



*The Podcast Focused on
Revitalizing Conventional Christianity
—One Person at a Time*

Inside Jimbo's Head™

Series 1, Cultural Christianity Versus Kingdom
Christianity

Episode 11, What Is Kingdom Christianity? Part V,
When Will God Send His Kingdom?©

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Introduction

Alright, my friends. Let's open up Jimbo's head one more time.

Sound Effects: Opening Jimbo's Head

Wild huh? Ok, today I want to review what we have seen so far in our study of the biblical foundations for kingdom Christianity. Then I hope to complete that study and make a few closing remarks. Next week, we will answer the question, "How should I, as a Christian, relate to my native culture?"

Before we get there, I want you to think about the one-minute comedy skit from Lifeline Productions and the idea of setting our own rules for a game. Remember the chaos *that* caused the two fellows playing backgammon? Today, if we take the blinders off our spiritual eyes, we can see the same kind of chaos going on in the church.

Look over there! Christians are praying a prayer believing having done that the doors of eternity will open to them.

And over there! Jesus followers trying to make this life the best it can be by adding comfort, entertainment, adornments, and financial security to their personal lives and their families.

Oh, No! Look over there! Believers are being discipled in classrooms rather than through sacrificially invested relationships with mature Jesus followers walking out their lives with them.

And man, oh man, look over there! Another multimillion-dollar facility being built when all that money could be used for kingdom purposes by people simply meeting together in homes. While that may sound like a novel idea to us today, it sure did not sound that way to the first-century church and the Iranian church we just studied. Both grew by leaps and bounds.

Then there are those over there. They think they are doing Christian ministry by simply feeding and clothing people without getting involved in their lives!

Need I go into the pride, arrogance, expectation of professional consideration, and lack of transforming power all coming from those raised up as leaders. Where are the simple shepherds?

You see my friends when we compare these approaches to what is happening in the Iranian church and the first-century church . . . Well, maybe, just maybe we will get sick enough that we are ready to allow Father to turn us inside out and upside down in both our personal lives and our gathering together.

By now, you should know that any harshness or finger-pointing being done by me is not out of arrogance. It is coming from a sincere cry to "Wake Up!" Often we are like the disciples in the garden after Jesus told them to watch and pray. I find myself being driven in these things today in the same way I have been driven for almost thirty-five years to cry out to hurting kids, "Wake Up! There is a whole way of life out there you have never experienced!" And we in the church? We need to hear that call—we desperately need to hear that call!

And then there is the question of struggling like Frank in this episode's Story from the Frontlines of Ministry. Who wants to struggle! It's easier to make up your own rules and set your own expectations. I don't want to struggle, but I do struggle. I struggled with the salvation call to discipleship like Frank, and I struggle every time I am about to open my mouth to share what's "Inside Jimbo's Head."

You see my friends when we take the path of being radically different as Jesus was radically different and calling others to take this path . . . Well, those who have made such a call know it would be much easier just to keep our mouths shut. But I cannot do that any longer. The less time I have in this life, the more urgent the push from the Spirit becomes to speak out.

So please, if you are offended by some or even all the things I say, consider whether or not you have really struggled with the lack of scriptural results seen in both your life and the life of your church. Are you comfortable with where you are? If so, either you have arrived or have anesthetized your inner person with excuses or worst yet, blinded eyes.

Ok, ok, I usually don't get this controversial this early in this segment. Yet, I encourage you to jump into the boiling caldron of Christian controversy with me as we finish our look at the biblical mandate for kingdom Christianity.

Inside Jimbo's Head Theme Music

Review of Previous Episodes

Let's take a quick look in the rearview mirror and review the road we have been traveling.

