

**Aldersgate UMC of Butte, MT**  
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Pastor Matthias Krier  
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**Message**

Matthias Krier

*“My Kingdom is Not of This World”*

Can you imagine what the followers of Jesus were thinking when they heard Yeshua say, *“My kingdom is not of this world!”*

In A Guide to Prayer for All Who Walk with God, Ronald S. James writes:

*“For us who follow Jesus and call ourselves by his name, it is a journey toward the kingdom of God. We have no language adequate to express what it means ...”*

*“Communion and the Coming Kingdom” - Weavings*  
Ronald S. James

Well, we may not have language to fully communicate the kingdom of God, but I am going to try.

Remember that the people of Israel were expecting a Messiah that would free them from Roman occupation and that they would once again become a free people. Just when the followers of Jesus thought that this was coming to fruition, they were confronted with this kind of rhetoric from Yeshua that this was not his mission to free Israel from Roman occupation. This was their long awaited hope for the kingdom of God to come into being.

So what exactly is key to understanding the kingdom of God? Maybe this illustration this can help, maybe not:



So what exactly is the key to understanding and experiencing the kingdom of God? Intellectually, we may get it, just as we understand the keys on our keychain and how they unlock doors we have in our lives. But what is the key to unlocking our understanding and experience of the kingdom of God?

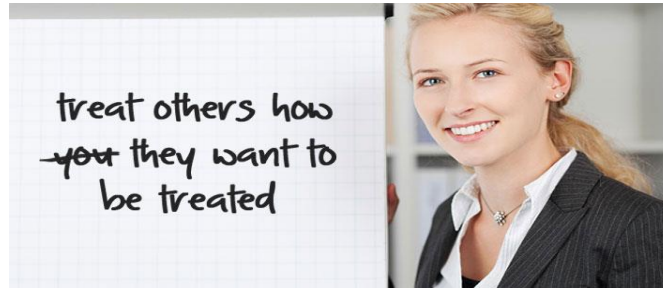
It is important that we hear these words again and let them sink in regarding the kingdom of God as well as what folks may have missed at the end of this reading:

**Scripture Lesson: John 18:33-37**

33 Then Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus, and asked him, 'Are you the King of the Jews?' 34 Jesus answered, 'Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?' 35 Pilate replied, 'I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?' 36 Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here.' 37 Pilate asked him, 'So you are a king?' Jesus answered, 'You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.'

I am not sure we really get this, because if we did, we not only would live by the Golden Rule, we would live by the Platinum Rule.

How many of you know the Platinum Rule?



And how is that?

*With Patience, Dignity, Kindness & Respect.*

Have you noticed that while some folks these days may be a bit more patient, there are a bunch of folks who are less patient?

Have you noticed that there are some folks these days who are a bit more kind, but there are also a bunch of folks who are much less kind, if not rude.

In the past 18 months people have grown even more weary than before the pandemic ... people have grown even more impatient than before ... people have become even more depressed ... people have grown even more sad ... people have grown even more unkind ... it is, I believe, because folks do not understand what Yeshua was trying to say here and elsewhere when it comes to the *kingdom of God*. Not only do they not understand what Yeshua was trying to teach about the *kingdom of God*, they are not experiencing it. The key to understanding the *kingdom of God* is to experience it. Hear these words from Luke 17:20,21

*20 Once Jesus was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God was coming, and he answered, 'The kingdom of God is not coming with things that can be observed; <sup>21</sup>nor will they say, "Look, here it is!" or "There it is!" For, in fact, the kingdom of God is among you.'*

Once we get this, it changes everything that the kingdom of God, the Presence of Christ, is right here, right now, in our midst. Open your eyes. Open your ears. Open your hearts!

In Mid-Week Reflections this week, I confessed that I have glossed over the last part of this passage where Yeshua says, *“For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world--to bear witness to the truth.”* John 18:37

Not only do we live in a world where millions of Christians do not seem to understand the *kingdom of God*, we live in a world that is not listening to the Truths of the Kingdom, the Truths of Jesus. Not only do we live in a world that is not listening to the Truths of Jesus, we are not listening to the science around climate change.

Not only are we not listening to the science around climate change, we are not listening to the science around this pandemic we are in. There is so much in the way of the lies and distortions around what is happening with climate change, COVID 19 as well as our ever increasing fragile democracy. These lies and distortions stem from selfishness, greed, fear and ignorance. Sometimes I just want to shake folks and say, *“Some things are true whether you believe in them or not.”*

We are at a critical juncture in history. What we do now has long term consequences in our thinking around climate change, the pandemic and with our fragile democracy. We will never live in peace & harmony in this country or in this world for that matter unless we take action, collectively.

Joel Graff shared a message not too long ago and in his message he shared something that is entitled *“Wesley’s Manifesto.”*

You have this as an insert and I trust you will take it home and ponder how each and everyone of us can promote these values and better care for our community as well as our planet.

I would like to lift up just one of these for today: This is # 5:

**Empower individuals to feel they  
can make a difference!**

Last week for those of you who were here and those who were streaming with us, we were truly blessed with our beloved Youth Group here at Aldersgate who put on one of the most meaningful services I have ever experienced. It was

refreshing, inspiring, moving and heartfelt! Jill, our Youth Director, is doing just what this # 5 in John Wesley's Manifesto is talking about:

Empower individuals to feel they  
can make a difference.

I am so very grateful for not only Jill, our youth and our Youth Sponsors, but our leaders here at Aldersgate who strive to live this out not only here but in their volunteer work in this community!

On the other side of John Wesley's Manifesto is the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Again, I will lift up just one for today:

### *Good Health & Well Being*

Unless we take really good care of ourselves, how in the world can we truly care for others? Remember, in what Yeshua gave to us in the Two Greatest Commandments: *LOVE God, LOVE neighbor & LOVE self!* There is a balance to living the abundant life Yeshua speaks of in John 10:10: *"I came that they might have life and have it abundantly!"*

If Wesley's Manifesto seems too overwhelming, start with just one thing or possibly two as we are doing here today. If the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals seems too overwhelming, start with just one thing or possibly two because we know that *"The Journey of a thousand miles begins with one step."* Lao Tzu

Some of us have already committed to some of these goals and are working towards them. I challenge each of us to prayerfully meditate and contemplate not only who you are called to be, but who are we called to be as a church?

Will we take the words in the Lord's Prayer seriously or not?



It is rather scary to think that as followers and apostles of Jesus that we are called to bring the *kingdom of God* to earth, is it not?

We are at a crossroads in history and what we do in this next decade will in fact determine what our kids and grandkids and our great grandkids will inherit on this earth.

While Yeshua said, "*my kingdom is not of this world,*" Jesus also said, "*thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven!*"

So we live with this paradox and it is up to us to discern who we are called to be and what we are called to do as the people of God! Yeshua gave us a vision of bringing the kingdom of God to earth and it is up to us to flesh that out!

One thing I know with absolute certainty, we are called to love. Not only are we called to love, we are called to be LOVE in this world. As we experience the Presence of God in our midst, we will no doubt experience LOVE, God's agape love which transforms everything. When we experience this wondrous love we can know not only love, but peace and harmony in a world that is sorely hurting. When we experience this wondrous love, we experience the kingdom of God for the kingdom of God is among you and within you! Amen and so be it!