

The Culture of the Kingdom Divine Order in the Kingdom

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There is divine order. Jesus was very careful to establish for us the basis upon which the kingdom itself operates when He sent His disciples out in what is known commonly as the Great Commission, He declared as a threshold announcement to His disciples, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me, go ye therefore...”

Now this represents a very different basis of rule than what human beings – especially in the western world – are typically familiar with. In the western world, the democracies represent a form of government that is representational, in the sense that the people are said to be sovereign and so the largest bundle of rights possessed in a society, is possessed by the individual. The individuals together give up their rights - or consent to the relinquishment of certain of their rights – to form a central government. And the process by which this occurs is typically known as a constitution of power and it has both an enumeration of powers - that is, what exactly has been given up - and it looks to the issues of the administration of that power, together with delegation and it also considers the matters of accountability.

Now with that being said, it is difficult for the western mind to fully grasp a claim of authority that is plenary (or complete). Which is to say, if someone says, “I have all authority in heaven and on earth and that this is the basis of my kingdom..” that is a form of power and order that is quite unfamiliar to the western mind. In fact, this is more the kind of order that we attribute to kings of antiquity. So when, for example, a great King like Alexander the Great would conquer a nation by military force, he would reduce any ability within that nation to resist his rule and he'd be an absolute monarch. Typically of course, he would leave a local form of order to govern that portion of his empire as he moved on to conquer new territories and to rule over all these territories together as an empire. But such things are not the familiar norm of the twentieth and twenty first centuries. In fact, since the nineteenth century we have been observing how nations conquered in a fashion such as this, by say the sovereign powers of the English crown or especially European monarchies, how these territories that twentieth and twenty first centuries are and have been about these nations breaking away from monarchical government to establish the rule of the people.

So it's difficult for us, in the western world, to even think about a monarchy that has continued to be the right of an absolute monarch, an absolute king, to rule over people. Our King - the Lord Jesus Christ – is not particularly a King whose emphasis is on territory because He does not insist on conquest, nor does He hold nations hostage to their need for provision and protection. His is a kingdom that is entered into voluntarily and His is a kingdom, the foundations of which are established upon a grant of authority from the Living God - the Almighty God - to the Son. And the administration of this authority does not have in mind to subjugate and overwhelm human beings, instead it has in mind to show them the nature of God and that nature of course is that God is love.

Now these principles are very difficult for the western mind to grasp because even if we are familiar - from an historical perspective - with absolute monarchies and what examples we've had of a single individual ruling thoroughly in the twentieth century and a few of them, like Fidel Castro and the dictatorship of North Korea, a few dictatorships remain like this. We are impressed with the absurdity of the fact that one man claims to know and to administrate and legislate for the benefit of all and that one man in fact claims to know what is best for every individual within his domain. For example, in the country of Cuba, one is immediately struck with the fact that the lack of freedom for those people is because of the presupposition that an individual knows how best for every individual to live within the territorial norm of the borders of that particular territory. And one willingly recognizes that such forms of administration do not produce nor permit the creativity of human beings; neither produces the results of creativity nor does it encourage it. And so everybody dresses more or less the same, on parade days all the children wear their red neck scarfs and so on and everyone thinks more in a tunnel way about how to live because their lives have been streamlined by the presuppositions of a single individual.

So our experiences in the twentieth century with absolute monarchies - in the form of dictatorships - leaves much to be desired. So what has happened to the church, over time, is that it's leadership has accommodated to the demands of the marketplace. Even the Roman church, the most monolithic of all the churches of the western world, recognizes and routinely adapts to the powers of the marketplace for the simple reason that the churches will go empty if the membership feels disenfranchised from the ruling hierarchy. So what is common in the modern church is for us to take more as a suggestion - or as a mythology - the idea of Christ as an absolute monarch. And when we come to that point of view, that is that He's not really involved in our affairs, we then think that those who claim to represent Him in the earth are free to respond to the market sensitivities by altering, changing theologies by not emphasizing particular things and even revisiting and revising tenants of faith that previous generations insisted upon.

