



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

Inside Jimbo's Head™

Series 1, Cultural Christianity Versus Kingdom
Christianity

Episode 20, Getting Down to the Nitty-Gritty:
Making and Growing Disciples, Part III—Sharing
the Gospel of the Kingdom©

The following is a transcript of Inside Jimbo's Head from Season 1, Episode 20 of the Hello, Jimbo Speaking™ podcast, first aired April 27, 2021

You can hear the Hello, Jimbo Speaking podcast on the following platforms: Anchor, Apple Podcasts, Breaker, Castbox, Google Podcasts, Overcast, Pocket Casts, RadioPublic, Spotify, and Stitcher. For More Information, Go To www.jimbospeaking.org

All rights to each podcast and this written transcript are copywritten to James B. Warren and are solely owned by him. All rights reserved. Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilization of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying, and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the written permission of the author. Contact: Jim Warren, PO Box 65 Wheatfield, IN 46392

Introduction

Sound Effects: Opening Jimbo's Head

Well, there it goes. Sometimes I just can't stop it! That old head of mine has opened up, and now everything is spilling out. So, let's make use of some of that stuff and start looking at how to share the gospel of the kingdom of God.

Remember Donovan from the Stories From the Frontlines of Ministry? I will never forget that young man. "If I was sitting under a tree with my guitar and poetry, and if Jesus came walking by, do you think Jesus would call me to be one of His disciples?" Have you ever asked yourself that question? If you have been infected by the easy believism of our day, you see discipleship as an option. Donovan didn't. He knew that either you were a disciple of Jesus, had nothing to do with Him, or worst just listened to Him, or were one of the people trying to silence Him. One part of the story that did not make it into the vignette was when Donovan, after reading through the entire New Testament three times, began to talk to me about religious people who think they are Christians. When you take the New Covenant seriously and not read it from a preconceived religious standard or your native cultural standards, each leading to tons of excuses, you

see things pretty clearly. Donovan sure did!

You see, as the guy from the one-minute comedy skit with a punch found out, you have to be hired to get the benefits. You can't just show up and go through the motions as though you have a job. In the culturalized conventional church, we have many people who show up and think they are performing the work, but they do not belong to Jesus.

Does that sound harsh? Think about what we learned about the attitude that is the norm for all Jesus followers from Philippians chapter three, verses seven through ten. Remember episodes fifteen, sixteen, and seventeen? How often do you see that in the church today? How about your life? Is that your normal attitude? Why is it that so few even strive for such a lifestyle, let alone just live it? Could it be because "Houston, We Have A Problem?"

As I have said before, "If you can't walk the walk, don't talk the talk, because if your walk don't talk, your talk won't walk." Having a problem with walking the walk? As I stated last week, maybe we need to go back to the beginning and relook at how we got started. Don't think so? Okay. Just wait until the last segment of this Inside Jimbo's Head teaching.

The one thing I do not like about the one-minute comedy skits with a punch is how they always tie accepting Jesus with going to heaven someday. Did you notice that huge problem? Of course, they were created to be played on Christian radio. If they did not follow the pattern of easy believism, they would more than likely not get played.

Is that how you got started. You know, accepting Jesus so you can go to heaven when you die? If so, as we look at how to share the gospel of the Kingdom of God, you may want to think of a redo. Does that offend you? I hope not. But if conviction is there, action must follow.

Inside Jimbo's Head Theme Music

Opening—Where We Have Been and Where Are We Going

In the last episode, we looked at three keys to becoming and making disciples of Jesus. We must keep these in mind as we begin to talk about how to share the gospel of the kingdom of God. First, we talked about the imperative of never separating our redemption from the kingdom of God. Why? The kingdom of God, the kingdom instituted during Jesus' earthly ministry and established on the cross, is the only purpose of our redemption.

Have you ever asked yourself why so many culturalized, conventional Christians think they can live for the purposes espoused by their native culture and still be a Jesus follower? Have you ever wondered why so many try to fit Jesus into their American lifestyle and feel totally justified in living in that manner? Every time I see this, people end up watering down Christianity, trying to make the round peg of the kingdom of God fit into our culture's square hole? How? Excuse after excuse, after excuse, why they cannot live the life commanded by Jesus and His first followers through whom the New Covenant was written.

When our redemption's forgiveness of sins, when our redemption's victory over the power of sin, when our redemption's new purpose is separated from the present Kingdom, we believe we can live with one foot in the world and one foot in the kingdom. Many leaders have told me we have to live that way. As good religious people, we always add the caveat that living this way can happen as long as we live a morally acceptable life, attend church, tithe, read our Bibles and pray. Oh, yes, and try our best. This line of reasoning generally adds that while this may not be God's will, He is satisfied. After all, God is a God of grace and mercy.

