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the cub lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. (7) And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. (8) And the suckling child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder’s den. (9) They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea.

As we meditate of these Scriptures and develop our strong interior vision of the arrival of the Kingdom two things happen. Firstly we see where the present arrangement falls far short of God’s perfection and feel compelled to do something about it. Secondly we long for the Kingdom intensely and develop a vibrant hope

that becomes an anchor for the soul. We need both, if we just have the first we can be overly negative and dissatisfied, if just the second we can be lost in mysticism without application to the present reality.

Just as Jesus told parables of the Kingdom and the prophets painted pictures of the glorious future so we need to develop our own solution-focused faith picture of what the Kingdom of God will look like in our neighborhood.

This solution-focused, positive picture of what will happen when God turns up and sets things right is one of the great driving forces of faith, especially for the prophets. At one point John the Baptist was imprisoned and his followers went over to Jesus to ask Him if He was the Messiah. Here is how Jesus replied to the followers of John the Baptist:

Matthew 11:4-6 MKJV Jesus answered and said to them, Go and tell John again those things which you hear and see: (5) the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear; the dead are raised, and the poor have the gospel proclaimed to them. (6) And blessed is he, whoever shall not be offended in Me.

Jesus sends John a message that will reinforce his prophetic faith-picture of the arrival of the Kingdom of God. In other words Jesus was saying "John, the miracles are happening, the Kingdom has arrived, you did not preach in vain, your prophecy has come true".

These faith-pictures are crucial. When God wanted to help Abraham believe He gave Him a faith-picture: Genesis 15:5-6 MKJV And He brought him outside and said, Look now toward the heavens and count the stars, if you are able to count them. And He said to him, So shall your seed be. (6) And he believed in Jehovah. And He counted it to him for righteousness.

God wants to replace the pictures in your heart with pictures of His Kingdom.

Now I am not talking about self-centered occultic visualization, which is a demonic counterfeit to true spiritual vision. True spiritual vision happens when the "eyes of the heart are opened" through the work of the Holy Ghost and we believe in God's version of the future.

We have a choice to see with man's eyes or to see with God's eyes of faith.

For instance say we look at our families: Do we see problems and squabbles or children who have great potential? Do we see future criminals or future missionaries? Do we see the love in our wife's heart or just see all her faults? Do we see the husband becoming a strong leader or do we just see a hopeless wimp? You have to go to the Lord and say: "Lord, show me what my family will look like when your Kingdom comes that I may believe You and through faith see You in action in the midst of them." We have to see the Kingdom shaped solution and then patiently believe God for it to come to pass. This takes much prayer. Put your faith-picture in writing and keep it in your spiritual journal as a reminder.

In every situation there is potential for the arrival of the Kingdom. I have even seen the Kingdom arrive in a tiny pre-school in the middle of a desperately poor urban slum in Asia. Psalms tells us that God's love can reach us in the midst of a "besieged city" – the most hopeless of all situations in the ancient world (Psalm 31:21). Ancient Israel under Roman occupation was no picnic but the Kingdom arrived even there - despite much opposition from the religious establishment.

Solution-focused faith says "I believe God's Kingdom can come and His will can be done right here on earth, in my office, in my family, in my neighborhood, in my church, in my city and in my nation. Nothing is impossible with God so this situation is not hopeless. All things are possible to him who believes and I believe that God's Kingdom can arrive right here and I will commit myself to prayer until it does."

Blessings,

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