

CGGC eNews: [Recalibrating to a Kingdom Focus – Part 3](#)

June 10, 2016

Misconceptions about the kingdom of God - the kingdom is not just a future reality to be experienced in Heaven.

In order for us to embrace the kingdom of God, we need to understand what it is and what it is not. For most of my Christian life, I've had an understanding of the kingdom of God that was partially true while missing a lot of what Jesus taught about the nature of the kingdom of God.

I grew up understanding that whenever Jesus used the phrase "kingdom of God" or "kingdom of heaven" it was to be equated to heaven or eternity with Him. In this understanding, everything that Jesus taught about the kingdom was understood as a future reality that would happen after life here on earth, but not necessarily experienced in this life.

I want to share a few observations about this misunderstanding of the kingdom of God.

1) Kingdom of God = Heaven is partially correct – Heaven is the kingdom of God in all its fullness!

Revelation 21 gives us the beautiful picture of the kingdom of God, fully realized and complete.

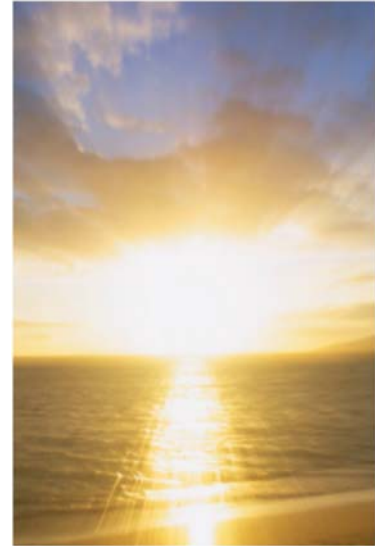
Revelation 21:1-4: Then I saw "a new heaven and a new earth," for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. 2 I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 4 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

There will be a day when God restores the world to what He intended it to be, death will be extinguished, pain and sorrow will be no more and God will be present with those whom belong to Him. We may get glimpses or tastes of this kind of kingdom breakthrough in the present day, but the full realization of the kingdom of God is a future event.

2) Jesus came proclaiming that the kingdom of God was near, present or accessible now.

Jesus clearly taught that the kingdom of God was a present reality. In Mark 1:15, Jesus announces "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!" Again in Luke 17:20-21 we see Jesus explaining the kingdom of God: "Once, on being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, "The coming of the kingdom of God is not something that can be observed, nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is in your midst." Once again in Matthew 12:28 Jesus says "But if it is by the Spirit of God that I drive out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you."

Jesus' entire ministry was evidence of the reality of the kingdom of God present in the world – sins were forgiven, the sick were restored to health, the oppressed were set free and the devastating effects of the fall were reversed through the ministry of King Jesus!



3) Jesus taught His disciples to pray that the kingdom would come and His will would be done on earth as it is in Heaven.

When Jesus taught His disciples to pray in Matthew 6, He invited them to ask that God would bring His kingdom to their present reality: “your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10). Jesus taught the disciples to ask for His kingdom to become reality in their present experience of life.

The same is true for us today! We are to ask God to bring His kingdom into our world so that we might experience His kingdom in our lives here and now.

Some have described the kingdom of God as the “already but not yet”. The “already” means that Jesus has ushered in the reality of the kingdom of God; it is present and we have access to it His kingdom and His rule and reign. The “not yet” means that the kingdom of God is also a future reality to be experienced with a fullness and completeness that we have yet to experience in our present day. We have access to His kingdom today. His kingdom is present today, at work today and unfolding today and we are to continue to ask Him to bring His kingdom to every aspect of our world until that day in which we experience His kingdom in all its fullness.

What does it mean for you to seek the “already but not yet” reality of the kingdom of God?

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The Well Summer Theology Camp at The University of Findlay



Through a grant from the Lilly Endowment Inc., The University of Findlay is proud to present a summer opportunity for interested high school aged students. The grant allows participants to attend for FREE. This includes all daily meals, snacks and all materials the participants may need.

It's also a great way for students to experience what it's like to live in a college dorm. (Students will be supervised at all times.)

Youth are invited to join us at **The Well**, a week-long summer institute focused on understanding the role of faith in all aspects of our lives including career and leadership opportunities. Participants will

explore meaningful theological questions together, reflecting on the moral dimensions of contemporary issues and examining how their lives are affected.

Join us Sunday, July 10 through Friday, July 15

What can participants expect from the institute?

The Well's curriculum is designed to walk participants through five tough questions, each building on the last to help individuals identify the role of faith in life and vocation.

The five big questions include:

- What is most important to me?
- Who am I? / How can I live a life of meaning, dignity and joy?
- Are there causes larger than me that drive my decision making?
- What am I being called to do?
- How will I serve humanity?

Though grounded firmly in a non-denominational, Christian foundation, The Well gladly welcomes students from all faith traditions to participate. In fact, activities throughout the week will incorporate numerous opportunities to both learn about and witness other religions, including Islam and Judaism. The Well, while meant to serve as a faith-strengthening endeavor, is not intended as a proselytizing effort.

Some of the daily activities include:

- Daily worship at different Findlay-area churches to represent the variety of Christian expression
- Breakout sessions to dig deeper into the "five big questions"
 - Students will be encouraged to share experiences, strengths, weaknesses and barriers to understand the relationship between faith and life
- Personal testimonies from guest speakers representing occupational and non-occupational ministry
- Exploration road trips to a variety of distinct religious centers (Jewish, Muslim, Orthodox and more)
- Leadership development and teambuilding exercises at a local "high ropes" course
- Interaction with professionals to discover how they provide service and vocation through their occupation
- Volunteer work benefitting several local charities within the Findlay community
- Daily review and debriefing of each day's theme, sharing thoughts on real life application
- Recreational activities at UF's athletic center, movie night, scavenger hunt, ropes course and other games

Ready to sign up? Space is limited so visit <https://www.findlay.edu/academics/well/>

Got questions?

Contact Pastor Matt Ginter, Director of Campus Ministry ginterm@findlay.edu; or Shawn Graves, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Philosophy at the University of Findlay, graves@findlay.edu.