

NOT FAR FROM THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Mark 12:28-34

(Not entirely original with me)

Introduction: In a conversation with a man and after discussion and questions, Jesus remarked to the man that "he wasn't far from the Kingdom of God." Probably every Christian knows somebody who is "not far from the Kingdom of God," who just hasn't made up his/her mind to believe in Jesus and to turn his/her life completely over to Him. The man (Scribe) Jesus was talking to saw what he needed to do and he lacked only yielding his heart to what his head was telling him. Being "close" to the Kingdom of God is not enough for there have been countless who have also "been close" to believing in Jesus and died never totally giving themselves to Jesus and they went to Hell.

I. WHEN IS A PERSON FAR AWAY FROM THE KINGDOM OF GOD?

1. One is far from the Kingdom of God when his/her mind is totally filled with other things.
 - When a person has "no time" to think about spiritual things.
 - When a person's mind is preoccupied with business, pleasure and everything else but spiritual things.
2. One is far from the Kingdom of God when he/she is caught up in things of the world, in things of self interest.
 - Making money, making a name for one's self, one's family keeps one from focusing on spiritual matters.
3. One is far from the Kingdom of God when he/she is totally ignorant of spiritual matters and knows little if anything about religious things.
4. One is far from the Kingdom of God when he/she is caught up in the lies of the world that his/her conscience is seared, silenced concerning spiritual matters.
5. One is far from the Kingdom of God when he/she is filled with prejudice, false ideas of spiritual matters.
 - The Jews of Jesus' day were filled with prejudices, their minds were closed to anything contrary to what they had been taught for centuries.
 - People whose minds are already made up about religious/spiritual matters which are wrong, with minds that have been perverted.
6. One is far from the Kingdom of God when his/her prejudices will not let them listen to the truth in sermons or a witness.
 - He/she closes his/her ears and will not listen to even their own family or friends who want to tell them the truth about Jesus and the Kingdom of God. His/her mind is already made up.
7. One is far from the Kingdom of God when he/she has no interest of any kind in spiritual matters.

II. WHEN IS A PERSON CLOSE TO THE KINGDOM OF GOD?

1. One is getting close to the Kingdom of God when he/she decides to listen to religious/spiritual matters.
 - When a person begins to think about religious/spiritual things.
2. One is getting close to the Kingdom of God when he/she makes up his/her mind to finally be honest with God and with him/herself.
 - When a person decides to take a look into "this religious thing" being willing to be honest about it.
3. One is getting close to the Kingdom of God when he/she discovers that the past excuses he/she has been making to ease their consciences don't work anymore.
 - It is natural to "put things off," making excuses but whenever excuses don't work anymore and the religious/spiritual thought keeps hanging around, that person is getting closer to the Kingdom of God.
 - When one sees that his/her excuses are not good for anything, he/she is drawing nearer to the Kingdom of God.

4. One is getting close to the Kingdom of God when religious/spiritual thoughts overtake one's thoughts of his/her business and his/her thoughts begin to be constantly upon religious/spiritual matters rather than other things.
5. One is getting close to the Kingdom of God when what was once a good time, pleasure loses its appeal and one's conscience begins to focus on religious/spiritual matters more than having a good time.
6. One is getting close to the Kingdom of God when he/she doesn't enjoy sin anymore. There is an uncomfortable sense, feeling of conviction, distress and uneasiness.
7. One is getting close to the Kingdom of God when he/she begins to see religious/spiritual things more clearly.
 - An understanding of the Gospel, an understanding of what "sin" is, who Jesus is, what Jesus came to do, destiny of those who believe in Jesus and those who do not.
8. One is getting close to the Kingdom of God when he/she is "almost persuaded" to believe in Jesus and become a Christian.
 - He/she begins to wrestle with the decision to believe, "shall I now accept Jesus or later?"

III. THE CLOSER A PERSON IS TO THE KINGDOM OF GOD, THE MORE CRITICAL IT IS

1. The more enlightened a person is, the nearer he/she is to the Kingdom of God and the more enlightened, the greater his/her responsibility.
 - King Agrippa said that he was "ALMOST a Christian."
 - Every person who has ever been witnessed to, who has heard a sermon on how to be saved, who has read a Gospel tract or the Bible and has not believed in Jesus is in a very critical condition for they are closer to the Kingdom of God than those who have not ever been exposed to the truth.
2. Satan is watching very closely those who are near the Kingdom of God more than the others.
 - Satan will use every means to distract to delay, to keep one in his/her lost state in whatever way he can and try to get them to "wait a while" or do something to turn attention away from making the decision to believe in Jesus.

CONCLUSION:

1. Everyone here this moment is either already a member of the Kingdom of God through their belief in Jesus Christ or is close to the Kingdom of God. Which are YOU?
2. Have YOU been putting off the decision to give your life to Jesus Christ? Have you been thinking about it?
3. Everyone here has family members, friends or knows someone who is not a part of the Kingdom of God.
4. There is NO acceptable excuse for anyone here NOT to believe in Jesus Christ and be a part of the Kingdom of God.
5. Satan doesn't want anybody to believe in Jesus and become a part of the Kingdom of God and is doing all he can to keep people away.
6. Will YOU, right now, accept Jesus Christ?