

The Kingdom: At What Cost

(Go To Meeting)

Michael Heiss—July 29, 2022

Tonight we're going to look at a subject that we all know about, in fact as a dare say, it's our reason for being.

Without God's plan for this, we would not be here. When I first came along into Christianity, having come out of the synagogue, I began to hear Herbert Armstrong and he was talking about the Kingdom of God, and the first Scripture I remember was Matt. 6:33. We're going to look at three Scriptures and then we're going to elevate this Kingdom to a higher spiritual plain and maybe see as we haven't before.

Matthew 6:33: "But *as for* you, seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness..."

That doesn't tell us a whole lot, except that we're supposed to seek the Kingdom. That's good enough for me, but we need to go beyond that.

Luke 14:26: "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, and wife, and children, and brothers and sisters, and, in addition, his own life also, **he cannot be My disciple.**"

We know that it really means *love less by comparison!* In fact but if you look at Matt. 10:37-39 the translation reads more like that. But we're looking at Luke because he gives us some specific information here.

Verse 27: "And **whoever does not carry his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple;** for which one of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has *sufficient* for its completion; lest perhaps, after he has laid its foundation and is not able to finish, all who see *it* begin to mock him, saying, 'This man began to build, and was not able to finish'? Or what king, when he goes out to engage another king in war, does not first sit down *and* take counsel, whether he will be able with ten thousand to meet him who is coming against him with twenty thousand? But if not, while his *enemy* is still far off, he sends ambassadors and desires the *terms* for peace. In the same way also, **each one of you who does not forsake all that he possesses cannot be My disciple**" (vs 27-33).

Jesus is the King, the Gate-keeper, the Door; nobody comes to the Father but through Him! So, unless we are His disciples, we're not going to get to the Kingdom of God, that's just all there is to it. *There is no other way!* So, we better be His disciples.

One way that we can garner the wherewithal to accomplish this is found in Rom. 12 and we will see what Paul has to tell us:

Romans 12:1: "I exhort you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, Holy *and* well-pleasing to God, which is your spiritual service. **Do not conform yourselves to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind** in order that you may prove what *is* well-pleasing and good, and the perfect will of God" (vs 1-2).

That's the process by which we come to Christ; being transformed from the world and society unto God.

Let's look at two parables in Matt. 13. I call this the parabolic chapter because it's got more parables than you can shake a stick at. We're only going to look at two. There's a lot packed in here:

Matthew 13:44: "Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is compared to treasure hidden in a field; which when a man finds, he conceals, and for the joy of *finding* it, goes and sells everything that he has, and buys that field." *There's something special about that field!*

Verse 45: "Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is compared to a merchant seeking beautiful pearls; who, after finding one very precious pearl, went and sold everything that he had, and bought it" (vs 45-46).

Obviously, on our level we are looking at this pearl and it's the Kingdom. **We are to give up everything we have to buy that special pearl—***that Kingdom!*

We're now going to elevate it to its highest level. I'm submitting to you that the pearl, the field and the treasure *is us!* ***We, the people of God, are that special pearl, that special treasure!***

- Who is the merchant?
- Who is the one who finds it?
- *That individual is none other than the Mighty El Elyon!*

He looks at us as special! He's willing to give up everything! What's His purpose? *He has a purpose!* I've been a junior astronomer for many, many years; I just love astronomy, and I always go to the planetarium if I can. I can remember the planetarium people telling us that there all these stars up there and there are about 150-billion stars or so.

I realized that no, no, no, they're not talking about 150-billion stars, they're talking about 150-billion galaxies of which the Milky Way is but one. 150-billion or so, and how many stars per galaxy? We cannot count them! It would take a lifetime to count all those.

But God has them out there, and what is He doing with them? What does He want to do with them? He has plan all right, a long range plan!

Remember Fiddler on the Roof? He built a big house with one staircase going up, one going down and one just for show!

God does nothing for show! Everything He does, everything He creates, He has a purpose for. God wants to do something with those stars. But to do that He needs the right help.

Angels He has by the 'gazillions'! They can't do it! In fact, there's something very interesting; if you go back and read closely in Exodus you will read where God told the Israelites,

I will send My angel before you, and he will lead and guide you. But don't provoke Him. My name is in Him and He will not forgive that sin.'