If you believe such things, if you have cheapened God's grace and mercy, it is a sure bet that you are part of the problem, not a part of the solution! Oh, and you will never see that kind of thinking portrayed in the New Covenant, only some people's systematized theology.

Not separating redemption and the kingdom leads us to the second key we must always keep in mind when thinking about becoming or making disciples. We cannot separate discipleship from salvation. Salvation is about being transferred into the kingdom of God in this life and transferred out of the kingdom(s) of this world.

This transference happens because we have been set free from the guilt of sin. Living as God's image-bearers, living a righteous life happens because we have been set free from the power of sin. We also receive a new directive, the sole purpose of expanding the kingdom in the lives of other disciples and those who are not yet in Christ.

With this understanding, it is easy to see why there is no authentic Christianity without living the life of a disciple of Jesus Christ. This reality is why salvation and discipleship cannot be separated. Always remember, a student learns the teachings of their master. A disciple not only learns what their master teaches but emulates every aspect of their master's life. In the conventional culturalized church, we have many students but few disciples even where discipleship is taught. Remember the rationalistic intellectualism that has seeped from our native culture into the culture of conventional Christianity? Ah Ha! Another reason "Houston, We Have A Problem."

These first two points bring us to the third and final key to becoming or making disciples, which we discussed in the last episode. This third key is how a person must respond to the gospel of the Kingdom of God if they are to become a disciple.

There are three words used by the New Covenant to tell us how to respond to the gospel of the kingdom of God: repent, believe, and baptize. However, these three words are so intricately linked they should not and cannot be separated.

To repent means to change one's mind and purpose so that a new way of living always follows the act of repentance.

To believe means to have a firm foundational conviction that all God said and did, says and does, and promises to do is true and truthful, leading to a life of obedience. In other words, to believe means to have active faith.

When a person repents and has active faith, the first act of obedience is to be baptized as a disciple of Jesus. There is no other way the New Covenant teaches us nor shows us by example to identify with Jesus as one's Lord and Savior. One can pray a prayer, but only water baptism brings one into identification with Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Obviously, if one cannot be baptized, a simple prayer will suffice, as seen in the thief's example on the cross.

The perfect example of repentance and active faith is found in Paul's radical attitude and actions found in Philippians chapter three, verses seven to ten. Paul's recognition of his partnership with Jesus and His kingdom, as well as his full, complete, intimate, experiential relationship with Jesus as his Lord, led to a very specific response. This response took place as a completed act in the past that continued to affect him into his present. Paul saw his past religious experience, his past cultural way of life, and the whole of everything in its entirety as a damaged loss and a detriment to his life in Christ. Thus, Paul took authority over them and saw them as doggy-dew to be scraped off his shoe. This is repentance.

Paul's faith brought him into a full, complete, intimate, experiential relationship with Jesus and the power of His resurrection. It also led him into a full, complete, intimate, experiential communion with the sufferings of Jesus, leading him into a life lived in conformity to Jesus' death.

Is that what you see today when people "pray the sinner's prayer?" Now I can hear you, "Jimbo, these are things into which we need to grow!" Boy, oh, boy, do you need to listen to the next episode. For now, just realize that the way the verbs in these passages of scripture were formed shows us that these radical attitude and actions were either something that was completed in the past and continued into Paul's life at his present or something that was a continuous, habitual, lifestyle in his present.

Hey, I have a phrase I want you to tattoo on your mind. Ready? NO MORE EXCUSES!

So, if this is what it takes to become or make a disciple, how should we share the gospel of the kingdom with those who are not yet in Christ? This question is our question for the day. After all, the conventional culturalized modern church results are not what we are looking for, are they! To answer the question, "how should we share the gospel of the kingdom," I plan to share three areas with you.

So far, we have looked at the principles behind the gospel of the kingdom. You should, by now, understand what makes up this gospel. We went over this in episodes number ten and eleven and mentioned it in most of the episodes. But now we need to get down to some specifics. First, I want to share a kingdom gospel narrative with you. Then I will share with you some key concepts to keep in mind as you share this narrative. Finally, I will end this episode by going over my "counting the cost questions" I use as I share this narrative of the gospel of the kingdom of God.

Section I—The Gospel of the Kingdom Narrative

Remember back in episode eighteen when we talked about the B.L.E.S.S. lifestyle? In the last episode and this episode, we have been discussing the second "S," which stands for "share." At

some point in the relationships produced by your B.L.E.S.S. lifestyle, you will have to share the gospel of the kingdom. The truth be told, you will be sharing parts of this narrative and the issues behind the counting the cost questions throughout your redemptive relationships as the Spirit gives you the opportunity. Notice I said, “. . . as the Spirit gives you the opportunity.” You will never have to force-feed people either of these issues. The openings will develop as they see your radical attitude and actions as a disciple of Jesus. Normally, they come as questions about why you do what you do or why you treat people the way you treat them.

Here are the basics of the kingdom gospel narrative I share with people.

