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TO BUILD GOD'S  
KINGDOM

# STAND. PRAY. ACT.

Welcome to our seven day devotional series exploring God's kingdom!

The theme for this series was inspired by a colleague, Dr Pankaj at Muzaffarpur Hospital in India. He has dedicated his life to serving God and people affected by leprosy. Speaking to us about the future of the hospital, he said "My prayer is that this place heals hearts and minds, as well as bodies. Through the care we give, we want people to know the love of Jesus."

We often read about the kingdom of God. Many of us regularly pray "your kingdom come". But what does that mean as we live our lives today? How does God call us to build His Kingdom? What difference can our faith and actions make?

As we explore these questions together, remember that you are kingdom builders!

Across the world, people affected by leprosy are unwanted and excluded. But God's heart of love is for everyone. When together we reach out to forgotten people in His name, we start to bring God's kingdom here on earth. That's so exciting!

As you journey with us this week, why not ask the Lord how He wants you to respond to His calling to stand, pray and act.



**Peter Waddup**

The Leprosy Mission CEO

# DAY 1: A SMALL START

**“The coming of the kingdom of God is not something that can be observed, nor will people say, ‘Here it is,’ or ‘There it is,’ because the kingdom of God is in your midst.”  
(Luke 17:20–21)**

Throughout Jesus’ ministry, people asked about the kingdom of God. What would it be like when it arrived? Who can enter it? When would it come? How would they know it had come?

These are very sensible questions! People knew that the kingdom of God was unlike any nation they knew about or had lived in. They wanted to know more. And Jesus, in his generosity, listens and responds. He patiently reveals the kingdom to all those who listen.

Out of all Jesus’ teachings on the kingdom, two things captured me as I sat down to write this devotional. They’re completely radical. They turn the concept of a “kingdom” on its head. And they matter just as much today as they did 2,000 years ago.

The Kingdom grows from small beginnings. In Luke 13, we read how Jesus likens the Kingdom to a mustard seed and yeast. Little things can be amazing. Jesus’ beginning on earth was small and humble, and yet He changed the world the moment He arrived in it.

The Kingdom is for and of the “little people”. Jesus didn’t just go to the rich and powerful, the people with armies or conquerors. He chose ordinary women and men. He saw beyond material wealth, circumstance, and experience. He invited everyone to be a part of His work.

So what does that mean for us, as we seek to build and inhabit God’s kingdom? It means trusting that our small, ordinary acts, done in faith, make a difference. Every day, we see and hear of the difficulties people face in our communities and across the world. It can be so easy to feel overwhelmed. To think, what can I possibly do? But Jesus shows us the answer to this question. We can do anything in His might!

Many of us have written about the small things this week. You might think it’s cliché and you’ve heard it all before. But the fact that the kingdom of the Almighty starts like this is so incredible, that it is worth repeating again and again. Because it means that God wants to include us! He doesn’t just open the gates to the kingdom, He invites us in too. God is trusting us, the ‘little people’, to help build His kingdom. We just need to trust Him in return!

*Heavenly Father, there are so many reasons to praise you today. Thank you for opening the gates of your kingdom to me and inviting me in. I pray that this week I will walk close beside you, feel inspired by you, and trust in you. Go before me, Lord, so that all the little things I do can be building blocks for your glorious kingdom. Amen.*

by Abielle Hallas

# DAY 2: SEEK FIRST HIS KINGDOM

**"But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." (Matthew 6:33)**

In Matthew 6:33, Jesus provides us with a clear directive: prioritise seeking God's kingdom and righteousness, and all our needs will be met. This is a powerful reminder of where our focus should lie – not on the treasures of this world, but on the eternal kingdom of God.

When I was asked to write this devotional, something I was pleased to do, I found myself putting other things first. "I will do it soon, but first I just need to do this, or finish that". What was most important, glorifying God through this opportunity to encourage others and share His Word? Or the other tasks on my personal to-do list?

