

*“So is the kingdom of God:
as if a man cast seed on the
earth...But when the fruit is
ripe, immediately he sends
forth the sickle, because
the harvest has come.”*

Mark 4: 26-29

A kingdom of carnations is brought into being by many carnation seeds firstly being sown into the earth. These seeds are watered and with the help of the sun the seeds grow and develop into carnation plants. Eventually, the carnation plants mature and blossom, expressing beautiful carnation flowers. This botanical example illustrates many of the principles used by God in establishing His kingdom on earth.

Firstly, God Himself came in the man Jesus Christ as a sower to sow Himself as the seed of life into the hearts of men. Through repentance, our mind and heart are turned and opened to receive the divine seed into our spirit—the Bible calls this regeneration (John 3:3, 1 Pet. 1:23). If you would like to receive this kingdom seed simply turn your heart to God and pray, “O Lord Jesus, I open my heart to receive You as the seed of the kingdom. Come into my spirit and fill me with Your life. Thank you Lord.”

Following our receiving of Christ as the seed of the kingdom, we must give Him every opportunity to grow in the soil of our heart. 1 Cor. 3:9 says that we are God’s cultivated land, God’s farm. The extent to

which Christ grows in us depends on the condition of the soil of our heart. Worldly distractions, hidden sins, the desire for riches, and the anxieties of life frustrate Christ from growing deeply in us. We must repent of these matters and confess them to the Lord. By so doing, our heart will be the good earth, giving every inch of its ground to receive the seed that it may grow, bear fruit, and produce a harvest. When the harvest is ripe, that will be the day of the full manifestation of the kingdom.

The coming of the kingdom began when the Lord Jesus came as the seed nearly two thousand years ago, and it has been coming gradually through a process of growth ever since. The Gospels show that the Lord Jesus is sown into us as the seed of the kingdom, and the Epistles show how the seed grows and develops within us. Finally, Revelation shows how the growth consummates with a building, the New Jerusalem.

The book of Revelation, which reveals the harvest of the kingdom, shows us that the way we mature in life is by enjoying Christ. It is in this book that we are told we need to eat Christ as our life supply. Christ is our all-inclusive portion. He is the tree of life and the living water. He is the hidden manna, and He is the feast. During the thousand years of the millennium, the New Jerusalem as the paradise of God will be a reward to the overcoming believers. But after the millennium, in the new heaven and new earth, the New Jerusalem will be a common blessing to all God’s people. Whether or not we receive a reward or suffer a loss depends very much on how we

cooperate with Christ as the seed of the kingdom sown into us.

At the end of the book of Revelation, a call is issued: “And the Spirit and the bride say, Come! Let him who hears also say, Come! Let him who is thirsty also come; he who wills, let him take the water of life freely” (22:17). The way in which we realize and experience the kingdom is not by learning doctrines about the kingdom, but by eating and drinking Christ. John 6:35 says, “Jesus said to them, I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall by no means hunger, and he who believes into Me shall by no means ever thirst.” The more we eat and drink of Christ, the more He spreads within us. The more He spreads within us, the more the kingdom is manifested. This is the kingdom life, a life that is always being saturated and possessed by Christ.

The full manifestation of the carnation kingdom begins from the sowing of the seed into the earth and progressing to the full bloom, the ultimate manifestation of the carnation life. This is a picture of the kingdom of God. We too are in a growth process, and one day our growth will reach maturity. May we give our full cooperation to the seed within us so that, like the carnation, we may grow and mature in life to blossom. This will make us the firstfruits who inherit and enjoy the coming kingdom age. May we be empty in spirit and pure in heart to receive something new of Christ each day, praying always, “Lord grow in me unto maturity for the sake of Your kingdom.”

Not every one who says to Me, Lord, Lord, will enter into the kingdom of the heavens, but he who does the will of My Father who is in the heavens.

Matthew 7:21

Note 1 - To enter into the kingdom of the heavens, we need to do two things: call on the Lord and do the will of the heavenly Father. To call on the Lord suffices for us to be saved (Rom. 10:13), but to enter into the kingdom of the heavens, we also need to do the will of the heavenly Father. Hence, not everyone who says, "Lord, Lord," will enter into the kingdom of the heavens; but those who call on the Lord and do the will of the heavenly Father will enter in.

Since entering into the kingdom of the heavens requires doing the will of the heavenly Father, it is clearly different from entering into the kingdom of God through regeneration (John 3:3, 5). The latter entrance is gained through being born of the divine life; the former, through the living of that life.

Prayer: "Lord Jesus, may I be empty in spirit and pure in heart to receive You as the divine seed of life and may I cooperate with You so that this life would grow in me unto maturity for the sake of Your kingdom, Amen."

The Gospel of the Kingdom (4)

Matthew 24:14

And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole inhabited earth for a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.

Christians on Campus

Bible study time: 11am-12pm,
every Wednesday

Subject: The Gospel of John

Room number: Costo Lower III

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