

The Kingdom of God The Government of God

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We have said that Jesus possesses all authority in heaven and on earth and He sent the Holy Spirit to bring His authority and to distribute it to us because each of us has a destiny that we are to fulfill. (Inserted – actual verse—“**Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.’**” – **Matthew 28:18**) That destiny is the way that the Living God intends to interact with human beings to show His goodness, His kindness, His grace. Now it is not just enough for us to have gifts of the Spirit operating in us, that’s not all we need in order for Christ to show who He is to others. For example, if you have gifts of the Spirit and you could do all manner of things but the attitude with which you do these things is inconsistent with the presentation of the character of Jesus Christ then you may do the right thing but—as a person—you will actually detract from the goodness of God by the way that you accomplish the things that you accomplish. If the character of the person is lacking, the substance of what they do will also be found to be lacking. So God has intended to develop our character by the gifts of the Spirit, in certain particular giftings of the Spirit.

There is another consideration and that is: there is an environment in which the people of God are meant to grow up into maturity—which has to be something that God gives them. That is, He gives them an environment of peace and good order so that they *can* grow up and fulfill their destiny. *So the government of God is that which God gives for at least two reasons: one is to provide an environment of peace, good order and well-being in which for the children of God to grow up into maturity and the other is the training and disciplining of the character of the people of God so that when they do the works—when the Lord does through them the works that the Lord does—their character is consistent with the work that is being done.* As a delegate, every delegate does not operate in his or her primary interest; every delegate operates for the benefit of his principal—the one who sent him. Therefore there are two aspects that go with being a delegate: one is that you handle the power of the

one whom you represent—the one whose interest you are sent to carry out—you handle their power properly, meaning you do with their power what they would have you do and not what you would do, independent of their interest. And secondly, that the character of the one doing the work must also present the authentic nature of the one whose power they are actually handling. So... and you understand this in business—even in business this concept prevails.

If, for example, someone sends you out to acquire certain equipment for the business... sends you out to buy a truck or a piece of electronic equipment and gives you the company's credit card, let's say, with which to do it. You are fully authorized to sign for the company and vis-à-vis any third party, your indebtedness of the company is an authentic, or legitimate, indebtedness. So let's say a person decides instead of using the company's credit card to purchase a vehicle for the company's use and benefit—having been sent to do so—that they bought a vehicle for *their*

own use and benefit. Now in the law that is called embezzlement, and it is a crime, but we readily understand the principle that you only use the power of the one who has sent you to accomplish the purposes of the one who has sent you and the use of that power must be consistent the objectives of the one who has sent you—that part we understand.

But let's suppose that the delegate—let's say he is buying a truck for the company—and he goes to the dealership and berates the sales people and throws an absolute “fit” as the expression goes... is just inconsiderate and demanding and the kind of client you hope never to see again. If word of the conduct of that employee gets back to the owner of the business, what do you suppose that the owner would do if the owner is someone who is known for his civility or her thoughtfulness? Let's say it is a service business and you are buying a truck which will have the name of the business on the side of the truck—it's a service business and, let's say the service business says, “We serve with a smile.” And this purchaser, working for the company, comes in and is absolutely a terror to the salespersons—demanding, arrogant, inconsiderate, ordering everybody around, rejecting the truck for the smallest of reasons—just using the occasion to make himself feel good and powerful and so on. If this is the kind of business we described, you see the necessity of the one who represents the business not only having the authority to purchase the truck, or the power to purchase the truck, but also *in his presentation* presenting the way that the business actually does business in a manner consistent with the philosophy, the goals, the aims of a service business. Well it's not any different in the Kingdom of God.

Jesus is a loving God; God is a loving Father. Even if you do a good work but you do so in a way that obscures the goodness of God then the fact that you do the work is not all there is to be thought of. For example, you see

any number of people today who will say, “Send in a donation and I’ll pray for you.” Now what is that? “Send in a donation and I’ll pray for you?” Pray for the people! Nobody is mistaken by the fact that if you say, “Send in a donation and I’ll pray for you” that all you are doing is you are selling your time... you really don’t care about the people. I mean, if you could pray for the people without the donation then it shows that you care about the people but if you attach “sending in a donation” with your willingness to pray for the people, nobody is fooled by that—you are just trying to sell your time, you are trying to sell access to God.

