

## SERMON NOTES OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Grace, mercy and peace to you. Thank you for taking time to listen to this message:

### TITLE: THE KINGDOM OF GOD

THE MAIN TEXT: ROMANS 14:17. I have three main headings as follows:

1. THE DEFINITION OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD (Matt. 13:18-23)
2. THE CALL INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD (1 THESS. 2:12)
3. THE WILL OF GOD IN HIS KINGDOM (Matt. 6:9-13; Rom. 14:17)

Let us begin by reading the main text from Romans 14:17:

“for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”

### 1. THE DEFINITION OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

As indicated on my passport, I am a citizen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland by birth, and in a similar way spiritually, I am born again, which is essential to be a part of the kingdom of God (John 3:3-5), this was a work of God in my heart, the new birth onto righteousness by faith, for the kingdom of God is received by faith in order to enter it (Mark 10:15). The kingdom of God has been defined by some [Bible commentators or] preachers by dividing the word *kingdom* (**KING-DOM**)—or in other words, a King ruling over a certain domain. In order for a kingdom to exist there must be a **KING**—this **KING** is God (Ps. 47:7; 1 Sam. 8:6-7) manifested in the Lord Yahushua (2 Cor. 5:19; John 10:30). Kingdom’s rise and fall, but the kingdom of God is an everlasting kingdom (Dan. 7:14; Ps. 145:13). The kingdom of God can also be called the kingdom of Heaven, it is the highest authority (John 19:11; Rom 13:1), evident when the KING, Yahushua [Christ] came to earth and demonstrated the power of His kingdom in mighty deeds [mainly in the casting out demons] and also in words (Act. 1:1-3; 2:22; Matt. 12:28). The King Yahushua [Christ] **DOMAIN** is in heaven and on earth (Matt. 28:18-20) over His elect people who are spiritually born into His kingdom (John 3:3-8; Matt. 13:38), and used of God to call others into His kingdom (Matt. 28:18-20):

MATTHEW 28:18-20 states: “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” The King Yahushua reigns in heaven and on earth particularly over His elect people, those chosen and called out of the world, the worshipping assembly who form the body of Christ where the Spirit of God dwells (1 Cor. 6:15-20; Rom. 12:4-8), or “the Church” the earthly symbol of the kingdom of God, where Christ as Head is enthroned in the heavens as the Lord of all creation, the great High Priest and exalted King (Rev. 1:5-6; 1 Pet. 2:5-10; Heb. 8:1-6), the Sovereign Ruler with God the Father in whom all events are at His command, which includes the day of final judgment when all humanity shall acknowledge the righteous rule of God, as the Sovereign

Ruler rights all wrongs with severe punishment upon the wicked, whilst showing abundant grace towards those who shall inherit the kingdom of God (Eph. 5:5; Matt. 25:34-46). The kingdom of God has come, and the kingdom of God is also yet to come (Luke 17:20-21; Matt. 6:10). It is a spiritual kingdom that has already come, but not in the literal sense of a visible observation, but spiritually into the hearts of His redeemed people (Luke 17:20-21; 18:16-17), then visibly in the future eternal kingdom to come (Dan. 7:13-14; Rev. 21:1-8).

Another way of defining the kingdom of God is through the parables Yahushua taught about what the kingdom can be likened to—and also our main text is also helpful in defining the kingdom of God:

Rom. 14:17: “for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”

Eating and drinking are essential for staying healthy and to improve a person’s quality of life, yet the Bible warns against being overly concerned about what you will eat or what you will drink or what you will wear—important as these things are—because [1] God knows and shall provide for all your needs (Matt. 6:25-32; Phil. 4:19), and particularly because [2] there is a more weightier matter to consider or to prioritize above eating and drinking, which is the kingdom of God—we are instructed to “seek first the kingdom of God” (Matt. 6:33)—it is the foundational message and central theme of the Lord Yahushua’s teaching (Mark 1:14-15; Matt. 4:23; Luke 8:1). The Lord Yahushua taught through parables that the kingdom of God is so *valuable* as revealed in *the parable of the hidden treasure* (Matt. 13:44), and the kingdom of God is so *precious* as revealed in *the parable of the pearl of great price* (Matt. 13:45-46). The implications are that the kingdom of God should be a priority above every necessity of life, as revealed in *the parable of the mustard seed*—reading from Matt. 13:31-32: “Another parable He put forth to them, saying: ‘The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, which indeed is the least of all seeds, but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches’.” The main lesson here is that the kingdom of God [*also called the kingdom of heaven*] when consummated shall expand to world dominion. Another interpretation is that the kingdom of God at the beginning is the least of our concerns, but eventually becomes our greatest concern. Have you experienced the new birth? If not, you should be very concerned because the Lord Yahushua [Christ] revealed that “unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3). In *the parable of the leaven*—reading from Matt. 13:33 states: “Another parable He spoke to them: ‘The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened’.” The lesson here is that the kingdom of God is to spread within our personal lives, and collectively with other likeminded Christians through the preaching of the gospel, the kingdom of God is to spread throughout the world. But the most popular parable regarding the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom which the Spirit uses for the great work of God in a person’s heart in order to experience the new birth is *the parable of the sower* (Matt. 13:3-9, 18-23). I will not read it...but when you...

