

Thy Kingdom Come Thy Will be Done

What is God's goal regarding His creation?

- **Restoration:** To Restore Creation such that it Becomes as He Intends It to Be
 - **Redemption:** To redeem fallen creation unto His ultimate purposes.
 - **Righteousness:** To set all things right, bring about justice
 - **Reconciliation:** To reconcile what is estranged to Himself
 - **Regeneration:** To bring life out of death in Christ and extended in Him throughout
 - **Reign:** To establish and extend the Kingdom of God over all creation

These goals have been accomplished in Christ Jesus Himself (God the Son incarnate, the Savior, who died and was raised and exalted and who has taken His seat at the right hand of God in the heavenlies as the legitimate and forever reigning King of the New Creation Kingdom God (NC KOG)). These things are extended to us in the real but nonmaterial realm of the Spirit.

Again, **God has already accomplished His goals in the person of Jesus Christ.**

The church is the body of people who share in this significantly finished work of God in Christ. And we share in what God has done in Christ **because** He has given Himself, not only for us, but also to us. By means of the now indwelling Holy Spirit, what is true of the resurrected Jesus is true of those in Him.

We share in the realization of God's goals now (already), but we do so most completely in our spirits. In our fleshly bodies we live in the world which is still waiting to be redeemed, "**groaning**" under the suffocating weight of **remaining wrong** -- injustice, hatred, inequality, strife, suffering, sickness, death...

As Christians we can and should have confidence in future consummation and ultimate realization of the restoration that is now ours in the Spirit. But our confidence must be that of a **soldier still fighting a dangerous and personally costly battle.** Though our victory is significantly achieved and consummately assured, nevertheless the battle that is ours to fight is still costly, hard, dangerous... for us in the present.

We live on the front lines of a real and ongoing battle. We are the redeemed confronting the world waiting to be redeemed. Our hands do not carry weapons to fight against people who are against God, rather our **hands are outstretched in love**, beckoning the world to grab ahold of the rescue that has come in Christ Jesus, the rescue which His disciples undertake in His name. We meet the world **bearing the gifts God has given us for the express purpose that we use them to benefit others**, to see them restored in Christ.

We live as lights in darkness, shining the light of Christ which is in us, illuminating the path leading to God Himself who calls all to Himself through Christ Jesus, pleading as ambassadors, "Be reconciled to God" (2 Cor 5:20 + ctx).

We aim too low
if we seek justice for ourselves and in this life only.
We aim too high
if we seek justice for all but only in the next life.

We must seek justice for all both now and forever!

Is this not so? Really, I am asking you. Are we not called to seek justice in this life AND the next? Indeed, are we not called to live our lives now as a testimony to the Gospel of what God has already done in Christ -- what He will surely consummately complete when He comes again? Assuredly! And does it not follow that we are to work towards God's very same goals? Yes! Is this not the advancing of the kingdom that has been inaugurated in Christ? It is!

**As a Christian I can celebrate: In Christ there has begun so much right; yet
As a Human I have to mourn: In the world there remains so much wrong.**

What is our role as those who have been restored, redeemed, set right, reconciled, given new life out of the death of our previous sub optimal 'life', and commissioned to reign with Christ? Is it not to use what we have been given for the very purposes of Him who gave them to us in the first place? I trust you will all agree that it is!

Jesus taught us to pray to our heavenly Father saying:

**"Your kingdom come,
Your will be done,
On earth as it is in heaven."**

Matthew 6:10

Paul the Apostle has spoken of creation's "groaning", saying,

"For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for *our* adoption as sons, the redemption of our body."

Romans 8:22-23

Jesus spoke of the life His disciples should expect and embrace saying,

These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."

John 16:33

John the Apostle was granted a vision including what it looks like when God's goals now inaugurated in Christ find their consummate fullness saying. Here is a part of that vision:

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer *any* sea. 2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, 4 and He will wipe away every

tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be *any* death; there will no longer be *any* mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away."

5 And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." And He *said, "Write, for these words are faithful and true."

...

10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God,

Revelation 21:1-5, 10

The question I asked in my email for you to address could be stated like this: **should we (does God want us to) address the problems of the world, or just wait till He brings us a new one?**

He does promise us a new heavens and a new earth in Rev 21.

He does say the poor we will always have with us (Mat 26:11,...)

He does say, let the dead bury the dead (Mt 8:22, ...)

Some might ask then...