The gospel of the kingdom begins with the creation of the cosmos. God created the cosmos as a reflection of Himself. It displayed His attributes and shined forth with His glory, the representation of all that He is.

However, after God created the earth and all that was to inhabit it, He formed a place, a garden where He placed the pinnacle of His creation, the parents of all humankind. This garden, this kingdom, is where God lived in the intimacy of communion with these special acts of creation. They were special because God created them in His image to be His image-bearers. God breathed His own life into them, not created life. In humankind, God allowed His every character, a character of purity, love, and truth, to be reproduced. Thus they did not reflect His character as all other parts of creation reflected His attributes. Humankind was created as bearers of His character, bearers of His divine nature. In other words, all of creation reflects all that God is while humankind was created as a receptor of His divine life, His divine character, and thus lived according to His character. All of this was done with the chief purpose of glorifying God.

As His image-bearers, God gave the parents of humankind authority to spread His rule throughout all the earth. However, this authority was dependent upon their continued communion with Him and their submission to Him. Communion with God was the purpose of the first kingdom, the garden from which they were to spread His authority. This dependency and communion allowed them to continue to be His image-bearers. By their very inbreathed natures, the parents of all humankind were like God, not simply a reflector of Him.

However, the one who lived in rebellion against God, His enemy, enticed and seduced the parents of humankind to rebel against God. He persuaded them into disobedience to God's rule, disobedience to God's commands. The result of this disobedience was three-fold:

First, the authority God invested into the parents of humankind was abdicated by their disobedience and transferred to God's enemy, the Devil. This abdication made him the “ruler of this world.” Thus a new kingdom was established in the creation. If you like, you can call it the Evil Empire. However, Biblically speaking, it is called the kingdom of darkness, a kingdom of rebellion against God and His ways which flowed from His character. This new kingdom took on the characteristics of its new head—the character of rebellion against God. All of creation was transformed and became a part of this new kingdom of darkness. Creation also lost its full ability to reflect God's attributes, even though they still can be seen in the creation in a limited sense.

However, the authority of this new kingdom of darkness was limited in the same way the authority of humankind was limited. Neither of these ever usurped the overall authority of God.

Second, the parents of humankind lost their image-bearer nature and became spiritually dead. They took on the nature of the rebellious one. No longer under the authority of God, they became under the authority of the “ruler of this world” and continued to live in disobedience to God. The passions of their and their offsprings fallen state, including their now corrupted physical bodies, drove them farther from God and their fallen natures kept them from being God's image-bearers. Instead, they became those who were deserving of only God's wrath because of their fallen nature and the behaviors it produced.

Finally, that garden, that kingdom of communion where God lived in intimacy with the pinnacle of His creation, was lost to the parents of humanity and their offspring. They and thus all their offspring were separated from God.

The sum of all of this is that God's kingdom in the cosmos where He ruled through His creation, not just over His creation, was lost.

However, God's love, His desire to communicate all that He is to, in, and through His creation, caused Him to reach out to a specific group of people. This group of people started with Abraham and eventually became known as the Children of Israel. Through these people, God would come to humankind as the Messiah—the one who would establish this renewed kingdom once and for all. He would set the pattern for the renewed kingdom He would establish through this specific group of people. Coming as the Messiah, God not only would establish the renewed kingdom but prepare humankind to participate in this renewed kingdom. Through this completed work of the Messiah, the transformation of fallen humankind would bring them back to once again being God's image-bearers. They would live in communion with Him and in subjection to Him. As His image-bearers living in subjection and communion with Him, renewed humankind would allow God to once again intimately rule through His creation, not just over His creation.

Throughout the history of these chosen people, God would make conditional covenant with them, promising to establish His kingdom through them if they would stay obedient to Him. However, throughout the history of God's interactions with these chosen people, a pattern developed. Obedience, the establishment of a physical kingdom pattern, disobedience, loss of the physical kingdom pattern, repentance, and the re-establishment of the lost kingdom pattern continuously took place. This pattern shows that the condition of being a part of God's kingdom was obedience and communion with Him so that authority would only rest in His image-bearers. No disobedient person or group of people could keep the authority God invested into them, for they could not be His image-bearers.

The key to the covenant God made with these chosen people was that the covenantal promise of the renewed kingdom was to Abraham and his seed. However, the term “your seed” did not mean the children of Abraham eventually called the Children of Israel. The term “your seed” was singular, meaning the Messiah. God never intended to establish the promised kingdom to a specific group of humankind but to the Messiah, whose physical lineage would be through this

chosen people. The lineage of the Messiah was not the only purpose of this chosen people, however. Remember God's interactions with them served as a blueprint or a sketch of the reality that would come when the Messiah would appear. Thus, the kingdom and this special relationship as image-bearer living in submission and communion with God while imbued with authority would be open to all humankind once again. It would not be limited to one group or nation of people.

