

The True Kingdom: How Jesus Rules in an Earthly World

In a world caught up in political power and sweeping change, we often lose sight of the bold message of Christ's kingdom. As believers, it's easy to feel small when our little gatherings look weak next to global systems and big-name leaders. But the Scriptures share a deep truth that sets us free from this wrong idea.

When Jesus lived among us, He dealt with the same struggles we face now. The Jewish people were under Roman rule, facing taxes, oppression, and little freedom. Many thought the Messiah would topple Rome with an army and set up a political kingdom. Jesus, though, brought something completely different.

This stands out like the choice in Eden: the Tree of Life or the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. The world's systems--Rome back then or governments today--run on the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. They lean on self-defense, strength, control, and force. In contrast, Christ's kingdom grows from the Tree of Life--trusting the Father's faithfulness, dwelling on resurrection life, and belonging to heaven.

Psalm 2 puts it strongly: "Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against his Anointed... He who sits in the heavens laughs." This Psalm shows that while earthly powers plot against God's kingdom, the Lord stays calm, with His Son already crowned as King.

Jesus kept turning down political power. When Satan tempted Him with all the world's kingdoms (Luke 4:5-8), Jesus said no. When crowds wanted to force Him into kingship after He fed them with multiplied bread (John 6:15), He slipped away to the mountain alone. Even His disciples got it wrong, asking in Acts 1:6 when He would bring back Israel's kingdom. Jesus pointed them to another kind of strength--the Holy Spirit, filling them to share His resurrection with the world.

The early church grew strong without political clout. Simple home meetings, led by regular folks full of God's Spirit, outlived and strongly influenced the world under Roman rule. They didn't march against Rome or chase government roles. Instead, they built communities that lived out God's love--caring for the poor, sharing what

they had, and spreading the news of the resurrection. This quiet way outlasted Rome's massive empire.

We so many times think we are to fix the world; we as believers are the world God has already fixed, and the world will be fixed by Him as they respond to the call of God as we did, there is simply no other way to see things made new. Our small meetings aren't weak--they're right where God's kingdom shows up. When we come together in homes, trusting the gospel and living in God's love, we open windows to heaven on earth that no worldly system can break.

Living from the Tree of Life calls us to dwell on Christ's resurrection, God's poured-out love, and the sure hope that even death cannot keep us from experiencing the new life seen in the resurrected Jesus. It's about seeing that "the earth and all it holds belongs to God," that we're joined to Jesus, and that heaven is our home. This view lifts us above judging ourselves by the world's rules. We don't have to feel bad for not fixing every injustice or changing whole countries. Our job is to stay true, showing Christ's kingdom where we stand.

True justice doesn't rest on cash or who's in charge--it's tied to living in the truth of Christ's resurrection, a life so strong death can't shake it. For people with little, justice isn't about gathering stuff or holding out for a fat paycheck to feel good. It's seeing that Christ covers every gap, and their worth--or what they can offer--doesn't hang on their bank balance. Take Paul: he had next to nothing, yet he shared the gospel's wealth with tons of people. Or picture those poor Macedonian churches--they were barely getting by, but they reached deep and gave to the Jews in Jerusalem, the same ones who'd looked down on them. That's grace at work. For those with a lot, justice isn't about hoarding riches or being the boss--it's about answering to Christ, a greater Master, and sharing the kindness they've received. That's the true thing, and you can't jam it into the world's ways--it only grows in hearts that see death's already lost.

This kingdom outlook lets us connect with people across political lines--not to push our views, but to bring them to our King. We act as priests in a world of clashing kingdoms, building bridges instead of walls.

The world's kingdoms--Chinese, Russian, South African, Zambian, or any other system--will one day fall apart, but what we have in Christ lasts forever. Hebrews 12:28 puts it this way: "Since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe."

Don't mistake your gathering's apparent smallness for insignificance. You're part of Christ's unshaken kingdom, living from the Tree of Life while the world clings to the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. You aren't God's tools for changing the world—you are His testimony of what's already been changed. Your gatherings don't transform the world; they display the transformed reality that already exists in Christ. This is your witness—not as world-changers, but as the changed world, in submission to the one that brings eternal life.