The character of the one representing the Lord must be representative of the Lord himself. If the Lord is kind—and He is—then the character of those representing the Lord must also be the character of kindness. If the Lord is merciful, your character must be merciful. It’s not just enough to pray for someone, it’s not just enough to demonstrate some incident of power on behalf of another—because the Lord lives in you to do that—your character must also be consistent with that demonstration. So it is not surprising to us in the least that the character of the Lord has to be developed in those who are His children—that we must look like our Father—that shouldn’t surprise us. Even earthly fathers have the goal that their children be like them; certainly our heavenly Father is like that except that, in being like Him we are not talking about physical resemblances, we are talking about His character being replicated in you. The government of God then is given for two particular reasons: number one is to replicate the character of the one whom we represent and number two is to produce an environment of peace and good order for the children of God in which for them to grow up.

Let me take a moment and speak to you about an environment of peace and good order. The importance of this is readily apparent. You take a situation in which a child grows up in a home in which there is order, peace and well-being. That child will grow up very differently and will look to the future totally differently from the child who grows up in an environment of conflict, chaos, shouting, fighting and the like. A child who grows up in that environment of shouting, fighting, people yelling at each other, disorder, chaos—a child like that does not think about what he or she is going to grow up to become. A child like that thinks only in terms of surviving long enough to get out of there. They don’t have time to think about what they are going to grow up to be or to become. They know only this: that they’ve got to survive in order to get on with life. Their goal is not what they will become; their goal is simply to survive the ordeal of their upbringing.

By contrast, a child who is *given*—as a gift from his or her parents—an environment of peace and good order; that child doesn’t think of growing up and surviving that and getting out of there. That child thinks in terms of growing up to become something. I suppose I’ll always remember this little girl; she was the child of one of the families whom we knew some years back and one day she going back to our house with Lucy and me and her

parents were going to pick her up at the house. As we were walking into our house—we got out of the car and were walking into our house—and she said to both of us, “I like coming to your house.” So we said, “Well, why?” And she said, “Well, because everybody knows what the rules are at your house and everybody abides by those rules.” What an astonishing thing for a little girl to say, but we knew the family and the family was absolutely chaotic; they would qualify as “the wild bunch”. But this little girl understood that ours was a home of peace and good order and she liked to come there.

I’ve said to my children, “You’re not better than anybody else. It’s just that in God’s goodness He allowed you to grow up in an environment in which you were free to think about what the future would be to you. If you had grown up in a home where your parents were always fighting and you were constantly in fear of your own life you may not have flourished like you have.” There is actually very little difference in the intelligence of children who grow up in environments of peace and good order and children who do not. Their financial situation has very little to do with who these children are capable of being. The thing that makes a complete difference is whether or not your home is one of peace and good order. If it isn’t, you’ll spend most of your life struggling with the question of who you are and who you were put here to be. On the other hand, if your home is one of peace and good order then you have an excellent opportunity to grow up to become what God put you here to be and to become. So it is not surprising that the government of God is meant to replicate the character of the Lord in you and to produce an environment of peace and good order in which you might grow up to fulfill your destiny.

The first order of sovereignty is the well-being of those subject to the rule of the sovereign—that’s the first consideration of rulers. If you have any measure of authority at all, if you have any sphere of rule, then the well-being of those subject to your rule is your first calling. I am the head of my house and that means that if there is a noise in the house at 2:00 in the morning, I am the one who is supposed to get out of bed and go and find out what the disturbance is. I don’t say to my wife—who is likely to be the one who hears it first—I don’t say to her, “Well, you heard it—you go check.” No I am the sovereign, so I am supposed to see to her well-being. Peace and good order are God’s gifts to His children.