We started our journey by looking at the results of conventional Christianity in the West and specifically in the United States. I really don't believe you can understand where we have been or where we are headed if this first leg of our journey was not firmly fixed in your soul. Simply put, we have failed. Oh, there have been individuals who have grown in our Christian systems, but the facts are the facts. If you are still sitting in the back seat asking "why are we on this journey," I would suggest you go back and listen to episode one, "Houston, We Have a Problem." Then search out the facts for yourself. There have been many new developments since I first recorded that teaching and they have been . . . Well, once again, they are not the beautiful scenery you would like to see as you look out your side window of the vehicle that we are traveling in for this journey.

We then took four episodes to define what I call Cultural Christianity. I hope you got a good idea of what culture is, how it affects us, and how conventional Christianity has welcomed with open arms our American culture. The results . . . Do we have to start this journey all over again with episode one? Oh, and by the way, I hope you learned the powerful pull of culture on a person, especially the culture we have developed in conventional Christianity. This is why it is very hard to produce change. We never want to be pulled out of our big comfortable overstuffed lounge chair. Oh, yes . . . Did I talk about the word "struggle?"

After our journey through the scenery of cultural Christianity, we began to look at the landscape of Iran. Specifically, the unbelievable way the disciples of Jesus have allowed God to move in their country. I suggested that this move of God in Iran was far more in keeping with kingdom Christianity than anything we have seen in the western world. Remember the lessons we learned from the western missionaries who have spent much time with these young believers? There were two main points I encouraged you to remember from all the lessons from these episodes.

First, our lives must be focused on internalizing the things of God, repentance, active faith producing obedience, and a vibrant-unwavering love for Jesus that drives us to obedience. This must happen regardless of the consequences.

Second, we must couple that kind of life in Christ with a continued, never-ending focus on the work of the kingdom of God and not making this life as good as it can be. Oh, and by the way, you can't keep one foot in and one foot out. It just doesn't work that way.

Oh, yes! I also ended this discussion with the story of the Iranian Christian who moved to the United States and wanted to return to Iran. What was her reason for wanting to return to a

place of a hard life filled with consistent persecution of Christians? She felt that “there is a satanic lullaby here, and all the Christians are sleepy, and I’m feeling sleepy.”

Remember, “Houston, We Have a Problem.” Anyone want a spiritual no-doze? This disciple of Jesus was willing to give up the freedoms and financial benefits of living in America to return a place of severe persecution just to be invigorated by on-fire, Spirit-led fellow disciples.

Once we got out and stretched our legs at this vista, which overlooked the power of kingdom Christianity, we sounded the trumpets!

Trumpet Fanfare

By now, you have to know how much I love sound effects! But why did we sound the trumpets? We began to open our Bible and take a look at the biblical mandate for kingdom Christianity.

The first thing we looked at was how the fulfillment of a promised kingdom was not only how all Jewish leaders in Jesus’ day interpreted the whole of the Old Testament but the very purpose of Jesus coming into this world. It is a gospel that omits this key fact that brings about easy believism and allows that satanic lullaby to put us to sleep.

I then introduced you to the two questions I was using to segment this teaching. We began with the first, “What constitutes the kingdom, and how should it affect our lives today as Jesus followers? The second part is what we will focus on today, “When will God establish His kingdom?”

I first established the fact that the terms “kingdom of God” and “kingdom of heaven” stand for the kingdom the Messiah was to establish. Their usage was determined by the audience on which the gospel writer focused. Kingdom of heaven was used for a Jewish audience and the kingdom of God for a gentile audience.

In the second point of focus, we saw why the Jewish leaders missed the kingdom Messiah Jesus established. They missed it because Jesus’ kingdom was spiritual, not physical. Many of us do the same thing today! The key here is to remember how our western minds try to keep pulling us back to the false assumption that the spiritual cannot be as real and have as much of a powerful effect on our lives as the physical. It is also easier to ignore that which is spiritual, not physical. This seems to permeate the church today because of our focus on rationalistic intellectualism and knowing scripture from a systematic doctrinal standpoint rather than on the internalization of scripture while living/walking in the Spirit.

