

***A Passion for Building God's Kingdom***  
Colossians 3:23-24  
Free Lutheran Fellowship at Willow Springs  
April 20, 2008

I think that the modern church has taken the simplicity of the kingdom of God and made it complicated. The pope's visit is a prime example: Bishops, Cardinal, Cathedrals, motorcades, meetings with politicians, scandals and law suits, billions of dollars to handle, services in ball parks. Most Protestant churches are also complicated...we have committees, meetings, doctrines, programs, activities, materials, constitutions and it goes on.

We can be caught up in the machinery of the church and be spiritually dry and hungry. This is a great danger...serving the king and missing the kingdom!

2 Corinthians 11:3 *But I am afraid, lest as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.*

Basic Christianity is really simple and I would like to spend some time today to remind you what it is to be Passionate for Building God's Kingdom.

Colossians 3:23-24 *Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men; 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.*

I would like to propose to you from this text that the kingdom of God is not the institutional church activities so much as it is Christ being seen and felt in our normal daily lives. Notice it says *Whatever you do...*

What did people do in the time of Christ? Most of your time was spent keeping your family clothed and fed. Food was grown locally, harvested manually, processed daily and needed continually. Clothing was hand-made. Transportation was basically walking. Wood had to be gathered, corn shelled and ground by hand, fires built and maintained, clothing mended, shelter secured. Keeping alive was a full-time job. They didn't have time to organize committees. Survival was from 6 AM to 6 PM and it was dark the rest of the time with no electric lights.

Yet in the midst of this lack of organization the gospel spread like wild-fire, the sick were healed, lives were changed. The kingdom of God was pulsating with life among these hard-working peasants and slaves. This leads us to ask what the kingdom is:

THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS ANYWHERE THAT GOD IS RULING AND REIGNING. The context of our verses is family and work life. So let's see what it means to *do you work heartily, as for the Lord*. This is the key to being passionate about the kingdom of God.

## **I. THE KINGDOM IN OUR LIVES**

Colossians 3:1-17 simply describes the new and holy lives we have when Jesus is our Lord and Savior.

Verse 5: no immorality;

Verse 8: no anger, no abusive speech;

Verse 9: no lying;

Verse 12: compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience;

Verse 13: no complaining, forgiveness;

Verse 14: love and peace  
Verse 15: thankfulness  
Verse 16: songs of praise

That is what the kingdom of God looks like in an individual. I personally believe that the average unsaved person out there would be more impressed with a changed life than a 10 million dollar cathedral. I believe that purity, love, encouraging speech toward the people we work with each day is more powerful in bringing them to salvation than anything we can organize in the church.

## **II. THE KINGDOM IN OUR HOMES**

Families all across America are falling apart. Sadly, homes of people who go to church are falling apart too. Many are barely holding together. I believe that one of the greatest ways to show the reality of Jesus Christ to our world is to have a Christian home.

I once heard the true story of a pastor and his wife that would have terrible fights you could hear as you passed the parsonage. He would often be kicked out of the house and have to sleep in the church. He eventually molested a confirmand. The pastor before him had an affair with the mother of the girl that got molested. To this very day that whole community has no interest in church and does not take the gospel seriously. Those pastors were noted preachers but their lives spoke louder than their words. Their messed up lives drowned out their sermons. The present pastor of that church struggles with the ongoing effects of those previous pastors some 40 years later. Our home is our greatest testimony for Christ.

Look at verse 18 where it starts with a wife who respects her husband. The image of the Father has been trashed in our culture. On television men are portrayed as bumbling fools who are driven by their lust. Men need encouragement. Rebekah was watching "Beauty and the Beast" on Friday and I noticed a scene where the father had failed with his invention he was making. He wanted to give up. But his lovely daughter, Bell, told him that she believed in him and he was instantly revived and fixed his invention.

There is nothing that can help a man be the kind of person he needs to be than the respect of his wife. If a woman criticizes, undermines and rules over her husband he will wither away into the fool that television has made him to be. But if she honors him and believes in him, he will rise to the occasion, work hard, be wise and respectable.

Day after day a man goes to work and gets called nicknames, gets ordered around, gets put down and his wife is the only one left to build him up and believe in him. If a man has an encouraging, cheerful wife he will one day be the envy of every man he works with. Jesus helps women to respect their very imperfect husbands and raise children that obey him. Verse 19 tells husbands to love their wives and not be bitter toward them. It is all too easy to be crabby and preoccupied. Our wives need us to be kind to them, to say thank you and treat them special. We need to remember them with little gifts and compliments. This doesn't come naturally and takes a whole life to learn well. We don't have many good examples to follow. But a kind and considerate husband does more to preach Christ to an unbelieving world than stained glass windows or tall steeples.

Verse 20 reminds children that the kingdom of God is demonstrated by obedience to their parents. When parents with rebellious children observe your obedience to your parents they will know that you have something their children don't have. You have Christ in your hearts.

## **III. THE KINGDOM IN OUR WORKPLACE**

Finally verse 22 tells slaves to obey masters with a sincere heart. In our culture this would refer to employees and employers. When a Christian shows up for work on time, does a good job, keeps a good attitude...it is a testimony. I know one man in Alaska who is the most dedicated and trustworthy employee that his boss has. I am convinced that his boss is constantly pointed to the Lord by this man's work habits.

I once heard about a boss who asked his employee to do something unethical. The employee said that he could not do that because he was a Christian. The boss was furious and fired him.

Shortly afterward the boss got diagnosed with a terminal illness. As he was dying he called upon that employee he fired to come and minister to him because he was the only one he could think of that knew God.

## CONCLUSION

So this comes to the verses of today's text where Paul tells the Christians that in their homes and at work that *whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.*

So if we want to be passionate about building the Kingdom of God, don't be quick to join another committee. Instead, focus on being respectful wives, loving husbands, obedient children and diligent employees.

***We will never get most of the people we know to church but if we can demonstrate the power of the Holy Spirit at home and at work we will bring the kingdom of God to them.***

Day after day people drive by church buildings and are not one bit interested in entering them, no matter how fancy they are. They hear pushy preachers on TV begging for money and they click them off. But they cannot argue with a truly changed life of someone who has met Jesus and has a happy home and is a cheerful and hard worker and helpful neighbor.

Let's be passionate about building the kingdom of God at home and at work where people are watching and the rubber meets the road.

***Sunday morning church is a joke if it is not real at home or on the job.*** To be passionate about building the kingdom of God is  
to be filled with the Holy Spirit of Christ,  
to respect your husband,  
to be kind to your wife,  
to obey your parents,  
to be a model employee at work.  
That is the real deal people are looking for.

The evening news may be full of popes, cathedrals, parades and ceremonies but the average working person is not impressed. What they long to see is their neighbors meet Jesus, have a changed life, a beautiful home life and a good attitude on the job. *That is better kingdom building than any institutional religion can offer.* Amen

Time to reflect:

Prayer: *Heavenly father. Build your kingdom on earth. Start by changing my life and making me like Jesus. Help my home to be a foretaste of heaven on earth. Help me to*

*demonstrate Christ by my attitude and behavior at school and at work. Make me the salt of the earth that gets people thirsty to know Jesus my Savior. In His Name I pray. Amen*