Q: Isn't the best strategy then for Christians when we see what is wrong in the world simply to be thankful that God has set **us** right in our spirits and that we have a hope for the future when He will surely complete the work?

Q: In light of what God has done already and the final future work of Christ shouldn't we simply rest in the fact that in the future when Christ comes again He will set everything right, and He will then do it a lot better than I can do now by way of fixing the broken world?

Q: Why try to patch-up something today when God will actually can fix it better tomorrow?

NT Wright has helped me think through these types of questions in the book (most of you have that we made available last year when we started the series on resurrection), "Surprised by Hope." He established the fact that Jesus' resurrection actually accomplished the inauguration/beginning of the New Creation which God had long promised to bring about (the final consummation of which will not transpire until the time when Jesus returns) where in restoration and the rest of the R's (above) are realized. So as Christians today, we are living in the beginning manifestation of the NC KOG.

Wright further argues that what God has done in inaugurating the New Creation calls Christians to live in such a way that recognizes (for ourselves) and manifests (for others) the reality of this New Creation in which we as Christians now live. Jesus has already set wrongs to right (justification and the Rs above) and worked miracles of healing and deliverance both because

- Healing and deliverance is what goes on in the New Creation and
- Healing and deliverance attests/witnesses/**testifies** to the fact that in Christ God was faithfully doing the grand work of restoration He had promised from the beginning.

Jesus healed the sick, delivered the demoniac, gave sight to the blind, raised the dead... because

- He was setting things right and
- Such would indicate/**testify**/witness to the watching world that in Him the New Creation was breaking into the old, and this is what life is like in the NC KOG.

The NC now in the spiritual realm and then in physical as well is the place of healing, deliverance, sight, life, justice... Jesus confronted injustice and secured justice in the heavenlies. Justice has already been served for all who are in Christ Jesus in its highest sense!

But not all are in Christ Jesus. Many remain in the world. This does not speak to some sort of failure on Jesus' part. Rather it was God's intention for Jesus to commission His disciples to extend His work throughout the rest of creation. I don't think it caught Him by surprise that this ingathering project would take a few. He charged His first disciples to be His disciples, witnesses and to make disciples of others and to do so throughout all the nations of the earth. **God intended to accomplish the expansion of His kingdom through the ongoing ministry of Jesus and His Church. God works through Jesus and His church!**

The work is not limited to the saving of some souls for a future heaven where everything is good. The work includes the restoring of all Creation in all realms -- physical and spiritual, nonmaterial and material. Jesus was raised **bodily** not as a one-off, but as the first fruits which will have its second fruits in the bodily resurrection of all who will come to Him in faith, and in the material restoration of the rest of creation.

Latch on to the **bodily** resurrection for just a bit. Raise in your mind the of-this-earth and in-our-flesh-and-blood-bodies aspect of many of Jesus' miracles. God has a plan for your physical body not just your spiritual soul. God has a plan for all of creation not just the spiritual aspects of creation.

So we must understand the inbreaking of the NC KOG not only to be about the salvation of souls, it must also impact every aspect of every person. This is where Wright's understanding is stretching me.

What God will bring to consummate fullness in the future, we should seek and work towards even now, as Jesus did when He physically walked among us!

Wright: pp. 191-192, Surprised by Hope

Why work now for what He will fully produce later? Why not just concern ourselves with seeing people "saved" now and wait for God to do the rest later given that, as I have already said, there is no basis to think anyone will be fully free from afflictions of this world until the next one fully comes?

Do we only concern ourselves with Gospel proclamation then, or do we (should we) concern ourselves with **working for the same things God will eventually bring about**. After all, as any Christian who has walked for the Lord for more than a few years will attest, a saved person, a New Creature in Christ, still undergoes injustice, pain,

suffering, hardship, sickness and even death. So we have to admit that following Jesus does not mean a life without suffering these things. In fact, and of course, Jesus says the opposite -- if we follow Him we will experience the wrongs that will ultimately be set right -- just as He did. See for example, John 15:20 -- **"Remember the word that I said to you, 'A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also."**

Why work now for what only God intends to fully bring only later? The answer has to include that God has ordained to use our discipleship, witness, and even disciple-making... in the present time to implement, manifest and extend the reach of His inaugurated new creation for the ingathering of others into the now present NC KOG.

That God uses humans to advance His purposes is seen both

- **in the order of creation** (man as image bear of God and ruler over the rest of creation) **and**
- **in His intended function for the people of Israel** (they were to represent Him and His purposes for world-wide restoration to the rest of the people of the earth).