I then shared how the way the terms kingdom of God and kingdom heaven are used interchangeably. Sometimes this was true in the same passage. However, this was mainly seen in the way each gospel writer describes parallel events and teachings from the life of Jesus. In concluding this point, I shared a way to remember how these terms work together.

The kingdom is God’s kingdom over which He rules, it’s spiritual, not physical, and it has all the hallmarks of heaven.

I then asked you a question that most people who have been in an evangelical church for a few years think has an easy answer, "What is the gospel?"

We talked about how most people focus on how Jesus came to die on the cross and was raised up from the dead so that they can be forgiven and go to heaven. I did not dispute that a person in Christ will go to heaven when they die and that this has everything to do with Jesus' death and resurrection. However, I showed you that the biblical answer has a different emphasis.

We looked at the fact that the gospel talked about in the Bible, especially in the gospel accounts, was the gospel of the kingdom of God. It is all about Christ's fulfillment of the Old Testament through the establishment of the promised kingdom. This happened by Jesus' incarnation, His death, His resurrection, and His ascension. Through His death and resurrection, those with active faith in him have victory over the guilt and power of sin as well as a redeemed purpose, which was lost through sin. The emphasis is not on going to heaven when we die, but accepting Jesus' invitation to enter into Him and His kingdom so we can live in relationship with the Holy Spirit and accomplish the spreading of His kingdom throughout the world.

I then shared thirteen scriptural ways the kingdom is described that lets us know what it is like and how it affects our lives. Without going over all of them, here are four key ones:

- First, being in this kingdom makes us greater and gives us higher standing than the greatest of people under the Old Covenant.
- Second, the kingdom is not static but always expanding and growing.
- Third, as the kingdom expands, it permeates the individual follower of Jesus, the community of Jesus followers, and the native culture in which we exist.
- And finally, the kingdom is at hand. That, my friends, leads us into our question of the day: When will God establish His kingdom?

When Will God Establish His Kingdom?

I know that was a long review of where we have been. Actually, it was longer than I expected. I know, I know that was no surprise to you, was it? I do believe, however, it is important to firmly establish these things as we look at the question, "When will God establish His kingdom on earth?" The first thing we must look at is what does the term "at hand" really mean?

Jesus and John the Baptist used the term "at hand" when referring to the kingdom coming." In both of my books, *Communing with the Trinity* and *The Radical Jesus Prayer*, I have provided a chart to look at the primary scriptures where the term "at hand" can be found. All but two of them specifically refer to the kingdom being at hand.

- In Matthew chapter three, verse two, John the Baptist said, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."
- Later in chapter four of the same gospel, verse seventeen, Jesus began His ministry by preaching, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

- Later yet in the gospel of Matthew, Jesus tells the original twelve disciples as He sends them out to minister, “And as you go, preach, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’”
- In his gospel chapter one, verse fifteen, Mark records Jesus beginning His ministry with these words. “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”
- Three times Jesus came back to His sleeping disciples in the garden and rebuked them for not praying with Him. We read in Matthew chapter twenty-six, verses forty-five and forty-six that He said to them, “Are you still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up, let us be going; behold, the one who betrays Me is at hand.”
- Finally, Mark refers to Jesus' words to His sleeping disciples in the same way Matthew refers to it. “Get up, let us be going; behold, the one who betrays Me is at hand.”

The thing described the most as “at hand” is the kingdom. Mark 1:15 gives us the 3,000-foot overview of Jesus' ministry. He describes the kingdom as the time of fulfillment. Allow me to refresh your memory with that verse from the New American Standard Bible. “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.” There are two very important things we see here. First, Jesus says, “the time is fulfilled . . .” Second, Jesus tells us why the time is fulfilled, “the kingdom of God is at hand.”

I want to share with you a translation of Mark chapter one, verse fifteen, found in Dallas Willard's book *The Divine Conspiracy*.