Good examples of that have to do with how post modernism is affecting the perception of

churches in terms of how they enter the marketplace today. For example, post modernism rails against what it perceives as the results of modernism, the ills associated with the practice of things they label 'modern'. And having no theology of their own and really having no serious thought in my opinion, of how to redress these things from a heavenly perspective. Often, post modernism is simply a reaction to modernism which reaction is predictably the current view of what truth should look like, depending upon the subject matter that you're talking about. So for example, if it is perceived that modernism produced a concentration of power in the hands of white men, post modernism would argue for a dissipation of that power and a greater inclusivity. It does not actually consider what the Lord wants because it is not sensitive to the Lordship of Christ, it is sensitive to the marketplace. And so it calibrates its responses to have popular appeal because in the popular appeal it finds its own vindication. In other words, if people embrace certain solutions to redress certain ills, even though the solutions that themselves are untried, the mere fact that they seem to have a market for those solutions, that almost always captures the fancy and the admiration of post modernism.

Now my point isn't to talk about post modernism or even about church governments; my point is to talk about an absolute monarchy and how an absolute monarchy works. Inasmuch as we're talking about the culture of the kingdom...culture is not just cobbling together some market sensitive responses to redress ills, that's not it at all. It is revisiting what the very nature of the kingdom actually is and it begins with the gospel of a King, God's Anointed, the One who has been established over all the earth by a grant of authority from the Father. That One, who now sits upon the throne but whose kingdom rules in the earth, pursuing this grant of authority in which He claims all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Him.

Now that imples the basic question: If He sits on the throne now, but He was originally endowed with all authority in heaven and on earth and His kingdom functions based upon this grant of plenary (or complete) authority, how does His kingdom actually benefit, in the earth, from that authority with Him being on the throne in heaven and not present as Himself in the earth? The answer is – and this is the critical thing to understand about the kingdom – the authority of the kingdom is the authority of the King but that authority functions in the earth by delegation. Which means, at the core, everyone who operates in divine authority has to claim some measure of delegation from the One whose authority it is, from the Lord Jesus Christ.

So it should not surprise us that the foundational authority in the kingdom is in the apostolic in a grant of authority to establish order in the kingdom and that establishment of order – the grant of authority by Jesus Christ to establish order in the kingdom - is given to an apostolic authority. That means that gifts of authority are given to human beings who, in the exercise of that authority, actually are doing the will of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is a powerful conflict between western notions of the use of power - the

origins and the use of power - and the kingdom - the origins of power and the use of power. We have a clash here. Perhaps in ancient times the clash was not so pronounced, always it would be significant because Jesus is claiming authority not from the power that comes from the edge of a sword or as Leon Trotsky would say, power that would come from the muzzle of a gun; some instrument for the projection of power which instrument threatens human life. But instead that that power comes from the Living God who does not immediately squash His enemies to prove that He has power.

This power then, operates in a context of voluntary compliance. But voluntary compliance – voluntary submission – does not mean that the individual who is subject to the authority of Christ gets to decide what the individual believes or doesn't believe. That individual gets to decide only whether or not he will submit to the rule of Christ. The choice is to submit to the rule of Christ or to deny that Christ is Lord over you. But once you submit to the rule of Christ, He reveals the nature of God and the nature of the eternal and the concepts of heaven to you. You see, if we chose to submit to the rule of Christ unconditionally, that we get to to choose what we believe. The folly of that perspective is self evident because unless what we would choose to believe is indeed the truth, then whatever we believe would be nonsensical and if we said we would be submitted to Christ and ended up believing all these things - which are absolutely silly notions, which have no foundation in truth, which in fact are the best of human reason which do not penetrate beyond the perspectives of time and space - then God would do us no favor to rule over us when we are still governed by the imperative of our own ideas.

