

The Doctrine of the Two Kingdoms

Lesson 5-The Church-Part 2

Generosity

In the economic mindset of the world the phrase “there is only so much to go around” rules the day. However, for the saints in the church there is a trust in God to provide for the needs of the saints and to _____ those that give generously. Faith in God to provide is a factor for the saints that those in the world do not have.

“In the redemptive kingdom the impoverished widow who gives two copper coins contributes more than all of the offerings of the rich combined (Mark 12:41-44). This is not the way that the United States Department of the Treasury would (or should) view things. In the church ‘extreme poverty’ overflows into a ‘wealth of generosity’ that turns out to be an ‘abundance’ that richly supplies the needs of others (2 Cor. 8:2, 14). In the common kingdom something does not come from nothing, but that seems to be exactly what happens in the church. Christians cheerfully desire to give ‘beyond their means’, and rather than rebuking them as fiscally irresponsible Paul actually praises them, for the Lord loves it.”-VanDrunen

Evangelism

The saints desire to see the kingdom of Christ grow on the earth. Yet, they rely not on the weapons of this world but on the _____ as the gospel of Jesus Christ is proclaimed to all (Matthew 22:8-10).

“The church rightly calls every person in the world to itself and invites them to forsake every other ultimate allegiance for the sake of Christ’s kingdom. Yet it does so without violence and without any injustice.”

The Spirituality of the Church

While every other institution on earth has sprung up from common kingdom, the church has a _____ origin. Therefore, there is a difference in terms of focus and authority.

“The church is a community specially created by Christ and His Holy Spirit, a community that is not defined by or identified with any existing institution or community of the common kingdom. As such the church does not usurp the ‘civil’ functions of the common kingdom but devotes itself to exercising its distinctive ‘spiritual’ functions as directed by the Lord Jesus in Scripture. Without a biblical two-kingdoms doctrine it is very difficult to understand and appreciate this important idea. With a biblical two-kingdoms doctrine it should make a great deal of sense.”

“The church did not grow out of the soil of the common kingdom but sprang to life out of heaven itself, as the manifestation of a kingdom ‘not of this world’. For such reasons it is entirely inappropriate to identify the church with any institution or community of the common kingdom.”

“The church respects and acknowledges these common institutions and communities, but it must never allow itself to be identified with any of them. Things such as families, ethnic backgrounds, political allegiance, and socio-economic status define people in the common kingdom and distinguish individuals and groups from one another. The New Testament never says that these distinctions

should be banished in the ongoing life of the common kingdom, but it does insist that in the church of Jesus Christ a persons familial, ethnic, political, and economic identities are of no account.”

“When we are immersed in our own culture and own national interests, it is often difficult to realize how often we attach the church’s identity, and hence to betray the spirituality of the church.”

“The tasks that the NT does ascribe to the church are, not surprisingly, tasks that institutions of the common kingdom were not already performing and were not competent to perform: exercising the keys of the kingdom, conducting discipline, baptizing and making disciples of Christ, preaching the gospel, celebrating the Lord’s Supper, and ordaining ministers.” -VanDrunen

The Ministerial Authority of the church

How much authority does the church have? Does church leadership have? These are questions that are easily answered if we stick to what find in _____.

“The officers of the church have authority only to minister what the Word of God teaches, not to make up their own doctrines for believing or rules for living, no matter how compelling or wise they might seem to be.”

“The state has a broad discretionary power to make laws, the church has only the power to declare the laws and doctrines that already appear in Scripture. In short, church officers can say and do only that which Scripture authorizes them to say and do...If church officers cannot teach anything beyond what Scripture teaches, they are unable to bind the consciences of Christians beyond how Scripture already binds it. Thus Christian liberty is maximized.”

“Church officers must be zealous for doing and teaching all that Scripture authorizes and, as far as possible, leaving Christians with the liberty to do and to believe what they deem best in all matters that Scripture leaves open.”

“Church officers should teach Christians to submit to civil authorities, to discipline and educate their children, and to work diligently and honestly. They should offer pastoral counsel to help them grow in wisdom in such areas. But they should never command them what political strategies to follow, what child-rearing methods to utilize, or how to make their business run more efficiently.”

“Thus a good practice for the church to follow, I suggest, is to keep asking itself about each thing that it does: is this its own proper work, or did God entrust this work to another, nonecclesiastical institution?...If the church is to retain its spiritual character it must be zealous for doing its own special work well (which the church as found difficult enough) and to leave other work for the institutions to which God has entrusted it...The church’s nature is spiritual and its authority is ministerial, thus it should not take up cultural tasks that Scripture has not entrusted to it. Just because Christians should be doing certain things does not mean that the church itself should do them.” -VanDrunen