When you read it in your own time, notice that all four grounds heard the word of the kingdom, but only one ground prospered from the word, which refers to the children of the kingdom (Matt. 13:38), the elect people of God who hear and respond to the gospel call into the kingdom—MARK 1:15: “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the gospel.” This brings me to the second heading.

## 2. THE CALL INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD

READ MAIN TEXT Rom. 14:17, “for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.” Eating and drinking are necessities of life, but the kingdom of God is to be prioritized above the material goods of the world including every necessity because the spiritual and eternal benefits of the kingdom are more valuable and precious—so we are instructed to seek first the kingdom of God (Matt. 6:33). For you must enter in—draw near to God, submit to God (Jam. 4:7-8; 2 Chr. 34:26-27), for the Sovereign God must have dominion over your life—He rules His people by His Word—His Word reveals that you must be born again spiritually [this is the new birth] to enter into the kingdom (John 3:3-8), and therefore, it is so important to hear and respond to the gospel call into the kingdom (Mark 1:15). Then walk worthy of God who has called you into His kingdom of glory (1 Thess. 2:12). A valid question here is “How can we who are unworthy walk worthy of God who calls us into His own kingdom of glory?” (1 Thess. 2:12). The main text can be used to explain this. [READ text]. Rom. 14:17: “for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”

I have three subheadings under the second heading. The first subheading:

### RIGHTEOUSNESS

The call into the kingdom of GOD begins with RIGHTEOUSNESS.

1. As mentioned before, we are instructed to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness in Matt. 6:33. Not our own righteousness, but His righteousness initially. In whatever we do or whatever we appear to be good at—we must never think that it is our own righteousness initially when it comes to the walk worthy of God in righteousness. The Bible makes it clear that our own righteousness is as filthy rags (Is. 64:6). The Lord Yahushua declared that even our best human efforts of righteousness are not good enough (Matt. 5:20). But there is a righteousness of God through faith in Christ Yahushua that reaches God’s high standard of righteousness (Rom. 3:22). Christ Yahushua fulfilled all righteousness (Matt. 3:15; Luke 22:42; John 5:30; 17:4; Rom. 5:18-19; Phil. 2:5-9; Heb. 1:9; 4:15; 5:7-9). And this should be our prayer to be like Christ, King Yahushua—to think like Him, to talk like Him, to behave like Him, to walk worthy of God in righteousness like Him. King Yahushua had a right relationship to God, even boldly declaring, “I and My Father are One.” (John 10:30). King Yahushua had right conduct and behaviour in obedience to the Ten Commandments (John 15:10; Matt. 5:17). And King Yahushua [Christ] always did that which would win God the Father’s approval (Luke 3:21-22; Heb. 4:15). Therefore, we are totally dependent on Christ—Christ’s righteousness is imputed to all His elect people who believe on Him (Rom. 4:5-8) through the work of God’s Spirit in our hearts (Gal. 5:22-25; Pro. 3:5-6), and when clothed in Christ’s righteousness (Matt. 22:11; Is. 61:10), then a life of good works of righteousness should follow (Eph. 2:10). So by seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, we learn that the biblical definition of righteousness is basically [1] Christ’s righteousness imputed and received by faith, which places us in right relationship with God; and [2] followed by our own righteousness which enables us to continue to be in right standing with God by right conduct, doing that which will win God’s approval.