Finally, after the continuous breaking of the covenant by those God had chosen as a pattern for the renewed kingdom, God sent the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth. However, this Messiah was not just a person from the lineage of Abraham. He was not an inheritor of the fallen, rebellious nature of humankind. He was God Himself incarnated as a member of humanity. Thus this Messiah was God's true image-bearer, having God's very divine nature and living in subjection to and communion with God as a willing servant. For this reason, God could anoint Him with full authority to bring and establish the kingdom lost through the fall of humankind. Thus God worked through humankind in the Messiah to undo what was lost by and to humankind.

Messiah Jesus did not establish this renewed kingdom as humankind establishes human governments, societies, and cultures. He did not establish God's government, society, and culture through force but through a self-emptying, self-sacrificial act of obedient extreme unselfishness. Obediently Messiah Jesus went to the cross. On the cross, He accomplished two things.

First, He established the renewed kingdom of God by defeating God's enemy through His willful act of obedience to God. This willful act of obedience, alone, overturned the willful disobedient act of the parents of humankind. Thus, upon the shoulders of Jesus rests this new government with a new society and new culture.

Second, Messiah Jesus won the victory over the guilt of sin and the victory over the power of sin for humankind. He did this by taking our sins and sinful natures into Himself and bearing God's punishment in our place. Through the death and resurrection of Jesus, sins are forgiven, and old sinful natures have been put to death. No longer do those in Christ live under condemnation, nor do they live under to power of sin. They have been set free from slavery to sin, becoming slaves to righteousness. They become slaves to a lifestyle based on the thoughts, intents, and character of God. That is, they become, once again, God's image-bearers.

When Messiah Jesus had successfully established God's kingdom and prepared the way for humankind to be returned as God's image-bearers, God raised Him from the dead. Immediately after the resurrection of Jesus, He returned to the Father and was coronated as King of God's renewed kingdom. He was given full authority over all powers in heaven and earth, including human governments, societies, and cultures. This authority includes authority over the Devil and his kingdom of darkness. There is no authority over which Jesus does not reign (except for the persons of the Trinity with whom He reigns as a coequal). He then returned to His first disciples, preparing them for the part they would play as well as all those who would come into this renewed kingdom. As God's image-bearers in His renewed kingdom, their role was to be

one of expanding the rule of Christ into the lives of those still held prisoner in the kingdom of darkness.

This expansion of God's rule, God's renewed kingdom, occurs in a very specific way. The good news of this renewed kingdom, complete with new governance, society, and culture, is to be demonstrated and heralded by disciples of Jesus. It is demonstrated as God's people live in communities where they communion with God and each other. These become the physical manifestation of the spiritual kingdom established by Messiah Jesus. As these communities demonstrate the reality of this renewed kingdom, they then proclaim that the renewed kingdom, the rule of God, has once again been established upon the earth. They also proclaim that the new way of living under God's rule has been prepared for all through the obedient sacrificial act of Jesus on the cross.

When the message of the renewed kingdom is seen and heard, God's grace works repentance and active faith in those who yield their lives to the power of His grace. This grace produced faith, and its resulting salvation costs a person nothing. Jesus paid the full price for these things Himself. However, each fallen person must first carefully consider the cost of the changes that will take place in their lives when they become disciples of Jesus. As they receive a vision of the partnership Jesus is offering them with Him and His kingdom as well as the full, complete, intimate, experiential relationship they will have with Him as their Lord, the gift of repentance is granted. This gift of repentance causes them to consider their old religious way of life, their old cultural lifestyle, and the whole of all things in their entirety as a damaged loss and detriment to that partnership and relationship. Their minds are changed, and they take on a new purpose. This new purpose becomes their sole purpose in life in such a way that they treat anything that stands in its way as animal excrement to be scraped off their shoe.

Repentance inextricably becomes active faith, the meaning of the word "believe." Through this active faith, people are reborn with God's very divine nature becoming their new nature. Their old sinful nature is put to death, and the Holy Spirit comes and dwells in them, empowering them to live as God's image-bearers. They are raised to the position of sons in the renewed kingdom, giving them, as they work in community with others, its full responsibility, and authority. This responsibility and authority are granted, allowing them to extend the renewed kingdom into the lives of those who are still under the influence of the kingdom of darkness. This new responsibility and authority are granted them only as they live in communion with God and His people and live in subjection to Him and His New Covenant. In other words, they must live as His image-bearers subject to Him and living in communion with Him and His people. This lifestyle and its authority and responsibility become the sole purpose of their lives. This active faith brings all who yield to God's rule into a full, complete, intimate, experiential relationship with their king Jesus. It also brings them into a full, complete, intimate, experiential relationship with the power of Jesus' resurrection. This power of His resurrection sets them free from the power of sin. Finally, active faith brings them into a lifestyle based upon a full, complete, intimate, experiential communion with Jesus' sufferings, being made like Him in His death. In other words, they live and minister in the same way Jesus established the renewed kingdom. They

live and minister through self-emptying, self-sacrificial, obedient acts of servanthood. This new life and ministry drive Jesus' disciples into dangerous acts of unselfishness, demonstrating God's love for fallen humanity.