Moses was terrified, because he knew that Israel was a stiff-necked people and would sin, and he wasn't sure that they were ever survive it. If you read all the Scriptures and finally he begs God"

If You don't go up with us then leave us here.

Moses knew that God had the power to forgive!

The truth is, God's a softy! Read the book of Judges over and over again Israel said, after following after other gods, and cried out to Him. He sends a helper, a mighty man, a military man, a judge!

God needs individuals who will be able to think as He thinks, exercise the power that He exercises. Angels don't cut it!

So, once upon a time way back when—and according to the scientists, astronomers and their recent calculations, with the Redshift, the force by which stars are flying out and the universe is expanding—they can measure that and reverse it, they might be able to figure out when it all started. They've come up with about 13.842 billions years, give or take a million or so. When you're talking about billions, what's million or two one way or the other.

God comprised of two beings, the Logos that we know and the El Elyon decided that We need a family! We need individuals comprised of Our Spirit, our essence who will be able to carry Our

banner and shields, and conquer and administer all that's out there—billions of galaxies. So, they did 13.8 billion years ago.

Revelation 13:8: "...of the Lamb [Jesus Christ] slain from *the* foundation of *the* world"—*Earth!* What does that mean?

If we take it to mean that when the Earth itself was actually created, we know that it goes back at least that far, which is about 4-4-1/2 billion years. If we go back to when it was first formulated in the mind of God, you're going back to 13-billion years. Talk about long-range planning! Strategic planning! God's a Master of it!

So, we have to have it like this, we have to have the universe this way, the forces of magnetism and all the planets get lined up to make this earth perfect for man. So, They figured it out, but then They changed to the stickler, the stickiest, thorniest of all: If We're going to have man develop and grow that way, he's got to have free moral agency.

If he has free moral agency that means he's most likely going to sin. He's going to break Our standards, and We are Holy, Righteous and Pure, and We cannot abide sin. What are We going to do.

Talk about counting the cost! You better believe! Those to Beings counted the cost!

They knew that somebody was going to have to die for mankind and finally came to the conclusion that one of Them, and it became that the Logos was the One! He was the One Who agreed to die for them. Talk about expensive merchandise for us. God does not ask of us anything that He has not already done Himself!

He asks us to give up father, mother, sister, brother, everything we have including our own lives. He already gave up His life for us. That's how much He wants us. He loves us, we know:

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that He gave His only Begotten Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not perish, but may have everlasting life."

That's know throughout the world. In fact, that's probably one of the most beautiful Scriptures in the Bible, known throughout all Protestantism! But the fact that God says that these individuals are going to be worth My Life, I want them that badly!

About a year ago I remember giving a message and I said that we needed someone like Cecile B. DeMille, and Steve pointed out that I was dating myself. Now I'm going to date myself further:

In the 1950s there was a song—didn't make the hit charts—but it was among the Top 40. It was a song about Lola—Whatever Lola Wants, Lola Gets.

Well, whatever the Mighty El Elyon wants, the Mighty El Elyon is going to get! No matter the price!

Here we are sinning and who comes along?
Remember that snake! The one who Jesus says is a murderer and liar from the beginning. The one who says:

God, what are You doing with those good for nothing losers?

But that's not how God see it! We have to see it as God sees it, through His eyes. He doesn't see any of us as losers. He knew what was going to happen, and He prepared for it!

Malachi 3:17: "'And they... [talking about His people] ...shall be Mine,' says the LORD of hosts, 'in the day that I will make up My own special jewels....'"; *diamonds, gold, emeralds, sapphires; that's how God looks at us!*

He looks down the corridor of time and He sees us perfected! Those of you who are in the far-flung corners of the earth may not have heard this particular song very often, but many of us in America do. It is perhaps the most beautiful, moving hymn ever written: *America the Beautiful!*

It was put to words by a school teacher on vacation in the 1890s. She look out one day from the hotel room and it came before her:

Oh beautiful, for spacious skies
For amber waves of grain

I want to concentrate on the two middle verses, with two refrains:

America! America!
May God thy gold refine

America! America!
God mend thine every flaw

That's what God is doing, He's mending our flaws! He's refining the gold, and that takes:

- pressure
- heat
- time
- effort
- He knows that it's a long haul
- He know it takes a lifetime

Every time we go, we stumble! Gold is being refined!