All the preliminaries have been taken care of,” he said, “and the rule of God is now accessible to everyone. Review your plans for living and base your life on this remarkable new opportunity.¹

Further on in the book, Willard explains how the people of Jesus' day knew that “at hand” meant “now available.”

Jesus' hearers understood the invitation to base their own lives on the rule of God [kingdom of God] “at hand.” Of course they had no general understanding of what was involved, but they knew Jesus meant that he was acting with God and God with him, that God's rule [God's kingdom] was effectively present through him.²

Now we are getting somewhere. When we look at Matthew 26:45-46 and the parallel passage in Mark 14:42, we see why Willard spoke of the “rule of God” or “kingdom of God” as “now being accessible” The setting is the garden where Jesus led His disciples to pray. Jesus' prayers during this time were intense. Yet when He returned to the disciples three different times, they were sleeping. Here we have Jesus' response the final time He found them sleeping:

Then He came to the disciples and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and resting? Behold, the *hour is at hand*, and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. “Get up, let us be going; behold, the one who betrays Me is *at hand!*”

What was "at hand?" The hour in which the betrayal of Jesus would take place. Who was "at hand?" The one who would betray Jesus. When did this all take place? At that very moment as Jesus was speaking:

In the very next verse, we read: *While He was still speaking, behold, Judas, one of the twelve, came up* accompanied by a large crowd with swords and clubs, who came from the chief priests and elders of the people.

It is easy to see in this example, "at hand" means "now!" This is in keeping with the Greek word used for "at hand," *eggizō*. This word means "things that are imminent."³ It also means "to join one thing to another or to approach."⁴ This is why some English translations use the following terms to translate "at hand:" "The time has come,"⁵ "The hour is come,"⁶ "The hour has drawn nigh,"⁷ and "The moment is close at hand."⁸

Luke gives us the clearest scripture that shows the meaning of *eggizō*. Here Jesus gives a commission to seventy-two of His disciples. He is sending them out to practice what they have observed in Him. He is sending them in pairs ahead of Him to every place He was going. Jesus gives them specific instructions, including this:

Whatever city you enter and they receive you, eat what is set before you; and heal those in it who are sick, and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you [*eggizō*].'"

Luke 10:8-9 NASB

When healed by a miracle, people are not waiting for anything. It happened—right then, right there! Thus it becomes obvious "at hand" has nothing to do with waiting. It is here—right here, right now. "Is here now" becomes the obvious meaning of "at hand." This is akin to us saying something is "in hand" when we have received the item.

There is one more key to understanding that the kingdom of God was, without a doubt, established in Jesus' first coming. The phrase "The time is fulfilled" found in Mark chapter one, verse fifteen, is the key to this issue and is irrefutable. Reading this in English casts out all uncertainty. However, if you look at the Greek word for "fulfilled," *plēroō*, it literally means, "to make replete or to cram."⁹ Thayer's Greek Lexicon speaks of *plēroō* in these terms: to make full, to fill, to fill up, to cause to abound, to furnish or supply liberally.

However, it is even more important to look at the parsing of this verb. It is a perfect tense with an indicative mood. By the way, this is the same parsing for *eggizō*, the Greek word for at hand. The key here, in both instances, is the perfect tense of the two verbs. First, you must recognize that in Greek, the aspect of a verb is far more important than the time of the verb. The aspect of a verb has to do with the kind of action that was happening. While a perfect tense is past tense, which makes the establishment of the kingdom as something that had already taken place, the aspect is an action that is completed. Remember, this is true for the Greek word translated "at hand."

Yet the perfect tense goes one step farther. In a perfect tense, not only has the action already taken place at a specific point of time in the past, but the results of that action are continuing into the present. In other words, we could translate this part of Mark 1:15 as “The time has already happened and is affecting you this very day because the rule of God is here, right now!”

The reason this can be translated in such a definitive way is the indicative mood of the verbs translated “fulfilled” and “at hand.” An indicative mood is a mood of certainty. Simply stated, this is an emphasis on the action being an established fact or factual.

