

We've been thinking about the Kingdom of God—this counter cultural realm in which we live
It is where we take our identity and live as citizens of the Kingdom of God
We immigrate into this new Kingdom as followers of Jesus
There are new cultural assumptions in this Kingdom
To live fully into the Kingdom, we must adapt to the culture of the Kingdom
Strength through weakness
Up is down
Love is the ultimate power
Overcoming is through nonviolence
Today I want us to grapple with the resources of the Kingdom

If we bring our old cultural understandings of resources into the Kingdom, we find ourselves wanting
I think we are tempted to go a couple of different directions
We've learned that money and provision is our safety—we can purchase what we need
One answer is belief in prosperity gospel—that God rewards faith with financial blessing
But that leaves our faith broken when we hit hard times
The opposite vow of poverty isn't the answer either
No wonder we don't feel safe—what do we do when the inevitable happens?
Then I'm supposed to be generous and give money to the church and the needy?
I don't have enough for me and my own family!
The answer? Trust! Trust in the Holy One—the almighty God that loves me!
But...?!?

What are the resources of the Kingdom of God?

Eternal Now of time and space

While we are finite beings—God is eternal and all of eternity is present to us
What???
Simplistic illustration—I like to think of us living inside a huge tube suspended in space
Inside the tube we are limited by time, which only goes forward in one direction
Outside the tube there is no time—movement occurs in all directions
This is the God realm
All of eternity is present to us, even though we can't physically go back
It explains how our past memories can be healed
It shows how there is more than the finite world we can touch and see
While our bodies function in finite time and space—the eternal now is present to us
"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end." Revelation 21:6

Cloud of Witnesses and Heavenly Hosts

*"...we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, ...
looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith..."* Hebrews 12:1-2
*Then Elisha prayed: "O LORD, please open his eyes that he may see." So the LORD opened the
eyes of the servant, and he saw; the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around
Elisha. 2 Kings 6:17*

We are not alone—we are surrounded by all who have gone before and all of heaven
Side note: Kingdom of God is the same as Kingdom of Heaven—used in Matthew
proclaim the good news, 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.' Matthew 10:7

Not only do we take comfort in the stories of those who've gone before
But all of heaven is present to us in this Kingdom of God/Heaven
Sometimes, like with Elisha and his servant, the veil is pulled back and we can see through
But not seeing doesn't mean they aren't present

Open system of resources

The world's system is bounded and closed—time is finite and resources are limited
Life is either/or, you or me, win or lose, have or have not, etc.
God's system is open
According to Wikipedia, "Open systems have input and output flows,
representing exchanges of matter, energy or information with its surroundings."
With an open system, the boundaries are permeable and resources flow into defined entity
Nothing confines us to a limited system of resources—not time or space, not what we own
Not the bank account, not our education, not family resources—nothing!
Rather we are open to everything in God's economy and God's infinite resources
Our physical world is not necessarily closed and bounded in the God realm
Oil never runs out and clothes and sandals don't wear out—1 Kings 7:8-10; Deut. 29:5
5 loaves and 2 fish feed thousands—Matthew 14:13-21
Corrie ten Boom's medicine never runs out
There is enough gas to reach the destination
Time and task stretch to meet—the stretchy prayer is true
In the God realm, we participate in the infinite...

Infinite possibilities

"For mortals it is impossible, but not for God; for God all things are possible." Mark 10:27

I can do all things through him who strengthens me. Philippians 4:13 NRSV

*Ah Lord GOD! It is you who made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your
outstretched arm! Nothing is too hard for you. Jeremiah 32:17 NRSV*

In God anything is possible—

Eternal time and space

Cloud of witnesses and heavenly hosts

Open system of resources—there is no limit to what God can do

When we operate in the open system of God, we call it the miraculous

But this was to be the trademark of God's Covenant people—the truth that the Kingdom is come

We don't live in a hut in the corner of the Kingdom of God—we fully inhabit the Kingdom of God

So, then we trust—not in the old system of finite and dwindling resources

But in the new resources of the Kingdom of God

Does it always seem possible or understandable? No—but it is true

Does it always turn out like we want? No—but God is redeeming us and all we face

We bring our pain and brokenness to God—the raw truth of it

And we trust that God can do something with it

Again, it is that deep trust in God—plunging deep into the presence of God