Here are the Scriptures on the point: as the angels announce the birth of Jesus in **Matthew** and **Luke**, they say, “Peace on earth, good will towards men.”—which is God’s good will. (Inserted – actual verse—“**And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.**” – **Luke 2:13,14**) And as the prophecy concerning the birth of Jesus unfolded in the book of **Isaiah** in the **9th chapter**, it says, “Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulders. And his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Prince of

Peace, Everlasting Father, Mighty God. And of the increase”—note this please—“of the increase of his government and of peace...his government and of peace” (as his government increases so will the peace of those subject to his government increase) “of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end. Because the zeal of the Lord Almighty shall accomplish it.” (Inserted – actual verse—**“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.” – Isaiah 9:6-7**)

To the end of producing the character of Christ in others and an environment of peace, one of the administrations of the Holy Spirit, in distributing the gifts of Jesus to the body of Christ, is to give gifts of government and he gave five gifts. Here they are: (this is from the book of **Ephesians, chapter 4 at verse 11**). Having spoken of how Jesus ascended on high which is when and where He had the authority to rule, “He ascended on high, gave gifts to men, led captives in his train.” (Inserted – actual verse—**“This is why it says: ‘When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men.’” – Ephesians 4:8**) And it describes certain gifts that he gave to men. **Chapter 4, verse 11** of the book of **Ephesians** says, **“It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers...”** Why? **“...to prepare God’s people for works of service,”** To prepare you to represent the Lord. **“To prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.”** (Inserted – **Ephesians 4:11-13**)

So God gave these five gifts to equip us that we might become mature, that is, to the whole measure of the stature of Christ, meaning: as Christ was in the world—in behavior, in character and so on—that’s what we’re supposed to be. **“Then”** he says, **“we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves,”** (In other words, we will not lose our peace by every new thing that comes along) **“Blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming.”** (Inserted – **Ephesians 4:14**) No, we will be steady. Ours will be an environment of peace and good order. Instead of “tossed back and forth, running here and there—like infants” it says “Instead, we’ll speak the truth in love and we will in all things grow up in him who is the Head, even Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.” (Inserted – actual verse—**“Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him**

the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.” – Ephesians 4:15,16)

Every part of the body of Christ has a destiny to be fulfilled but we need the empowerment of the Holy Spirit to do the works that are consistent with how He intends to live in us and how He intends to live through us—we need that. But in addition to that, we need to grow up into maturity, which maturity is to be measured by the fullness of the stature that belongs to Christ. In other words, His maturity is the standard for the assessment of our maturity. In the process we will not be **“tossed back and forth”**. Instead, we will live a life in a context of peace and good order. We may have lots of troubles and many problems but we’ll not be **“tossed back and forth”** by the problems or distracted and dissuaded from our purposes by our troubles. We’ll be steady as we go, in the things of the Kingdom.

I wanted to remind you—in the book of **Isaiah** where it spoke of the government of God. This is from **chapter 9** of the book of **Isaiah**, **verse 6**, **“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”** Note this please—**verse 7**—**“Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end.”** That is, as His government increases so will the peace of those who put their trust in Him. **“He will reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.” – Isaiah 9:6,7)** So the Holy Spirit was given, as the delegate of Jesus Christ, to empower us to do miraculous works, to change our character to conform to the character of Christ, and to maintain an environment of peace and good order in which we might grow up and become mature. We have identified two of the administrations of the Holy Spirit: one is empowerment and the other is environmental—leading to our maturity, leading to our peace.

Five gifts were given to develop our character: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers—five gifts. These gifts are necessary for the equipping of the saints. I met recently with a group of pastors and some said that they had heard that I had diminished the role of the pastor. And I corrected them. I said, “This couldn’t be true because what I see is that *five* gifts are given for the equipping of the saints, one of which is “pastor”—apostles, prophets, evangelists, *pastor* and teacher.” The problem is that in today’s climate, only the gift of “pastor” is seen as being important. I do not undervalue the gift of the pastor, I speak to correct the discrepancy that has come about by the over-exaltation of the gift of pastor and the diminishment of all of the other gifts of the Spirit that result in the training of the character of those who put their trust in God.

So in the next series of messages I want to speak about what all of these five gifts are. What is the gift of the apostle, what is the gift of the prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher for the equipping of the saints? We will do that considering the Kingdom of God and the fact that the Kingdom is different from an institution or an organization. I trust that you will study with me the government of God as we explore these five gifts meant to develop the character of those in whom Christ is meant to be found in maturity. We are meant to have His character, together with His empowerment. Character without empowerment will always present Christ poorly. I'm Sam Soleyn; study the rest of this with me. God bless you, I'll see you then.

Scripture References:

Matthew 28:18

Luke 2:13,14

Isaiah 9:6-7

Ephesians 4:8

Ephesians 4:11-16