Focusing on the Second Coming

Now that we have established that the kingdom of God has already come and has been established by Messiah Jesus, I must persist in making a point I alluded to earlier. Just because Jesus brought a spiritual kingdom does not take away from the full reality of that kingdom.

Only through the eyes of a Western mindset would one question such a statement. Yes, there is a time when this kingdom will be physical. Yet it will be no more real than it is today. The only difference is that in the physical kingdom creation, including our bodies, will be redeemed and transformed.¹⁰ Today, right here, right now, the kingdom of God/Heaven exists in all its power, glory, and majesty. The physical reality of it is reflected in the surrounding world through the community of communion formed by those who are in Christ. (For those of you from Rio Lynda that’s what the church is supposed to be, a community of communion.)

The effects of this present kingdom upon the lives of those who enter it through repentance and active faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are powerful and dynamic. It is no less effective and powerful than when it will appear to all men in a physical form.

Thus to put so much time and effort into trying to discern when the physical kingdom is to come causes us to lose focus. We lose focus on what is just as real here and now—yesterday, today, and forever. If you have a problem with this present kingdom, you will never be comfortable in the physical kingdom to come. Why? They are virtually the same.

Here is a little side note: I am convinced that the coming physical manifestation of the kingdom will not be like what we call physical now. It will be more like Jesus’ transformed body. Just something to make you go, HmMMM!

Today, in the conventional church, we spend a lot of time and energy trying to figure out the kingdom that is yet to come. We do this while having little understanding or experience in the kingdom that is here. I will not now, and by God’s grace, I will never in the future ever argue eschatology with you. But I would like to take time to put into perspective why we should not obsess over the physical manifestation of the kingdom to come.

The scriptures encourage those who are under tremendous persecution to focus on this coming kingdom. However, no one in the United States is under that type of persecution at this point in history. To help you see the necessity of focusing on the present kingdom rather than the one to come, I would like to share a story.

There was a time when I had to drive my wife to work while the landlord was redecorating our duplex. During that time, we shared a townhouse with one of my children. However, that was forty-five minutes away from her work. That meant that for two weeks, three hours each day, Monday through Friday, I was in my car. Here is the kicker—half the time I was alone. Now I love to drive but not fifteen hours a week. That stretches even me. Often the ride by myself would become monotonous. Oh, I spent time in thanksgiving and praise, but I also listened to the Moody Radio Station. I still often listen to Moody. My favorite type of programming is the interview and Q&A programs.

The first week of listening to Moody Radio was astonishing. Everyone was talking about the second coming of Jesus. The talk and Q&A programs' phone lines flooded with callers and questions. I laughed to myself when the thought came, "it must be sweeps week at Moody." It is hard to get people who grew up in the 20th and 21st-century church excited about much other than their own comfort and entertainment. But with eschatology, their ears perk up like a dog looking at a meaty bone dangling in front of him.

Why are so many people in the church today fascinated with this subject? Even Hollywood invested sixteen million dollars in a movie starring Nicolas Cage called "Left Behind." In 2014 alone, they made an approximate profit of six million dollars through this movie.¹¹ Hollywood knows from previous experience the evangelical world is a rich place to mine for dollars. It is obvious they researched what interests this demographic. Thus they know our fascination with both heaven and the second coming of Jesus. They also are very aware of our propensity to seek out entertainment.

Why are we so fascinated with the second coming? Here is the real problem. When we discuss (or should I say argue) this topic, the subject almost always has nothing to do with "How shall we then live?" Maybe that is why. When dealing with this issue, we focus, for the most part, on ideas. Rationalistic intellectualism runs rampant. This is why we often lose focus on things like forgiveness, humility, and sacrificial love when dealing with this issue. I have never heard any of the proponents of the many eschatological frameworks ever focus on these key issues of life in Christ. Oh, maybe at other times they do, but not when they are in a heated discussion with someone from the "other side." The evangelical Christian argument about the second coming of Jesus finds its foundation on who interprets the scripture better than the other. This attitude, more than anything else, feeds the intellectual rationalism so prevalent in the church today. You would think we were a group of rabbis discussing the coming of the Messiah or something.