In both, we can see that **humanity (and especially Israel) was not only the recipient of God's blessings, but also the conduit through whom His blessings and purposes are to reach the rest of creation for its good and God's glory.** This can be said especially of those who have already been restored (R's)...

God works for our good in salvation and fully intends to work through saved-us for the salvation of others and indeed for the stewardship of the whole creation **even now.** Salvation clearly has past present and future time and a physical space aspects.

Heaven is not the nonmaterial future dwelling of disembodied souls, it is the dwelling place of God with man bodily, physically, materially... as well as spiritually. In Christ Jesus, heaven broke into the fallen world and God inaugurated a NC kingdom of which Jesus is (and will forever be king). God's intention for life in the New Creation Kingdom has all three time elements: past, present and a future.

I have undervalued the present by thinking what is most important is only the future. I have undervalued the material, thinking it was more about the nonmaterial.

When it comes to understanding and appreciating and living in the NC KOG, past, present and future are all important; spiritual and material are both important.

"Behold, the KOG is at hand"

"Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN"

Wright says, needfully broadening our understanding of biblical salvation, bottom p. 200, [then middle of p. 200 to elaborate]

"... the work of salvation in its full sense, is (1) about whole human beings, not merely souls; (2) about the present, not merely the future; and (3) about what God does

through us, not merely what God does *in and for* us. If we can get this straight, we will rediscover the historic basis for a full-orbed mission of the church.”

Christian, your discipleship, witness and disciple-making now has, Wright says, two functions by God’s design...

1. “...to be a sign and foretaste of what God wants to do for the entire cosmos... ultimate salvation...”
2. “...to be part of the means by which God makes this happen in both the present and the future.”

Wright sees God’s redeemed (us) as **stewards**. Again hearken back to the original creation and man’s God-intended role of **ruler** over the rest of creation. Man was to **rule as God’s steward** of creation. Wright says, “...this stewardship can not be something postponed for the ultimate future. It must begin here and now.”

Citation from 215, see highlights (TOP)



one who has thereby been installed as Lord of the whole world? The world has *already* been turned upside down; that’s what Easter is all about. It isn’t a matter of waiting until God eventually does something different at the end of time. God has brought his future, his putting-the-world-to-rights future, into the present in Jesus of Nazareth, and he wants that future to be implicated more and more in the present. That’s what we pray for every time we say the Lord’s Prayer: “Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” And that’s why that prayer goes on to pray for bread and forgiveness, which is, I suggest, where the issue of justice comes closest to our global village today.

From Paul’s magnum opus on resurrection in 1 Cor 15 we read,

58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, **always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not *in vain* in the Lord.**

Wright sees “the work of the Lord” as including our work for social justice in this life.

He says,

Citation from 216



true Lord through his resurrection. That, as we’ve seen, is part of the whole point of the Christian story. And if we believe it and pray, as he taught us, for God’s kingdom to come on earth as in heaven, there is no way we can rest content with major injustice in the world. We must recognize, as the second view does, that the final putting to rights of everything does indeed wait for the last day. We must therefore avoid the arrogance or triumphalism of the first view, imagining that we can build the kingdom by our own efforts without the need for a further great divine act of new creation. But we must agree with the first view that doing justice in the world is part of the Christian task, and we must therefore reject the defeatism of the second view, which says there’s no point in even trying.

Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven... Why? Because heaven, not the ethereal place up there that we will apprehend when we die, but the place of

God's residence now even in His church, has broken in and inaugurated a new reality, a redeemed reality a new creation kingdom of which Jesus is king and in which we dwell by virtue of our union with Him.

The new creation has been inaugurated in the resurrection of Christ Jesus. We are quite really citizens of heaven first and the USA second. Our goals must be the goals of God, our lives must be lived on mission as God has ordained. Our witness is of the Kingdom of God, the NC already inaugurated in Christ who has begun to set all things right.

You may by now be getting tired of listening or reading, but hear this please.

As it is clear that we Christians must now love with the love of God, so too I would say it is clear that we are under similar obligation to work for the justice that He will bring to completion in the final consummation of all things.

Do we love **only** because He commanded us to love? The command helps us on our way (and if you want to hold this as another good secondary reason to love that is fine with me), but I would say that **we love and we should love not first and foremost to fulfill an obligation, but because God, who is love, has caused us to be born again; and so born again we now share in the identity and the quality of God who is love.** We love because **that is now who we are in Christ.**

Now I could validly argue that we should work for justice as an act of love, but I would first argue that we should work for justice because **that is now who we are in Christ.** In Christ, we are justified, set right ourselves, forgiven of the debt of our sins ourselves, set free ourselves... how could we be anything but peacemakers, advocates of justice, those who seek the best of others for the now and for the forever?