I quickly realised that I had to put everything down and focus. The words of this verse hit hard. Was I seeking His kingdom as my main priority? Amazingly (but perhaps not surprisingly) when I shifted my focus, I realised that everything else was indeed less urgent and important.

In our busy daily lives, it's so easy to become consumed by our personal desires and ambitions, or to covet the latest and greatest things. Even seemingly selfless acts like putting your work or family first can easily become priorities we put before our relationship with God.

Jesus beckons us to shift our gaze towards the eternal and align our hearts with God's will, to seek His righteousness in all that we do, and to trust in His provision for our every need.

So, what does it mean to seek His righteousness? Jesus calls us to live our lives the way He modelled – putting others first, feeding the poor, fighting oppression, and loving our neighbour. Simply, putting God's concerns ahead of our own

When we make seeking God's kingdom and God's righteousness our top priority, we discover a profound sense of purpose and fulfilment that transcends earthly concerns. That readies us for the amazing future God has prepared for us.

*Heavenly Father, we come before you with hearts full of gratitude for the gift of your Son, Jesus Christ. Help us to seek your kingdom above all else and to purposely live our lives as Jesus commanded. May our lives be a testament to your goodness and grace, drawing others into your kingdom by the power of your love. In the name of Jesus, our risen Saviour, we pray. Amen.*

*by Rob Oakley*

# DAY 3: INVITED TO BE HIS CO-WORKER

**For we are co-workers in God's service; you are God's field, God's building.  
(1 Corinthians 3:9)**

The furniture and carpet are covered with dust sheets. Masking tape protects the skirting boards. I've sanded down the walls and opened the large, fresh tin of paint, ready to begin the first coat. But before I can start, I have a five-year-old stood before me, politely asking which part of the wall he can paint because he 'wants to help'.

The easiest thing would be to tell my son that I don't need his help. That in fact he will likely be more of a hindrance, as he slops blue paint on the floor and slowly transforms himself into a Smurf. But instead I find an old shirt for him to wear (buttoned up at the back of course) and thrust a paint brush in his little hand. It may mean more work for me, but I delight in spending time with him. Together we are co-workers. Him playing his part, however much of a mess I'll need to clean up later.

What does it mean to build the kingdom of God? In 1 Corinthians 3, Paul reminds us that we are invited by the God of the universe to join in His mission. And incredibly we're welcomed as co-workers. Does He need us to achieve His purposes? No! Just imagine the awesome ways He could choose to work. He could use angels or all manner of heavenly beings. He could use talking animals (Balaam knows a thing or two about that). He could just click His fingers. And yet born from the deepest love, He deliberately, purposely and joyfully chooses to use you and I to build His kingdom. I find that amazing!

Whatever avenue of service you're involved in today, you're there because your Saviour chose you to be. You're part of His kingdom building, but not in your own strength. We're only invited to partake if we lean fully on Him and His strength.

Nor is our service a means to pay Him back for what He's done for us. If anything, as I'm invited to be His co-worker, I'm even more in His debt because I need more of His grace to achieve the task set before me!

Instead, as I build and sow, I take heart that my gracious and glorious Father is using this time to make me into the person He wants me to be. Today, take heart in the service the Lord has called you to. It may be unglamorous. You may think nobody else sees what you do. But your Father in heaven delights in you. Because you are His field. You are His building.

*How incredible, God, that your plans include me! Lord, I am your field - make my roots strong and my shoots tall. I am your building - strengthen my foundations and open the windows so your light may stream in. Help me to lean fully on you, and keep my feet firmly planted in your footprints. Pour out your grace on me, so I may play my part in building your Kingdom today. Amen!*

*By Jonny Wicks*

# DAY 4: PROCLAIM HOPE

**“When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is offered to you. Heal the sick who are there and tell them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’” (Luke 10:8-9)**

Last year, I had the privilege of visiting some of The Leprosy Mission’s projects in Andhra Pradesh, India. It was a trip that I can truly say changed my life and whole perception of the work that we do together.