During that first week of long drives, I listened to almost eight hours of eschatological gibberish. Those who thought they had the "right interpretation" seemed to lose all humility. Those who disagreed from the other side seemed to forget all about unity and charity.

Listen carefully, please. In every New Testament scripture passage dealing with the second coming, there is but one focus. These scriptures always focus on one question, "How shall we then live?" The Bible teaches us about the second coming of Jesus to motivate us. These scriptures motivate us to live all Jesus commanded us to do (the life of a disciple). Even the

purpose of the book of Revelation was to give hope to a specific group of Christians. This group was suffering from intolerable persecution. This open letter from John gave them the revelation of Jesus Christ. It gave them hope because Jesus is the victor. Its purpose was to let them know that they were on the right side. This is an important thing to know when you have nothing, and your life is on the line. Think about our Iranian brothers and sisters. That condition is something none of us North American Christians know much about.

Unlike those to whom John wrote Revelation, we have the convenience (or should I say the curse) to spend our time arguing systematic theology. We argue the correct interpretation of scripture rather than focusing on "How Shall We Then Live?" That is the only purpose of Biblical theology. When we separate "How Shall We Then Live" from scriptures dealing with the second coming of Jesus, we get lost in the weeds. The truth is we get lost in the weeds with any study of scripture whose foundation is not, "How Shall We Then Live." It is like separating the love of God from the holiness and truth of God. When we do that, we get Easy Believism. When we separate "How Shall We Then Live" from scriptures dealing with the second coming of Jesus, we get the "I'll Fly Away Syndrome."

Now back to my story. In the second week of my long car trips, I happened to be listening to one of my favorite Moody programs. The name of it is "In the Market with Janet Parshall." In the segment I listened to, Janet was interviewing the head of the organization, "Voice of the Martyrs." Janet, with all of her famous passion, talked about all the Christians who, at that time, were suffering and martyred in Syria and Iraq by ISIS. She decried the beheadings and families buried alive. This was sad, beyond sad, but was a great lead-in to the interview.

The leader of Voice of the Martyrs shared his recent experience with Christian leaders from Syria. His organization gathered many Syrian Christian leaders together for a time of refreshment. Obviously, Syria is a country where being a Christian is not an easy proposition. Add ISIS to the mix and . . . Well, I'm sure I don't have to paint that picture.

What was the attitude of these Christian leaders? He told how these leaders grappled with the teaching of Jesus. "Oh," you may say, "they are just like us discussing theology." Hold on, Charlie. Here lies the contrast between them and us. The teaching they grappled with was none other than,

You have heard that it was said, "you shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy."
But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Matthew 5:43-48 NASB

Wow! They did not grapple with the nuances of theology but the hard stuff! Based on how most

American evangelicals pray, they should have been praying for the second coming of Jesus. "Get us out of here! Come quickly, Lord Jesus!" According to how most of us handle such things, they should have been trying to figure out one thing. How this persecution fits into a timeline approach to the second coming. Yet no, there they were focusing on "How Shall We Then Live?"

How many times have I heard those Western friends of mine, shoulder deep in eschatological musings, take present events, and fit them into a timeline? Not these guys. These Christian leaders from Syria were focusing on "How Shall We Then Live?" How in the world were they going to live that truth, that command, in light of ISIS? Their concern was not over what Jesus meant. It was not over what Greek construction would make this command easier to live. They simply grappled with one question, "In light of this passage, How Shall We Then Live?"