Finally, repentance and active faith drive a person to identify with Jesus and the other members of the Trinity through water baptism. This identification with Jesus and the members of the Trinity becomes the sole basis of their lives. It is so strong, so real that the persons of the Trinity become the persons in whom they live and move and the ones to whom their powers and influence are subject.

With the establishment of God's renewed kingdom, there now exists two kingdoms in the cosmos. However, the power of the kingdom of darkness is limited, for it has been defeated when Jesus died on the cross, establishing God's renewed kingdom. Nonetheless, those who are a part of this defeated kingdom continue to be held prisoner. They can be set free if they avail themselves of the good news of the kingdom of God by responding through grace produced repentance, active faith, and water baptism. All people who become a part of God's reestablished kingdom become soldiers fighting the battle of the ages to expand God's rule to those still held captive. This battle is the purpose behind them being raised to the position of sons in God's kingdom, taking on the responsibility and authority of this renewed kingdom. However, this battle is not fought as human battles are fought. Those who are a part of the kingdom established by Jesus must expand it to those prisoners of the kingdom of darkness in the same way Jesus established the renewed kingdom. They must fight this battle from a self-emptied, self-sacrificial, obedient servant's heart. These battles are won through dangerous acts of unselfishness, not through the power of human authority. They do this not with the weapons of the fallen kingdom but through the spiritual weapons of God's reestablished kingdom, which reflect and point to God's glory. As God's soldiers, they no longer get involved in civilian affairs but must focus on building up one another and bringing the good news of God's reestablished kingdom to those held prisoner. Why? They are not a part of human governments, societies, and cultures but are now a part of God's rule, God's government, society, and culture.

When Jesus finished preparing and commissioning His disciples to expand His completed work, He returned to the Father. There He reigns and oversees the work of His disciples. At some point, the work of His disciples will come to an end. Jesus will return to His people. Those who have refused to become a part of His kingdom, living under His rule, will be judged with the head of their kingdom of darkness, the Devil. Those who are a part of God's kingdom will be judged as to whether or not their lives were worthwhile or worthless for the expansion of the reign of God through His renewed kingdom. Simultaneously, the physical creation, including the bodies of God's people, will be renewed and glorified as God's people have already been renewed and glorified spiritually. All will be set right in God's creation. God will rule through His special acts of creation, humankind who live in communion and subjection to Him as His image-bearers.

Well, there you have it. Remember the pastor I spoke about back in episode ten. He told me he could say the gospel in ten words? Well, that wasn't ten words. What did you expect from Jimbo? Do you also remember when I spoke about how the culturalized, conventional church has so simplified the gospel that it has lost its reality let alone its power? While there may be other ways to say what I just say, there is no doubt that this message is more in line with the gospel preached by Jesus, Paul, Peter, and the entire first-century church. Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead just does not cut it. Do you not believe me. Look at the results of the Easy Believism and its ugly step-sister, the I'll Fly Away Mentality coming from that stripped-down feckless gospel perpetuated by culturalized conventional Christianity.

I want to suggest that you get a copy of the transcript of this episode from the Hello, Jimbo Speaking Website at www.jimbospeaking.org. You can find it on the episode page under episode S1E20. I suggest this for two reasons. First, I would encourage you to break this gospel narrative down into sections to remember it more easily. Second I would suggest you add scripture references throughout if for no other reason than to give yourself a better understanding of the narrative itself. Finally, in a few minutes, we are going to look at my counting the cost questions. You will want to have a copy of these for your use.

Section II—Two More Keys to Sharing the Gospel of the Kingdom of God

Okay, Okay, let's move on. I promised you two more important aspects of sharing the gospel of the kingdom with others. We have already touched on one of these and will be studying the other more closely as we move into future episodes. So let's just scratch the surface today, shall we?

I want to touch on a newer topic for us, though I will be spending a few episodes on this topic before too long. The topic is community. This concept is an often overlooked aspect of sharing the gospel for those of us in Western society. Yet, for those who do not read our Western American mindset into the New Covenant, it sticks out like a sore thumb.

In our hyper-individualistic culture, we Americans fake community regularly. Now, I know for most of you that may sound offensive. Bet that's the first time you have been offended by anything you have heard on this podcast. Right? If all you have eaten is carrots your entire life, if I tell you that you are missing out on so many other types of foods, you will look at me like I have a third eye. You see, in our culture, individuals come together in a community to meet their individual needs. In Eastern cultures, individuals identify by the community in which they belong and focus on meeting the community's needs, knowing that their own needs will be met as the community's needs are met.