One very special day was our visit to several leprosy communities. One lady took me by the hand to show me her home. We couldn’t communicate as we didn’t speak each other’s language, but her gesture of hospitality spoke volumes. It was such a privilege to receive such a warm welcome. I will never forget that lovely lady.

In today’s passage, the disciples are given Jesus’ commission – to accept the hospitality of the towns that welcome them, to heal the sick and to proclaim that the kingdom of God is near. We see throughout the Gospels that this is something that Jesus Himself does. He meets people in their brokenness and offers hope. Following the example of Jesus means living in humility and meeting people where they are.

Perhaps for you, this means taking the time to truly listen to those around you, showing genuine interest in their stories and experiences. It might mean reaching out to someone who is going through a difficult time, offering your support and companionship without judgment or expectation. Maybe it means doing more in your community to support those in need. Whatever form it takes, embodying the love and compassion of Christ means actively engaging with the world around us, extending grace and kindness to all we encounter.

As we journey in faith, let us remember that building God’s kingdom on earth is not just a task, but a calling from Him. It’s about extending hospitality, offering healing, and proclaiming hope in a world often shrouded in darkness.

Every Easter, we are reminded of the ultimate manifestation of God’s kingdom – the triumph of love over death, the promise of redemption, and the renewal of all things. As we think about these things at all times of the year, let’s be inspired to continue sowing seeds of love and compassion. Let’s prepare the way for the dawn of God’s kingdom here on earth.

*Thank you, Heavenly Father, that you meet me where I am. And just as you reach out to me, I want to reach out to others. Go before me as I work in my community and the world to build your kingdom. To create a place where everyone is welcomed in, where everyone is shown kindness, and where everyone can feel hope. In Jesus’ name, Amen.*

*by Gabby North*

# DAY 5: LOVE AS I HAVE LOVED

**"My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you." (John 15:12)**

Jesus commands that we love each other. We are then told the way to do this is to love as Jesus loved us. So how did Jesus love? Ultimately He laid down His life at the cross, establishing His kingdom here on earth. This was a powerful demonstration of the kind of love that Jesus meant. He laid down His life and so we too are to lay down ours. His death devastated His disciples – they had walked with Him and experienced how Jesus loved them. How could this happen to Jesus, the man they had grown to love with their whole hearts?

Those very same disciples walked with Jesus, they ate with Him, they laughed together, they witnessed how He lived and who He mixed with. They saw Jesus' unique responses to every person. They saw each person come to Him, and leave having encountered God.

The gospels give us wonderful examples of how Jesus loved. His interactions with different characters that He met, or those who were brought to Him, shows how He loved each individual. When Jesus was with people He never thought 'oh that will do' or 'because that worked last time, I'll do it again'. Jesus was never lazy in His response. He intentionally looked into a person's life, discovered their need, and loved them right where they were.

Let's think about the man bound in chains, possessed by the demon called Legion. After encountering Jesus, he was free from torment. For the first time in years, he experienced freedom. Imagine that! Imagine being able to think clearly! Imagine freedom.

Let's think about the sinful woman who washed Jesus' feet with her tears and dried His feet with her hair. She was judged at the table, the guests warned Jesus about her. She existed on the side-lines. There was no place for her in respectable society. There was no escape from her past. She was broken and judged by all. Imagine how she felt when Jesus affirmed her. Imagine how she felt as Jesus appreciated her washing his feet. Imagine how she felt when the guest of honour, Jesus, said she is free from sin because of her love. A unique encounter that healed her heart. How wonderful.

Jesus loved. Time or place or sin made no difference. Every time a person encountered Jesus they experienced His kingdom. May I encourage you today, know that every time you love like Jesus, His kingdom is revealed and built.