Soon the leader of Voice of the Martyrs told how these same Christian leaders studied another passage. This one is where Jesus sent Ananias of Damascus to minister to Saul (Paul). All Ananias knew of Saul was that he was a persecutor of the church. Scripture tells us Saul was "breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord." Saul had authority from the religious leaders to imprison followers of Jesus Christ. And now, in a vision, the Lord speaks to Ananias of Damascus. He tells him to go minister to this guy! "You have to be kidding! How could a loving God ask him to do that?" I hear some of you asking that question.

"You have to be kidding" was pretty much the attitude of Ananias when the Lord spoke to him. Yet he went . . . and the world has never been the same. The Christian leaders from Syria asked themselves some very hard questions.

The Syrian church leaders pondered the following questions. How do we love these people? Should we really pray for them? What would we do if the Lord spoke to us? What if he told us to go to a leader of ISIS and minister to them? Their final conclusion:

We would rather go and die in obedience than continue to live in disobedience!

That my friend was not a theological construct. It was not something that somewhere down the road they might face. It was the reality of these Christian leaders, and they did not flinch. Once again, notice the questions were not about the theology behind the scripture. They did not try to systematize this passage with others in a way that would give them the ability to wiggle out of Jesus' teaching. Their discussion was not about anything other than, "In light of this passage, How Shall We Then Live?"

Wow! How would you and I react if ISIS came to the United States of America? How would we react if they beheaded Christians and buried our families alive? Before you answer that question, realize it is easier to answer it this side of the Atlantic than on the other side. You would be no more obedient to such a drastic command than you already are to all the commands of Jesus and His early disciples. Put that in your pipe and smoke on it for a while.

Ok, here it comes. This next statement will tick-you-off or make you cry, maybe both. Are you ready?

We, in the North American Church, have become fat. We have taken in so much of the word while not internalizing it. For the most part, we sit around, chewing our cud. We have given out little of the life the word should produce. Obedience? That went out the window with easy believeism. I fear we are like a 400-pound person sitting in an easy chair. We sit in our easy chair, listening to musicians and speakers who make us feel good. In one hand, we hold a book entitled, "Jesus Is Coming Soon." In the other, we stuff cake in our mouths while hungry people clamor for our crumbs.

Do you think that statement was too harsh? Maybe. Maybe not. This, I do know. We need to replace at least 80% of the time we spend on theological arguments. We need to use half of that time for communing with the persons of the Trinity. Then we need to get up, walk in the Spirit, and, with the other half of that time, take the authentic actions of obedient disciples of Jesus Christ.

I once saw a movie on the life of Martin Luther. One day he was out planting a tree. A brother came up and asked him a question, "Brother Martin, what would you do if you knew Jesus was coming back tomorrow?" Martin Luther thought for a few minutes and then responded, "I'd keep planting this tree."

Now the veracity of that little scene is questionable. Yet, you see, my friends, here are the questions we should ask about the second coming of Jesus and the kingdom He established here in this age. Do you focus on *living* your life in Christ? Are you living in obedience to Christ and His word by living/walking in the Spirit every day? Are we praying for your enemies? Do we sacrificially love your enemies and those who hurt you? Are you so busy storing up for the future that you have little time, energy, or resources for the needs of people around you? Is your primary focus on the kingdom of God and His righteousness? Do you live what you say you believe? Do you live and pray, "Your kingdom come Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven?" Do you start that petition within the spirit of introspection and confession, thinking of the needs of others yet unmet?" What happens when you get up and walk out the door?

What if you learned Jesus was coming back tomorrow? Would you change what you are doing today? Would you *have* to change what you are doing today? Would you have to change to be living in line with the scriptures, you know? Are you preparing for a theological exam, or are you preparing for a review of your life? Are you preparing for a review of your life based on the quality of your works? Yes, the blood of Jesus by grace through active faith brings us into right relationship with the persons of the Trinity. But He will judge our works based on our new life in Him. Yes, this is speaking about those in Christ! Is your standard for the quality of your works the attitude of Jesus? Are you perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect? Are you ready for the Bema Seat of Christ, where He asks, "What have you done with the new life and the new kingdom I have given to you? Have your works been worthwhile or worthless?"¹²

Do you pray and live the pattern Jesus gave, "Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven?" If you do, you will never be ashamed of those questions. Why? "All the

preliminaries have been taken care of," he said, "and the rule of God is now accessible to everyone. Review your plans for living and base your life on this remarkable new opportunity."