The question isn't which is better, East or West. The question is which is more in keeping with the teachings and commands of the New Covenant, the constitution of the kingdom of God. It doesn't take a ThD to recognize that the community-mindedness of Eastern and Mideastern culture is more in line with the Biblical record found in the New Covenant. This truth will always hold up unless you do as most Westerner Christians have done for centuries. We read our

cultural values into the Bible rather than interpreting the Bible from the context in which it was written.

Allow me to share one important fact that more than proves this point. In the New Covenant, when the Greek word translated "you," *sy* and its derivatives appear, they are in the plural form sixty-five percent of the time. When a Western-minded person reads these, they think of the individual application. When those through whom and to whom the scriptures came wrote and read the plural forms of these Greek words, they thought in terms of the community. What do you think is the most accurate understanding, the original mindset, or the mindset that reads into and over the original understanding?

But our problem with missing out on community-mindedness goes far beyond Biblical interpretation. It goes against the very thing that Jesus said would be the impetus for sharing the gospel of the kingdom. In John chapter seventeen, Jesus prays His high priestly prayer before the beginning of His passion. Here is a part of that prayer pertinent to our discussion of community found in John seventeen, verses twenty and twenty-one.

I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

Now many human attempts have been made to bring oneness into the body of Christ. Every local congregation I have ever been a part of or have been familiar with over the last fifty years struggles with what it means to be one. Then, there are all those "one another" passages full of commands that dictate the authentic look of community. However, this passage speaks to why we, in our human understanding and processes, not only struggle but stand defeated in developing the oneness of Christian community.

In this passage, Jesus makes it clear that the way we will see authentic community in a gathering of His disciples is when we experience how we are all in the Father and the Son in the same way they are in each other. We have recently learned that being one with someone is being so wholly joined with them that they are the one in which we find ourselves and the place we live and move and the one to whom our powers and influence are subject. Now we can talk about this from a theological perspective, and in so doing, we often think we have what we think we understand. But get this! The oneness of the Father and the Son is the oneness of the Trinity. Talk about mystical. But Jesus prays that we will practically be in the Father and the Son in the same way they are in each other. If this does not have a practical implication, then the Trinity has no practical application. But Jesus makes it clear there is a practical reality for this mystical reality.

Here we see that we are invited into the community and communion of the Trinity as a community of people, not simply as individuals. That oneness is the basis of our oneness with each other. And the world will know Father sent Jesus as we together live out our communion with the persons of the Trinity as a manifestation of Their reality and the kingdom of God.

Christian community is mystical; it is miraculous. It goes far beyond even the Eastern concepts of community. This mysterious nature of communion and community is why the first communities of believers interacted with each other in the way they did and served as a testimony to the reality of what they said. Today we live our Christian lives and “run the church” from a pure humanistic standpoint. Oh, we may pray from time to time but live in the miraculous, mystical nature of Christianity? Forget it! It does not fit our Western American culture, and we refuse to move from the big comfortable chair of our native culture. Ever hear that one from me before? If a local community of Jesus’ disciples continues with programmed Sunday morning worship in the same way they continue with programmed ministry, community will never happen. We must set aside our programmed ways and live together in the reality of the organic community and communion we have with the Father, His Son, and the Holy Spirit. We must come together regularly devoted to seeking Father together through spontaneous praise and thanksgiving, Scripture reading, petition and intercession, and even times of quiet contemplation. No move of God ever started without such times, including the start of the church on Pentecost!

What was the outcome of the disciples being devoted to waiting upon the Lord together before Pentecost? Just read the book of Acts. In there, look how they continued to do the same even after the church was birthed. Are you willing to restructure your life to live as they lived, or are you going to continue in that big comfortable chair called the American way of life? I got it. If you chose to continue in that way, you could then tell people how impossible it is to live as the early church lived because it was the cultural way of the time. NOT! But go ahead—your in good company using that excuse. Oh, wait a minute. What did I tell you to tattoo on your mind? Oh, yes! NO MORE EXCUSES! Hmmmmmm.

I have gotten farther into this than I wanted. Here is the bottom line. Nothing will change if we keep living our individual lives and our lives together from a mere humanistic standpoint. People will never know that Father sent Jesus to establish His kingdom on this earth in this age if we do not give them the outward expression of our community and communion we experience with the persons of the Trinity. That, my friends, moves us from the rational and pragmatic into spiritual realities many fear.

There is one more area I will touch on, and yes, I mean “touch on” before we move to what I think is the most important key to sharing the gospel of the kingdom. This second area is all about lifestyle. Now we spent a whole episode, episode number eighteen, talking about how lifestyle is a much larger part of ministry than we focus on today. In fact, it is the heart and soul of authentic Christian life and ministry.