My people are realizing they've made a mistake, they fell and shouldn't have done that, so they're calling upon Me. They're repentant and I am hearing them.

That's how God looks at it! Every time we get up and go forward, our flaws are being mended and the gold is being refined!

Remember, God wants us! He's got that plan for us! I'm sure exactly what it is; I can maybe get an inkling, but that's all. Let's see what Jesus says about God and the Kingdom and us:

Luke 12:32: "Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father delights in giving you the Kingdom."

He wants to give it to us! He wants us because we are part of His Family. I wish other Churches of God could understand *Family*. Do you know one of the most effective governments that ever existed was an evil government? *But it was effective!*

We know it as the Costa Nostra, old Italian Mafia. But it was family, and there would be meetings. Sometimes the chief Don was explaining something and it would burst. Something happened and one of them didn't like it and he thought the plan was ridiculous. He's mouthing off to the Don! Others there were about to smash him, but the Don holds up his hands. No, what is it?

He speaks and talks for 10-20 minutes, the Don is patiently listening. Finally the Don asks, 'Are you through? Are you finished?' *Yes, my Don, I'm finished!* 'Good, come, sit down!'

This is the Don, the chief one and he's going to say to this little pea-on, whoever he is. 'Come, sit down!' The Don takes his hand and he pats him on the cheek and says, 'Good boy, such a good boy.' Talk about patience:

I hear you; I heard what you said. There's some merit to what you said, but listen.

And he explains the plan, what it is, and finally at the end he says:

We need everyone to help in the project. Can I count on you? Will you be there to help us?

What's he going to say? *He has been completely won over!*

So, the young junior member says, 'Yes, my Don, with all my might!' The Don pats him on the face and says, 'Good boy. Now go do what you need to do.'

Why did the Don do that? *Family!* Unless your really rebelling. He wasn't rebelling, he was just a little frustrated. The Don had the patience.

I remember being a part of an organization, and if ever went to one of those top leaders and started to say this, that and the other things....

You're presumptuous! You're in a bad attitude!
You're rebellious!

Anybody who was there knows exactly what I'm talking about.

But the Father never does that! We're His children and He loves us! He wants us and we have to work together. He doesn't put us down! He will never put us down!

I once saw a caption: There's a cat and a wastepaper basket; you know how cats like to back up into little baskets. They feel comfortable that way. Here's a little kitty cat and his paws are up over the edge and here's his face and the caption is: Dreaming Big!

So, in the dreaming caption he's thinking: there's this massive head of an African lion with the mane! He was dreaming BIG! God is dreaming BIGGER! ***He's dreaming of a Family that's going to govern the Universe!***

In business—and I've dealt with a number of businesses as a tax practitioner—and I've seen businesses grow. The most effective business is always a *family-owned and operated* business.

The biggest Kingdom of all, the biggest enterprise of all is the Kingdom of God, and it's going to be Family-owned and operated! As a Family-owned and operated business, it's true that we're all equal in that.

1-Cor. 12—Paul is bringing out a very special message, talking about the body as one, but made of many parts: the eye, the ear, the mouth.

The eye says, 'I'm important because I see. If you didn't have me you couldn't see anything.' ***The ear says***, 'Yes, but without me, you couldn't hear anything! You couldn't hear any words or anybody talk.' ***The mouth says***, 'Look at me, you couldn't eat without me.' ***The nose says***, 'Yea but, smelling those beautiful flowers or a sumptuous dish of food.' Paul is saying, 'Look, we all have a part! We've all got a function.'

In the world of sports, my favorite game is baseball. That's because it's laid back, I'm not really and action guy. Football is bone crushing and basketball has got to be the most grueling of them all. You're up and down that court!

One of my favorite players of all time was one who played for the old Philadelphia 76ers. His name was Wilt Chamberlain, they called him 'Wilt the Stilt' because he was 7 feet 2 inches high! He

dominated! He had perfected what is called 'a sky hook shot.' He could run down the right side of the court and up and over 20-50 feet and swish! He couldn't save his life with a free-throw, he missed as many as he made. But those 'sky hook' shots of his!