2. Righteousness needs to be practiced by the people in God's kingdom (1 John 3:7). The people in God's kingdom are exhorted to put on righteousness like a garment or as a breastplate (Is. 59:17; Eph. 4:17-24; 6:14). It involves righteous deeds of service and separation from worldliness (Jam. 1:27), *which require love and commitment—like prayer (1 Thess. 5:17), fasting (Matt. 6:16-18), worship (John 4:24), bible reading (2 Tim. 2:15), stewardship (1 Cor. 4:1), serving in the Church (1 Pet. 4:10-11), helping the less privileged—clothing the naked, feeding the hungry, visiting those in prison, and giving to the poor (Matt. 25:35-36).* The moral principles and the work in the service of the Lord of the people in God's kingdom can be challenging, but the Holy Spirit empowers all to hear and to respond to God's call to walk worthy which begins with righteousness, and from righteousness to an experience of peace (2 Tim. 2:22). [To recap the call into the kingdom of God begins with righteousness and leads onto peace].

Rom. 14:17 (MAIN TEXT): "for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."

The second subheading:

## PEACE

1. The Bible figuratively describes the relationship with righteousness and peace kissing each other (Ps. 85:10), and also the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace (Jam. 3:18). There is a connection between righteousness and peace—when clothed in the righteousness of God in Christ—the God of peace grants to the people in His kingdom a sense of peace, which Is. 26:3 refers to as *perfect peace*. The first thing to say about this kind of peace, is that *peace* is the result of victory, and this victory is ours through our faith in Christ. For He Himself is our peace (Eph. 2:14-17). Secondly, no one who lives in sin can have peace with God, because God's righteous anger is towards sin, and so living in sin means living in a hardened state towards God, such are without Christ, and without God in the world (Eph. 2:12-13). So, to have peace with God means that there is nothing—no sin, no guilt, no condemnation that separates us from God which is only possible through the King—our dear Lord Yahushua [Christ] (Rom. 5:1)—having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through a right relationship with Him established by the blood of the new covenant for the remission of sin (Matt. 26:27-29; 1 Cor. 11:25), and kingdom people are encouraged to have peace with each other (2 Cor. 13:11; Eph. 2:13-18). In contrast to those not at peace with God—peace is taken from such people (Jer. 16:5), even if they are very wealthy in terms of the abundance of their material possessions only, such rich people have nothing to keep permanently (Prov. 13:7). This is evident in the biblical account of the narrative of a rebellious rich man whose land yielded plentifully, but he made plans for the future without God, and selfishly laid up material possessions for himself to live at ease for the remainder of his life, but he died and lost everything in the end (Luke 12:16-21).

2. It is important to understand the word *peace* from the Greek and Hebrew words to fully grasp its meaning. The Greek word for PEACE comes [EIRENE] from a verb [EIRO] which means *to join or bind together that which has been broken, divided or separated*. When a person is not at peace with God—such are spiritually separated from God, there is a lack of harmony, and absence of an inner sense of well-being. The Bible describes the state of all humanity before conversion as enemies of God (Rom. 5:10). The enmity that to some degree exists between the Jews and the Gentiles [particularly in the Middle East region] can be likened to the enmity between all humanity and God before conversion (Eph. 2:11-12)—it is a state of active hostility, even in a sense to be at war with God. But the people in the kingdom of God are joined together in King Yahushua to God—there is PEACE with God (Eph. 2:14-18), a sense of harmony, well-being and freedom from inner turmoil.
  
3. The Hebrew word for PEACE is even broader than the Greek word—SHALOM is a Hebrew word meaning peace, harmony, wholeness, completeness, prosperity, welfare and tranquillity, and can be used to express blessings upon whom it is spoken when greeting and parting. God desires kingdom people to experience PEACE in every way of the Hebrew word SHALOM as the Bible reveals in the inspired text of 3 John 2: “Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.” However, the prosperity of the soul is that perfect peace that surpasses all understanding when the people in the kingdom place full confidence in God, and are prayerful with thankfulness in every circumstance, such will possess a supernatural peace (Phil. 4:7), and like the apostle Paul [writing the second letter to Timothy while imprisoned yet at peace and joyful], in like manner, believers can be at peace and become joyful people in every situation (2 Tim. 1:1-11; Eph. 5:19-20). This is not easy, as you may be going through an extremely difficult situation right now, but like the apostle Paul while imprisoned the key seems to be getting our focus off our situation and focusing on the will of God, which is that you may inherit the future eternal kingdom by seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness now, followed by a continuous lifestyle of righteous deeds (Matt. 6:33; 25:34-40). So, the call into the kingdom of God begins with righteousness, brings peace, and leads onto joy in the Holy Spirit.