Oh, we talk about the Christian or the Christlike lifestyle, but we have also come up with a myriad of excuses why the lifestyle commanded by us in the New Covenant cannot happen today. We have come up with a myriad of excuses why the examples of the New Covenant cannot be the way we live our lives today. Greatest among these is the excuse based on the false teaching that we will never live the way we are expected to live, as testified to in the New Covenant until Jesus returns. And that, my friends, is the ugliness of easy believism’s step-

sister, the I'll fly away mentality!

Do you want to get rid of all those excuses? Go back and relisten to the gospel of the kingdom narrative I shared earlier in this episode! Then, once that is firmly fixed in your heart and mind, always remember that ministry is not so much what we say or do to or for people. Nor is it simply what we say to people. Christian life and ministry are, at their heart, who we are with people! But this goes one step further!

Man Jimbo, when are you going to stop pushing? The answer to that, my friends, is when I see these things happening.

So, what is the one step further when it comes to lifestyle. I have just touched on it. When we, from the hyper-individualistic mindset of the American culture, hear someone talk about lifestyle, we always put it into an individual framework. We think about how we, as an individual are doing. Okay, more than likely, we think more about how all the individuals we know are doing. But remember, if your life is not lived in the mystical, miraculous reality of what the New Covenant speaks of when it speaks of authentic community, you are not living as a disciple of Jesus. Lifestyle is more about us as a community than us as individuals. In fact, I have written elsewhere that without authentic community, there can be no authentic spiritual growth. Without authentic spiritual growth, there can be no authentic community. Without living in and experiencing communion with the persons of the Trinity, both as individuals and as a community, neither authentic community nor authentic spiritual growth can occur.

Section III—Final Key in Sharing the Gospel of the Kingdom, the Counting the Cost Questions.

Okay, okay, now we will really get down to the nitty-gritty of becoming and making authentic disciples of Jesus the kingdom way. Now we will really get down to the nitty-gritty of how to share the gospel of the kingdom.

Every time someone came to Jesus and asked Him if they could be His disciple, He did not make it easy for them. He either hit them over the head with a counting the cost question or made a difficult statement that would cause them to count the cost of following Him. Why would Jesus do such a thing?

Jesus was not looking for people who wanted to be saved so they could be in a relationship with Him and go to heaven someday when they died. As we learned in the gospel of the kingdom of God narrative, He was looking for people who wanted to be so wholly joined to Him in such a way that He was the one in whom they live and move and the one to whom their powers and influence is subject. In other words, He was looking for disciples. Jesus was looking for people willing to God's image-bearers. He knew active faith and repentance would drive them to obedience if active faith and repentance were part of these peoples' lives. He knew this would be true no matter the cost.

Jesus had brought the kingdom of God and, in a few short months, was going to once and for all establish that kingdom on this earth for all eternity. He was looking for people who wanted to live humankind's original calling as God's image-bearers through living in communion with Him and living in subjection to all He commanded. We see how Jesus, with even those who were following Him, would pull them close and then make hard statements that would cause them to want to leave. And remember, many did leave!

Now Jesus knew the hearts of each person that came to Him and spoke to Him. He knew the one area that would have the greatest pull that would keep them from a life of communion and obedience, allowing them to serve in His kingdom as God's image-bearers. I have, on occasion, been able, by God's grace, to see that area in a person's life who has asked me how to become a disciple of Jesus. However, more often than not, I have found using the following counting the cost questions very helpful in uncovering that area or areas in a person's life. So I want to share these questions with you.

Before I do, I want to make a few things clear.

I always make sure that the person understands the kingdom of God gospel narrative before asking them this whole set of questions. As the Spirit gives the opportunity, as I share part or all of the gospel narrative, I talk about each of these, counting the cost areas throughout our relationship. Very rarely has the entire gospel narrative or all six sets of these questions been asked all at once until the person thinks they are ready to become Jesus' disciple.

Second, it is imperative that whether the person answers your question with a yes or a no, that you ask them to explain what they mean by that answer. You will hear this as I share these questions with you. Their explanation will always allow you to see whether or not they misunderstand this area or whether they do not want to follow Jesus in this area.

It is also imperative that if a person gets hung up on one of these areas that we do not walk away from them and leave them in the dust. You have built a relationship with them because they are worth knowing, not just to share the gospel of the kingdom with them. Remember episode eighteen?

It is equally important that if they get hung up on one of these questions, you write the question down for them and set a time to get back together within twenty-four to forty-eight hours. If they are still hung up, just spend time with them and let them continue to see the reality of God's kingdom in your life. In other words, continue the B.L.E.S.S. lifestyle the Spirit produces in your life as a true disciple of Jesus.

