

HEARTBEATS- Staying Connected 2/4/2021



Dear Friends in Christ,

We talk a lot in the church about the Kingdom of God, and rightly so. Our mission as Christians is to do whatever we can to help spread the Kingdom of God—to encourage the growth and dissemination of the message of God’s forgiveness and unconditional love for all people. We are members of the Kingdom and called to share the message of our King.

But I sometimes wonder if the image of “kingdom” is a bit foreign or confusing for us in this country. After all, almost 250 years ago, we revolted against the ruling kingdom of England and in particular, its king, and established a government that rejects having one person in control and determining how the subjects must support kingdom and king. Our nation was found with the idea of democracy for the people and by the people, and no person can or should expect unqualified loyalty and devotion.

Yet much of the Bible talks about the Kingdom of God and Jesus as Christ the King. We are dedicated to the mission of our Lord. We are faithful to God and seek to serve God first and foremost. The language of the Bible comes from a time when everyone understood the king and the kingdom and the subjects of their lands in a specific way and for them, kingdom and king fit for their relationship to God and Jesus. Yet I still wonder if there might be another way to talk about God and our relationship to God and to each other differently than “kingdom.”

What if we dropped the “g”? What if instead of “kingdom” we started thinking about the realm of God as “kindom”? (Okay, I know “kindom” isn’t a word, but maybe it could be.) Another image that is often used for the church is family. God is our Father (though I recognize that this may be a troublesome image for those who were mistreated or abused by their earthly male parent) and Christ is our brother. And we are brothers and sisters to each other. We are “kin” and part of a “kindom”.

* In Matthew 12:50, Jesus says, “For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is My brother or sister or mother.”

* After the resurrection, in Matthew 28, Jesus gave instructions to the women, “Do not be afraid. Go and tell My brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.”

* I John 4:21 says, “And He has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister.”

* Paul, in Romans 8:15 wrote, “...rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by Him we cry, “Abba, Father.”

The image of kinship can be very helpful for thinking about our relationship to God—Father and children—and to one another—brothers and sisters. Through Christ, God, like the Father in the Parable of the Prodigal Son, has brought us back into the family and given us a place equal to the elder son. Through faith, we are connected to one another as brothers and sisters. We are part of one family with God as our loving parent. We are members of the “Kindom of God.”

In Christ's love,
Pastor Jeffrey