As love (extended and worked into our very beings by the Spirit) **is to characterize our every interaction with God and man, so God must certainly intend justice** (extended to us and similarly worked into our very being by the Spirit) **to characterize our every interaction with creation especially our fellow man.**

We have been justified -- set right. We now partake of the righteousness of God in our union with Christ the righteous One. Justice should be the fruit and practice of those who have been made righteousness in Christ. Cut the Christian and they bleed love, justice, and for that matter, all that comes from Christ: peace, mercy, healing, life...

**As Christians are known to be disciples of Jesus by their
active working unusual heavenly love for one another,
I argue that they are similarly known by their
active working unusual heavenly pursuit of justice
for all of God's creation still groaning under the heavy load of injustice.**

The world is groaning and we who call ourselves His disciples, witnesses, and disciple-makers have much work to do. We do it from the firm strong place of union with the resurrected Christ.

There is nothing like a war to set a hobby in its place. And George Floyd's death has made it clear that the war many, including myself, had thought significantly won, is far from over. Have we been too long dinking in our garages while the enemy causes harm? I fear we have. I fear I have. Christians know their enemies to be Satan and Sin; and one might regard as Satan and Sin's first children to be Prejudice and Hatred. Such are God's enemies and they work evil for harm instead of justice for good.

Injustice is not in-keeping with the NC KOG, itself having already begun.

God would have us work for the highest expression of that justice **even now...** "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done..."

What would you have us do Lord God? What would you have me do?

God to Johnny: Be the disciple, witness, disciple-maker, (and more: the co-regent, servant, priest...) who I have called, saved and am now transforming you to be. Use the life, gifts, resources... which I have given you for the purposes for which I have given them to you.

I am sorry Lord for walking so slowly at my own pace with such distraction by what interests me, when Your pace is so much quicker and more determined seeking to gather more to yourself giving them rest for their souls even now and life in consummate fullness when You return.

I forecast that sorry and sad will be the rich man who holds more tightly to his riches than to His Lord;
truly rich is the poor man who is known by the Lord; peace, life, love... are his now and forever.

The Coronavirus seems to have surfaced an abiding inequity in the USA, one I thought had been retired on the heels of the Civil Rights Movement. I grieve that some still carry more than their fair share of the load that I now wonder if I should have picked up if I am to be a suffering servant through whom The Suffering Servant works.

What does it look like for a privileged white man who is now in Christ to love non-whites in our time? Is it enough to not harbor prejudice or hate in my own heart? You know, I think before George Floyd was killed I thought it was, if I thought of it at all. I am not prejudiced so I don't have to deal with racism.

But we have not been saved to simply see to our own righteousness have we? If we were, there would have been no need for Jesus to issue the Great Commission to make disciples, no need for God's empowering of us to be Jesus' witnesses...

But like Israel of the Old Covenant, the church of the New Covenant was not saved to be the end (the Dead Sea into which the Jordan flows without feeding other streams). Rather the Church is to be the beginning and means to an even greater end (Spirit filled reservoirs supplying parched creation with living waters). We are now in the time of fulfillment, like Israel was, called to be in the time of promise -- sons of God, a kingdom

of priests in Christ intended by God to see to it that His will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

HOW?

I think I have to agree with what others who are apparently more sensitive to the issues of injustice than I have been... silence only endorses the systemic injustice that was left unremedied by the good strides taken during the Civil Rights Movement. Being a silent non-racist myself no longer seems to be enough, not in the NC which God has allowed us to enjoy and has tasked us see it become a reality for others to enjoy. We must be more than silent nonracists.

I have been given tremendous opportunity by my parents and Lori's parents. In turn we have sought to give opportunity to our children with the hopes that they too would be able to see their children the recipients of the same.

I can't tell you what I have done for the children of those held down by the remaining injustice in our country and around the globe, and it is not because it is a secret.

I suppose there is money to give, scholarships, grants, ... but what I have would be one squirt gun on a forest fire. What else Lord?

I know I am not prejudiced, I could work on yours. But honestly, I do not sense prejudice in you either.