*Lord, I try to love, but sometimes I find it hard. I don't show love like I should. I'm sorry for these times. But you always love completely. Thank you that your love heals and frees. Thank you that you love me uniquely and always see my needs. Help me to show your kingdom through my love for others, for those who are rejected, judged, or trapped. Help me to love just a little bit more like you. Amen.*

*by Rachel Harris*



# DAY 6: DO NOT BE AFRAID

**“Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom”  
(Luke 12:32)**

Have you ever had one of those moments when the world feels magical, even ‘other-worldly’?

Perhaps when out for a walk you take in a beautiful scene. Or you stroll into a church and feel overwhelmed by a holy presence. Or you bump into someone who has just the right words to encourage you at a tough time.

Times like these can bring a unique way of seeing the world, of sensing God’s glory.

On a cloudy day, the opposite can feel true. You know the sun is there but can’t quite feel it. Then the warmth of the sun pushes through the haze and brings hope.

In the same way, Jesus says, many times, that the kingdom of heaven is near. It is so close, it’s within grasp. Something we long for. And He promises that when we believe in Him, we can have full access – free kingdom membership for life. We just have to keep close, and looking actively for signs.

There was a cost for us to have access to His kingdom. Jesus gave the gift of Himself, to bring us new hope. Through His amazing love, we can follow Him in faith and generous kindness for one another.

Are you feeling anxious and troubled? Do not be worried and upset. The Lord knows what you need. Whatever you are going through, He understands. He cares.

For all our faults and failings, Jesus loves us, His ‘little flock’, so deeply that at times He weeps. He delights that you can share in His kingdom.

There is more. Jesus never abandons us, but, like a sculptor, is shaping and transforming us to become something new. We can be active helpers in building God’s kingdom too. It is like being given a giant paintbrush to wash away the clouds so that the sun can shine through once more.

*Thank you, Jesus, for paying the ultimate price for me. A price I can never repay. And so today I come to you with a prayer and a promise. Lord, I pray that you will sculpt me into the person you call me to be. And I promise that I will keep close to you. You gave everything for me, and still you reach out your hand. I will follow you in a deeper faith, and delight that I can share in your kingdom. Amen.*

*by Debra Chand*



# DAY 7: POOR IN SPIRIT

## **Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:3)**

On first reflection, the Greek word for blessed (makarios) means to be happy and/or fortunate. Within the context of Jesus' sermon on the mount, it has a much deeper meaning. The world would often associate happiness and favour with external circumstances and external benefits. But Jesus is not simply talking about external things, but internal benefits that are eternal.

The benefit of being poor in spirit is having access to the kingdom of heaven. Throughout the Bible we see that God's kingdom is characterised by five Ps: presence with His people, who have His peace that surpasses understanding, and are operating in His power for the benefit of His purposes.

His purposes include the promise from Habakkuk 2:14, "For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." His glory includes His goodness, kindness, power, and blessing to us. As we are blessed, we experience His presence in our hearts. God gives us the strength (power) to face even the most difficult situations with His peace.

To experience these benefits, we need to be poor in spirit. Being poor in spirit is the recognition that without God we are destitute spiritually. We are unable to have peace with God and others. We want to do things our way, not God's way.

When we recognise our need for Him, God works in our hearts to transform us. We can experience internal peace that surpasses understanding as we experience His eternal presence with us. The Lord has made this wonderful promise:

"I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws." (Ezekiel 36:25-27)

How amazing! When we trust God by recognising our desperate need for Him, we will be transformed into the likeness of Jesus. Jesus who, as he hung dying on a cross said, 'Father into your hands I commit my Spirit'. As we receive more of His Spirit, we can be effective in helping to see more of God's kingdom this side of eternity.

*Lord, I want to come into your presence today. I pray that you will give me your peace, whatever I face. I pray that I will lean on your power, whatever I do. Transform me today, Lord, and put a new spirit in me. A spirit that works for you, and declares your glory and goodness. Fill my heart with love for you, and draw me close into your kingdom. Amen.*

*by Guy Wilcock*

To join our prayer community and pray with us  
each month, please visit

**[leprosymission.org/prayerpartners](https://leprosymission.org/prayerpartners)**

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