Do you know what made that possible? *The itty-bitty, little pinky toe!* If you know anything about the foot and how it's made, it's a master of creation! That toe provides the balance! If you don't have that little toe, you don't have the balance and you can't get that shot off. Without Wilt's pinky toe he was nothing! ***Which is the whole lesson!***

We're all part of a Kingdom, all part of a Body. God wants us, all of us working together. That's His whole plan and purpose! There is equality! Look at what Jesus said:

Luke 12:4: "But I tell you, **My friends**..."—*talking to His disciples!*

John 15:13: "No one has greater love than this: **that one lay down his life for his friends**. You are My friends, **if you do whatever I command you**. No longer do I call you servants..." (vs 13-15).

You're not servants; you're not beneath Me. I am not up above you looking down at you.

"...because the servant does not know what his master is doing. But I have called you friends because I have made known to you all *the* things that I have heard from My Father" (v 15). *I have withheld nothing; we are together!*

- as a human being Jesus was equal to His disciple
- yes, He was the Begotten Son of God
- yes, He was God incarnate

But Jesus was dealing with the disciples as individuals because He knew that in the Kingdom they would all be of the same spirit. That's almost mind-boggling when you realize what that implies. In that Kingdom, Jesus is the Firstborn of many brethren.

Many years ago Herbert W. Armstrong came up with a phrase. He was talking about our destiny was to become 'God as God is God.' He wasn't sure about it. He called a meeting of the top evangelists and said:

Look! I'm coming to realize this. Please shoot it down.

They couldn't shoot it down. What he meant was, that in composition—not in function. We think of the Kingdom as a hierarchy. There is no hierarchy; there is *function!* That's what it is, ***function!***

The Divine Father of lights and spirits will always be the Grand Patriarch! ***He functions as the***

Grand Patriarch! If our spirit is equal to His, that means that we are God as He is God; we have all the power, all the might, all the glory the same as He does. If we don't, then all of this is worth nothing! God's plan was to have us this way so we could go out there and do whatever He could do.

Romans 8:29: "Because those whom He did foreknow **He also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His own Son,** that He might be *the Firstborn among many brethren.*"

He's one of the brethren, but because you know that the Firstborn has special preeminence. So, the Son, the Christ, will always function as the preeminent Firstborn.

In Islamic terminology of the Turkish Empire there was the Kalfa and the Grand Vizier; the Kalfa was the one in the palace; he held down the glorious throne, but he didn't do much work. Carrying out his wishes in the empire was the Grand Vizier.

- The Father is the Kalfa
- Christ operates as the Grand Vizier

Christ goes and organizes the army, organizes the universe. Of course, He discusses it with the Father. But They're equal; we are equal. It's enough to blow your mind, but it's true!

Romans 8:15: "Now, you have not received a spirit of bondage again unto fear, but you have received *the Spirit of sonship*, whereby we call out, 'Abba, Father.' The Spirit itself bears witness conjointly with our own spirit... [communicating; God's Holy Spirit and our spirit within us] ...*testifying* that we are *the children of God*. Now, if *we are children*, **we are also heirs—truly, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if indeed we suffer together with Him, so that we may also be glorified together with Him**" (vs 15-17).

Either Paul used the correct terminology or he didn't. He either got it right or he blew it! I don't believe he blew it; he got it right! He's saying that ***we are joint heirs with Christ!*** How is that possible unless when we're resurrected we're going to have the same glorious body that He does.

It's the only way we're ever going to be able to inherit what He inherits. He's inheriting the Universe, full of glory! It says that They're together, ***and that We may be glorified together with Him!***

Paul is talking about equality with the Son; and we'll see with the Father, as well; **except in function!** Yes, different functions. We will perform different duties, but with the same substance and power and might! *Almost enough to blow your mind!* But it's true! ***The only way we can have it is by***

having Christ's body! Paul talk about us:

Philippians 3:20: "But for us, the commonwealth *of God* exists in *the heavens*, from where also we are waiting for *the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, **Who will transform our vile bodies, that they may be conformed to His glorious body...***" (vs 20-21).

That's the whole idea! Just think, this whole concept has been *hidden in plain sight!* God has had it in His Word for over 2,000 years, but the world couldn't see it!