I don't think the problem lies in the prejudice of intentional and growing Christians -- though I must sadly observe that it has not yet been fully displaced in some Christians who have not yet sufficiently matured to see that

- any good within them is but a gift from God, and that gift given to them is a grace of God not based on merit, a grace God is extending to others of all colors WITHOUT PARTIALITY,
- the white man and the brown man and the black man all stand before God of equal value and equally loved.

Yes we certainly need to understand and promote the truth that there is no room for prejudice in the NC kingdom of God; and where it does exist, it must be called out as clearly as other sins more commonly recognized by the church: idolatry, murder, adultery... Racism is a remnant of fallen humanity, an expression of natural thinking and ignorance of humanity's common value in the eyes of God.

God worked with a people He called to Himself as a special people, but He did so for the purpose that they would work for the reconciliation of all people -- people from every tribe and tongue, people from every nation and therefore people of every color.

THERE WILL BE NO INJUSTICE IN THE FINAL REALIZATION OF THE KINGDOM OF THE NEW CREATION, THERE IS NO PLACE FOR IT IN THE CHURCH WHICH IS THE MANIFESTATION OF THE NEW CREATION IN THIS AGE, AND THE CHURCH SHOULD WORK FOR THE SAME IN THE WORLD AS IT SEEKS TO EXTEND THE

KOG INTO THE WORLD SUCH THAT THOSE IN DARK PERIL CAN BE RESCUED INTO THE LIGHT OF LIFE, THOSE HELD DOWN CAN BE SET FREE.

Come on now brothers and sisters in Christ, how would God have us work for justice in the unjust world into which He has sent us as those justified by the saving work of Christ, i.e., as recipients of Christ's setting things right with us, how would God have us work for justice?

Before you answer let me try to focus our discussion. Clearly bad has been done by some taking opportunity for ignoble purposes (looting and rioting). Clearly also some police have not responded as well as they could pushing peaceful protestors to the ground. Dealing with opportunistic crimes and inadequate training for protest management can be talked about another day. What I am asking us to talk about is **what we can do about the main and underlying issues** that have more to do with remaining prejudice and social injustice the stuff that resides in our culture and institutions, the stuff that is typical of the fallen world not yet redeemed.

How do we address these issues of injustice as those whom God has justified in Christ?

This is not the time to pull an Adam, "Well the woman You gave men she..." This is time to look to Jesus who brought justice by shouldering injustice.

How would God have us respond to the remaining injustice?

One more thing before I turn to you, **we don't want only what the world wants** -- earthly justice, for us to be nice to each other and treat each other with respect. Rather **we want something more**, don't we? We want the world to be reconciled to God in Christ, to be justified, to be set right by God in the fullest sense of reality, not just treated kindly here on earth in the short span of our lives.

We want nothing less than the resurrection life of Jesus to be shared with others as it has been shared with us; and I believe that we (the Christian Church) are God's ordained vessels for the job. Jesus was The Man for the job, but in Him we are the men and women for the job. We are points of intersection between heaven and earth (Wright). We are people God can use to bring earthly and heavenly justice to those who groan under the want of it.

Think big (overturning corrupt systems), think small (your own discipleship). The two go hand in hand. As we cultivate and enjoy our personal and intimate walk with God He can stir us to great things. Who better to take on the problems of the world than those who know that the true solution does not lie in people being nice to each other on earth only but in being justified by God in Christ and then living our resultant new lives working that same justice out in the world both for the goodness of New Creation justice itself and for the witness that provides to the otherwise invisible Kingdom of the NC?

What can we do now that brings justice now and forever in the now inaugurated NC KOG, the heaven that has come to earth?

Let's talk about these things this coming Sunday.

Here is your discussion format. With as much attentiveness to the Holy Spirit and with as much time in the Word of God as you can seize, fill in the blanks:

The Bible discloses that _____, therefore we should_____.

Let me prime the pump with what Bill shared when he thought we were going to be talking about this last Sunday and he was going to be away.

Bill Jones: Johnny, I really think this is a great topic for Sunday, I would really love to be able to join in with everyone, however, I am going down to San Luis Obispo to meet up with my granddaughter Corrinne, who is going to be attending Cal Poly in the fall, so we are spending the weekend there with her, however if I were going to join in, I would definitely go to Romans 13:8,9, and 10 focusing on 8 and the second half of 9 and 10 paying close attention to the commandment, which as it says, sums it up. You shall love your neighbor as yourself, this to me really speaks to how God would have us treat everyone! Love you my brother, please give everyone my love! 😊