Finally, if all you do is listen to these questions from the perspective of sharing the gospel of the kingdom with someone, you lose! That's right! Today, you must hear these questions as if Jesus is asking them of you. Once again, be sure to go to the Hello, Jimbo Speaking Website at www.jimbospeaking.org. Go to the episode page and then to episode S1E20. Download the transcript and go over these questions until you can say yes to each of them without reservation, without deception, without excuse, and without any concern for the consequences. If you can't

do that, you have no business speaking to anyone about becoming a disciple of Jesus. Why? You need to become a disciple of Jesus. Too harsh? Sorry, but if the truth hurts, it must be dealt with through repentance, active faith, and identification with Jesus through water baptism. So with all that said, if you are still with me, here are the questions. Ready to have your world turned inside out and upside down?

Question Set One—Dynamic Change

Do you realize that there is nothing you can do to earn your relationship with God—Jesus paid it all?

Yet, this new relationship will bring you into a radical dynamic lifestyle change as you enter a covenant relationship with God. This relationship with God will make you a citizen of God's Kingdom, and you will be expected to live by His new standards of life.

Do you understand this?

Please talk to me about what this means to you.

Question Set Two—The Deep Divide

Do you realize that you will move over a deep divide that will separate you from your old way of living?

Do you realize even the key premises of your present cultural norms will change when you become a citizen of God's Kingdom?

Do you realize that you will become a member of God's Kingdom and must give your sole undivided allegiance only to Him and His kingdom purposes?

Do you understand this?

Please talk to me about what that means to you.

Question Set Three—Relationship Changes

Do you realize relationships change when you enter this covenant relationship with God and become a citizen of His Kingdom?

Do you realize that this divide may separate you from many of your old friends, even many family members?

Do you understand this?

Please talk to me about what this means to you.

Question Set Four—Relationship Priorities

Do you realize that the way you treat people will be different once you cross this divide and become a member of God's kingdom?

Do you realize you will no longer focus on your needs but the needs of others?

Do you realize you will no longer come first in your life, but God and all others will come before you?

Do you understand this?

Please talk to me about what this means to you.

Question Set Five—Sacrificial Servanthood

Do you realize that you must lay down your wants, desires, comforts, dreams, wishes, and purposes in making this covenant with God and becoming a part of His kingdom?

Do you realize you will exchange these things for obedient servanthood to God's purposes, desires, and will?

Do you realize this will happen even if it means extreme self-sacrifice?

Do you understand this?

Please talk to me about what this means to you?

Question Set Six—Questions of Decision

Are you ready to enter the covenant of salvation with God, becoming a disciple of Jesus, living in His Kingdom by His new cultural standards?

Are you ready to forfeit your allegiance to all the kingdoms of this world and give your whole-hearted allegiance to the kingdom of God and the same whole-hearted allegiance to Jesus as your Lord?

Are you ready to obey all He commanded you to do throughout the New Covenant found in the Bible without excuse, reservation, or concern for the consequences?

Are you ready to move from the alienation and the wrath of God into a new life as His child, focused solely on living obediently to His purposes in community with Him and His people?

Are you ready to cross the great divide?

Great! First, talk to me about what this means to you, then you can talk to God about what you have just decided. Oh, and by the way, please allow me to listen into that conversation.

Once this happens, you can be baptized as Jesus Disciple, identifying sole with Him and His kingdom, telling the world you now belong solely to Jesus.

Sign Off

Well, the clock has ticked way past our endpoint, and I know that is a lot of ground to cover. I also know it may sound strange if you have grown up in the conventional culturalized church with its emphasis on easy believism and its ugly step-sister, the I'll fly away mentality.

So, let me finish by reminding you that this Sunday at 8 PM CST, 9 PM EST, the conversation continues. My good friend and co-host, Joel Heim, and I will have another live broadcast of the Digging Deeper Café. Here we will be joined by either Dr. James Randolph of Advancing Christ's Kingdom Global Ministries or Kevin Birky of Mulberry Tree Ministers in Kouts, Indiana. They will be asking me questions about this Inside Jimbo's Head segment and bringing their unique commentaries. And yes, we look forward to your questions and comments, as well. In fact, it is your questions and comments that are the reason for the live broadcast. So come to the Hello, Jimbo Speaking Facebook page or the Hello, Jimbo Speaking Youtube Channel this Sunday at 8 PM CST, 9 PM EST and join us.

If you are listening to this podcast after it first drops, you can find the video of this Diggin' Deeper Cafe on the Hello, Jimbo Speaking website at www.jimbospeaking.org. You can find a lot more on this site as well.

One last thing. While you are listening, please, be sure to subscribe to this podcast, consider becoming a support partner at either the \$0.99, \$4.99, or \$9.99 monthly level, or make a larger monthly or one-time support gift at the Hello, Jimbo Speaking webpage at jimbospeaking.org.

So, until Sunday and the Diggin' Deeper Café or the next episode of the Hello, Jimbo Speaking Podcast, go out there and by 'God's grace, make it a great life that honors and glorifies Father through the faith that produces obedience. Do not settle for anything less. Why? Father settles for nothing less! See you next time.