We know the reason why; one of the most damnable heresies of all: *the trinity!* If you have a trinity, you have a closed Godhead. There is no room for a family. That's what Satan did, he closed the mind of so many people that they couldn't understand what God had in store for them! ***That's what God has in-store for us! This is mind-boggling; we're going to inherit His glory!***

Let's also take a look at Jesus is talking to His Father about us and His disciple that were with Him at that last dinner, the last night before He was crucified:

John 17:20: "I do not pray for these only, but also for those who shall believe in Me through their word,, [that includes us; we're the ones believing] ...**that they all may be one...**" (vs 20-21).

That's kind of tough. I know some of the guys around here in the Churches of God, and I have to be one with them? *Yes! I've got to be one with them whether I like it or not!* How am I going to do that? *By God's Spirit!* That's what's going to do it!

"...even as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You..." (v 21).

We are going to be one together, all of us wherever we are! We are going to be one together as the Father and Christ are one.

"...that they also may be one in Us..." (v 21).

That means that God says we are going to one with Christ and one with the Father! *All for one and one for all!* The Father, Christ and all of us are going to be one in equality, ***but not in function, of course!*** God wants us! He's seen enough of us that He is willing to be at one with us! Even though I sometimes get impatient:

- I'm supposed to overcome
- I'm supposed to control my mind

Let me confess one sin, if I may, with you:

2-Corinthians 10:4: "For the weapons of our

warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to the overthrowing of strongholds, casting down vain imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and **bringing into captivity every thought into the obedience of Christ**" (vs 4-5).

That's hard! That's a tall order! I'm the type of individual that I read and see things wrong, and it's a good thing that I'm not 'god,' yet! I've got to control myself! When I start sinning I want to smash.... I can hear my Father saying,

Cool it, Mike! Cool it! I know how you feel and I know what you're thinking. I've sent the same thing for over some 6,000 years, and I've see a lot more than you have. If you can understand and imagine what I had to go through while those insolent individuals murdered My Son,

He [the Father] had to control Himself. Jesus said, 'Don't you know that I could ask for 12 legions of angels? Just think what two of those angels did to Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities on the plain.' And He could have 12 legions.

He says, 'But you're not ready. I have to refine your gold more. Amend your flaws more! I want you to perfection; I want all My people to perfection! I want all your brothers and sisters to perfection, because there's going come a day when that trumpet is going to sound and you're going to be up on that Sea of Glass and My Son is going to give you direction. He will give signal and you will ascend with Him and then you will begin to right every wrong. You will be able to correct all those mistakes and problems in due time! Got to work at it, though; you have to go for perfection.

That's what God does! He wants perfection in us! But what are we yet to do? I think Paul sums it up best; it's one of the most moving statements:

Philippians 3:12: "Not as though I have already received, or have already been perfected; but I am striving, so that I may also lay hold on that for which I also was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not count myself as having attained; **but this one thing I do—forgetting the things that are behind, and reaching forth to the things that are ahead**" (vs 12-13).

- glory
- splendor
- righteousness

Verse 14: "**I press toward the goal for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.**"

That plan way back when that was in the mind of those to God beings! Paul says,

I'm pressing forward' I'm not going to stop! I've got to get to the Kingdom, I've got to get to the top! What is the power in our tank?

Genesis 1:2: "...and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." *Hovering over the waters, the Spirit of God! The most powerful force in the universe; the force that built the universe!* God spoke the word and the Spirit went into action! That Spirit is going to get up the hill! That Spirit is going to get us across the finish line!

Paul says, 'My Father wants me, my elder Brother wants me! I can't let Them down! I'm pressing forward!'

That's what we have to do! We have to keep on keeping on! We've got to keep on pressing on! The Father sacrificed everything He had for us! Let's not disappoint Him!

For us it's upward and onward! It's pressing on! It's keeping on keeping on toward that glorious Kingdom. When the trumpet sounds He will be there waiting for us. Let's keep pushing on! Let us not disappoint our heavenly Father!

Scriptural References:

- 1) Matthew 6:33
- 2) Luke 14:26-33
- 3) Romans 12:1-2
- 4) Matthew 13:44-46
- 5) Revelation 13:8
- 6) John 3:16
- 7) Malachi 3:17
- 8) Luke 12:32, 4
- 9) John 15:13
- 10) Romans 8:29, 15-17
- 11) Philippians 3:20-21
- 12) John 17:20-21
- 13) 2 Corinthians 10:4-5
- 14) Philippians 3:12
- 15) Genesis 1:2-14

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Matthew 10:37-39
- 1 Corinthians 12

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