Rom. 14:17 (READ MAIN TEXT): “for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.” The third subheading:

#### JOY IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. The main text appears to mean that God through the power of His Holy Spirit is working these things right now in His kingdom people. God is ruling in us by Christ, the King through the power of the Holy Spirit to answer the call to righteousness in Christ—to make us more righteous through righteous acts, more peaceable, and more joyful. JOY is the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22). JOY is the gladness of heart that comes from knowing God—keeping His commandments (1 John 2:3-4), abiding in Christ [the King] walking just like He has walked, He went about doing good (Act. 10:38; 1 John 2:5-6), so we need to be helped by the indwelling Spirit of God to do good works (Phil. 2:13; Rom. 8:9), as opposed to being in the flesh which produces such works as selfishness and pride (Gal. 5:19-21; 1 John 2:16).

2. JOY like happiness are wonderful feelings to experience, but there is a distinction between happiness and JOY. Happiness is an emotion in which one experiences feelings ranging from contentment and satisfaction to bliss and intense pleasure. JOY is an emotional virtue, a stronger feeling than happiness, an experience particularly as a result of living in God. Happiness is lost when one hears bad news leaving some in a state of dread and despair, whereas JOY is not lost upon hearing bad news or at times of suffering (1 Pet. 4:12-13). Let us learn the experience of JOY in the life of Job upon hearing bad news in regards to the loss of his property and children, and also his suffering with poor health. Although, Job wrestled with the question, why? Yet he responded in worship and trust in God (Job 1:13-21; 13:15-28; 14:1-14). There is a connection between JOY and worship, both go hand-in-hand, particularly evident in service—often in life, the people of God in the kingdom receive JOY from the Spirit of the Lord after an act of service such as witnessing, we may be shy before we witness, but after we witness, there is great JOY in being used as an ambassador for Christ (2 Cor. 5:20; 1 Pet. 3:15). The same experience of JOY is evident when we praise and worship God (Ps. 68:4-5; 100:1-5; Col. 3:16), or do anything that pleases God, it works both ways, the Spirit is joyful (3 John 4-8; Gal. 6:8-10), and we are helped to be continuously filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18-21; Gal. 6:22-25; 1 Thess. 1:6-7), so that our JOY may be full (John 15:11; 1 John 1:4). Life has its ups and downs, yet the people of God in the kingdom full of JOY by the indwelling Spirit, upon hearing bad news we are to rise above our situation or feeling of despair, and like Job respond in worship and trust in God (Job 1:13-21; 13:15; 14:14). Above all, the King Yahushua is our example of how to deal with feelings of despair or painful situations by His sufferings (1 Pet. 2:21-25), “who for the JOY that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Heb. 12:2). In like manner, as the people in the kingdom of God, we are to focus on the JOY at the end, and also focus on doing good works now [righteous deeds] (Matt. 25:34-40) in order to endure present painful experiences, as part of God’s purpose is to produce character in His children (Rom. 5:3-5), so we can trust in God that all things are working for good (Rom. 8:28; Pro. 3:5-6). In contrast, an individual absent of the Spirit of God at times may blame God after hearing bad news such as the death of a loved one or a life-changing medical problem—a survey some years ago carried out by ABC news revealed that between one third and two thirds of people in the United States sometimes feel angry with God in regards to some current thing they are suffering with, such as a cancer diagnosis ([www.abcnews.go.com](http://www.abcnews.go.com)).
  
3. In the NT books of Acts and 1 Thessalonians, we are informed the people in the kingdom of God were repeatedly filled with joy in the Spirit (Act. 2:4; 4:8, 31; 9:17; 13:9, 52; Gal. 5:22), and also were exhorted to rejoice always (1 Thess. 5:16). There are so many reasons to be thankful and to rejoice in the Lord, but due to time, let us briefly analyse two reasons. Firstly, the joy of salvation (Luke 2:10-20; John 15:4-11)—we, the people of the kingdom of God, are unworthy, yet all our sins have been forgiven, and we have been granted salvation through Christ (Rom 5:11). How can we not continue to rejoice in God for the joy of salvation in praise, and worship, and magnify God? (Luke 1:46-55). And secondly, the joy that the kingdom of God is presently within us (Luke 10:19-20; 17:20-21), and so we should continue to rejoice in the hope of the consummation of the kingdom of God at the end of the age when Christ, the King returns (Matt. 25:31-46; 28:20).