There is only one reason kingdom Christianity is radical today. We have lost sight of the goal. For many reasons, far too many to go into here, we have been focused on going to heaven and doing our best while making this life the best it can be. That is not the focus of an authentic disciple of Jesus. Authentic disciples focus on the kingdom of God, which is here and now—nothing more, as though there could be more, and nothing less. Why? The gospel is the good news of the kingdom promised to the people of the Old Covenant and instituted by Jesus! It is here! It is now! The rule of God has come. Does He reign in your life?

Concluding Thoughts

That was pretty heavy stuff, wasn't it my friends?

I was going to sum up all we have learned about kingdom Christianity, but I believe that pretty much hits where our tires do burnouts on the asphalt. Always remember any teaching from scripture must be internalized and lived not just understood.

I would only remind you of this one thing as we conclude our introductory look into kingdom Christianity. A kingdom must have three elements to be a kingdom. There must be a king who reigns, people over whom the king reigns, and a set of laws through which the people carry out the purposes of the king. Kingdom Christianity is all about the reign of God in and through you!

Our brothers and sisters in Iran and Afganistan never let the excuse, "Well, I may not be doing these things now, but it is because I haven't grown enough yet. I'm really trying my best!" They read a command and then just do it! Sorry, Nike. Remember, what we see as "Christian growth," they see as a prerequisite to becoming a disciple of Jesus. And there is no other type of authentic Christian, my friends. Discipleship is not an add on to the basic model. When we become more like our brothers and sisters in Iran and less like those around us, we will be living in kingdom Christianity. The king's reign will expand in our lives and the world around us. If you are in Christ, if you belong to Him, if you take the title of Christian, there is no other way to live but within the radical realities of kingdom Christianity.

So, let me finish off by reminding you that tomorrow we will take a look at how a disciple of Jesus should relate to their native culture. I'm sure you have been asking yourself that question. Then we will take a break from looking Inside Jimbo's Head for a full episode featuring a Story From the Frontlines of Ministry and a short interview with the person who was a key character in that story. After that, our series, Cultural Christianity Versus Kingdom Christianity, will begin to get down into the nitty-gritty of how different cultural Christianity is from kingdom Christianity as we look at some very practical realities of the Christian life.

Please, be sure to subscribe to this podcast, consider becoming a support partner at either the \$0.99, \$4.99, or \$9.99 per month level, and check out the Hello, Jimbo Speaking webpage at jimbo-speaking.org.

So, until tomorrow, go out there and by God's grace make it a great day that honors and glorifies Him through the faith of obedience. Do not settle for anything less. See you next week.

¹ Willard, Dallas. The Divine Conspiracy (p. 15). HarperCollins. Kindle Edition.

² Willard, Dallas. The Divine Conspiracy (p. 19). HarperCollins. Kindle Edition.

³ Vines Expository Dictionary, Blue Letter Bible;

<https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongsg=G1448&t=NASB>

⁴ Thayer's Greek Lexicon, Blue Letter Bible;

<https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongsg=G1448&t=NASB>

⁵ New Living Translation

⁶ Aramaic Bible in Plain English

⁷ Darby Bible Translation

⁸ Weymouth New Testament

⁹ Strong's Definitions, Blue Letter Bible:

<https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongsg=G4137&t=NASB>

¹⁰ Romans 8:19-23

¹¹ IMDb; http://www.imdb.com/title/tt2467046/business?ref_=tt_dt_bus

¹² II Corinthians 5:10 where good and bad do not mean morally good or bad but worthwhile or worthless / admirable or unworthy.