You see, reason is good for what reason is good for; reason has no value when we are considering things that lie outside the purview of reason. All things transcendent, all things eternal, operate on a very different basis than reason; they operate by the power of God. Classic example: Reason would say that the same object cannot occupy two different spaces at the same time, that's reason. And in the world of the physical, that is true, that is axiomatic. But everyone who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ knows that at the same instant each of us can be fully possessed by the Holy Spirit, in all of His completeness in each one of us – hundreds of millions of us – at the same instant upon the earth. How is that possible? By what rule do we explain that reality? It is a reality, but there is no rule of physics, for example, there's no rule of reason that could possibly explain that, yet it is true.

Many things are like that, in fact many more things are like that than are not. The things of reason, the things that reason covers and explains are things that are bound by time and space and are of this physical, natural world. But beyond that, science and reason are useless, and yet people who come to Christ - who come to be under the rule of a transcendent King - insist on reason. And the only reason they do that is because they hope to appeal to their fellows in the marketplace. But from beginning to end, no one is bettered by that process. The imperialism of reason is that it suggests that everything is

subject to reason and whoever agrees to that is a “reasonable fool”. But we who serve the Lord, understand that His ways are above the earth, are above our ways as the heavens are above the earth; His ways are complete, our ways are at best looking as in a mirror dimly.

So, the entire structure of the kingdom of God recognizes - at the core - that there is authority given by God to the Lord Jesus Christ, which authority He in turn delegated to the Holy Spirit, who in turn commissions delegates of the Lord Jesus Christ and sends them out among human beings to establish the rule of Christ in the earth. Such ones are of course sent ones and they're sent with a particular grace, they're sent with a particular commission that's different from the commissioning of all others because they are foundational; they bring the order of the kingdom and the mandates of the kingdom and they demonstrate the power of the Sovereign King whom they represent and they reveal the mysteries of heaven to the earth. Now that's vastly different from the rule, let's say, that a husband has in his household. That is a measure of order but it does not compare with the order to establish the foundations of truth in the whole earth, upon which foundations of truth God then reveals Himself to mankind.

This is stunning, isn't it? To think that the church could do away with this foundational, delegation of authority and end up in any epoch knowing what to do, knowing how to function, is stunning. But the arrogance of western thinking is, that by a democratic process we may decide how God operates among men. If we understood the eternal perfectly, then we might have a chance of speaking intelligently to eternal issues in time, as just human beings living in time and space. But the fact that these things are entirely foreign to us, if we're ever going to learn about them and more importantly the purpose for learning about them is as a foundation upon which to understand both how God speaks to us and what He says to us and further to that, that by speaking to us, God in fact changes our character from fallenness to sonship - from strangers and foreigners, to the very heirs of God.

The purpose of the kingdom then, is not to secure our lives financially and socially in the earth, although God will give us what we need to live on. The purpose is to represent the Living God and we, corporately, are woven together into a community or a society that defies all of the conventions of reason, history and society by presenting the very picture of love as demonstrated by people of all kinds of diverse backgrounds, living together in harmony and in peace, sharing our possessions and goods, laying down our lives for one another. Obviously, this kind of corporate activity is unheard of, even in tribal societies that have a common root and a common structure.

The kingdom of God is in fact the light in the world. This kingdom is foundationed upon authority that is given by God himself to the Lord Jesus Christ, who through the Holy Spirit establishes that authority in the earth on apostles and prophets according to

Ephesians 2:19. The foundation of the church is established upon the apostles and prophets with Jesus Christ himself as the Chief Cornerstone. That foundational authority is our constitution, it tells us both of our rights and of our duties, it informs us as to what we may do and why we may do it and how it will be done. If you don't have this kind of authority, then the only remaining authority that you would have - or that do have - is the authority of your own strength, that strength is incapable of serving the Living God.

The sent one is absolutely necessary for the culture of the church to function in every epoch of man. This 'one' who delivers the mail from God, he's not the person who mediates between the individual and God, he is simply the one who brings the message from God that causes you to look to Christ who is indeed the Mediator between God and man.

The early church continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine; they understood about sent ones, they received them and with that they received the Lord's authority. If the church today will receive the sent ones, then they'll begin to see the Lord again.

We'll continue to discuss the culture of the kingdom. I'm Sam Soleyn, God bless you, I'll see you next time. Bye bye.