And finally, briefly the third heading is:

### 3. THE WILL OF GOD IN HIS KINGDOM

It is the will of God in His kingdom to produce character in His children (Rom. 5:4-5), “love” being the ultimate and highest goal—firstly, our love for God (Deut. 6:5), helps us to love our neighbour as our self (Matt. 22:37-39). So, to fulfil the will of God requires us to be filled with the Spirit that we may walk in love (Eph. 5:2; Rom. 5:5), wisdom (Eph. 5:18-21), obedience (2 John 1:6), faithfulness and perseverance (Luke 11:28; Heb. 6:11-12). Let us look at THE WILL OF GOD IN HIS KINGDOM from these Bible verses: Matt. 6:9-13; Heb. 13:20-21; Eph. 5:15-20.

1. Firstly, MATTHEW 6:9-13 (The Our Father prayer)—is a model prayer and a powerful prayer that the Lord taught His disciples about the kingdom to come and the will of God in His kingdom to be done. Let us briefly look at verse 10: “Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven,” the text in Luke 17:20-21 is helpful here: “Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come. He answered them and said, ‘The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, ‘See here!’ or ‘See there!’ For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.’ Luke 17:20-21 answers the first part of Matt. 6:10, “*Your kingdom come*” — for the kingdom of God has come spiritually within the heart of each one of us, His elect people. Hebrews 10:36 is helpful in understanding the second part of this verse “*Your will be done*”—exhorting the people in the kingdom to persevere in order to fulfil the will of God and receive the promise—which according to Matt. 6:10 is firstly the kingdom of God fulfilled partially in the present, and then consummated in the future visible eternal kingdom to come.
2. Secondly, HEBREWS 13:20-21: “Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Yahushua from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Yahushua [Christ], to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.” Micah 6:8 helps us to understand what is good and pleasing to God — [1] to act justly, and [2] to love mercy and [3] walk humbly with God.
3. Finally, Eph. 5:15-20 states, “See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore, do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord *is*. And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus [Yahushua] Christ.” Notice in Eph. 5:18 the importance of being repeatedly filled with the Spirit, or in other words, Christ must live in us more (Gal. 2:20; Phil. 1:21), so He must increase, and I must decrease (John 3:30), for it is Christ the King who helps me and you (John 15:4-5) to obediently walk worthy of God, by very carefully examining how we live, so to live according to the rules of the kingdom now [that is, righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit].

## Summary

In summary, the first heading: **THE DEFINITION OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD**—it can be defined as the everlasting kingdom that is the highest authority, God in Christ the King ruling over His domain in heaven and earth, which primarily refers to His elect people, the Church, the earthly symbol of the kingdom of God, whom He also uses to call others into His kingdom. Another way of defining the kingdom of God is through the parables the Lord Yahushua taught about what the kingdom can be likened to—through *the parable of the hidden treasure*, the Lord Yahushua revealed that the kingdom of God is so *valuable* (Matt. 13:44), and through *the parable of the pearl of great price* (Matt. 13:45-46), the Lord Yahushua revealed that the kingdom of God is so *precious*, so we are instructed to seek first the kingdom of God, it should be a priority above every necessity of life, as revealed in our main text of Rom. 14:17. Also, in *the parable of the leaven* and *the parable of the sower*—both parables emphasize the importance of preaching the gospel of the kingdom in order for individuals to enter into the kingdom of God by the new birth experience (John 3:3-8; Mark 10:15). The second heading: **THE CALL INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD**—it is essential to respond to the gospel of the kingdom of God, then we need to walk worthy of God, which our main text from Rom. 14:17 is also very helpful—firstly by responding to the call of God onto RIGHTEOUSNESS [Christ's righteousness imputed and received by faith places us in right standing with God, followed by our own pursuit for good works of righteousness, right conduct, doing that which shall win God's approval], this can lead onto His elect people experiencing PEACE with God and with one another, which should lead onto repeated fillings of the Holy Spirit and JOY expressed in service, worship, thanksgiving and praise, so that our JOY may be full. And the third heading of this sermon: **THE WILL OF GOD IN HIS KINGDOM** —it is the will of God to produce character in His children, "love" being the ultimate and highest goal. Firstly, by our love for God, this helps us to love our neighbour as our self. So, to fulfil the will of God requires us to walk in love by being repeatedly filled with the Spirit, or in other words, more of Christ in us, so He must increase, and we must decrease, for it is Christ the King that helps me and you to obediently walk worthy of God, by very carefully examining how we live, so to live according to the rules of the kingdom now.

So in closing, I read the main text from Romans 14:17 again:

"for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."

I hope this message has been helpful to you, and may God bless you richly in the name of Yahushua [Christ]. Amen.