

This briefing document reviews the main themes and important ideas from the provided source, "1st Sunday in Advent (HDM) 11.30.mp3," which is a sermon discussing the nature of the Kingdom of God based on Luke 17:20-30.

## Briefing Document: The Kingdom of God - An Advent Reflection

Source: Excerpts from "1st Sunday in Advent (HDM) 11.30.mp3" (Sermon) Date: November 30 (presumably the 1st Sunday of Advent) Scripture Focus: Luke 17:20-30

### I. Overarching Theme: The Invisible, Internal, and Spiritual Nature of God's Kingdom

#### vs. Earthly Expectations

The central message revolves around Jesus' statement: "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation... For behold, the kingdom of God is within you." This theme is explored in contrast to worldly perceptions and the expectations of the Pharisees, emphasizing that God's kingdom is not an observable, external, or political entity, but an internal, spiritual reality.

### II. Key Themes & Ideas:

#### A. The Christian Church as an Absolute Monarchy under Christ:

The sermon immediately asserts that the Christian Church is not a democracy, but an absolute monarchy.

In this monarchy, God, through Jesus Christ, is the sole ruler, and "the word of the king is yea and amen."

No human authority (member, pastor, congregation, conference, senate, or pope) has the right to act contrary to the King's word.

This is presented as a positive, not a negative, because "our king in the Christian church is not like the kings of this earth. He is a very wonderful, gracious and merciful, very loving king." His kingdom is "a kingdom of grace and mercy and righteousness and truth."

#### B. The Kingdom of God is Internal and Invisible (Not "with Observation"):

Rejection of External Manifestations: Jesus' words, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation, neither shall they say, lo here or lo there," directly challenge the Pharisees' expectation of an earthly, observable kingdom.

"Within You": The kingdom "is an a thing and affair of the inmost heart of man." It cannot be identified by sight or pointed to externally.

Consists of True Believers: "The Holy Christian Church consists only and alone of all the true believers in Christ that are in this world."

Invisible to Human Eyes: The Christian church is "invisible to the eyes of men and that only the Lord knoweth them that are his for the simple reason that membership in the holy Christian church is by faith in Christ Jesus which is in the innermost heart." Humans cannot discern another's true faith.

#### C. Contrast Between God's Kingdom and Earthly Kingdoms:

Establishment of Rule: Earthly kings use "force of arms"; Christ establishes His kingdom "by his righteousness and truth and by the attractions of his saving grace."

Maintenance: Worldly kingdoms are maintained by "carnal weapons such as swords and guns and bombs and missiles"; God's kingdom is maintained "by the preaching and teaching and consistent application of God's precious word, the sword of the spirit." This involves both the "law of God which crushes the sinful heart" and the "gospel of God's grace in Christ Jesus which then winds up the bleeding in the broken heart."

Support: Earthly governments use "legalistic taxation"; God's kingdom is supported by "the free willing offerings and sacrifices of God's holy people who because they love their savior and their king want to be just as generous as they can."

#### D. Warning to Outwardly Connected Members and Call for Self-Examination:

Outward vs. Inward Connection: The sermon issues a "very serious and earnest warning to all those who may be only outwardly connected with membership in the Christian church." The Pharisees serve as an example of those who were outwardly connected but lacked true faith.

Importance of Local Congregation (but not sufficient): Membership in a local Christian congregation is "a God-pleasing thing" and necessary for proper association, worship, and fellowship (e.g., partaking in Holy Supper, Christian discipline).

Beyond Outward Observance: However, because the kingdom "cometh not with observation," one "must go farther than that." Christians must ask, "Am I by true, sincere, earnest faith within my heart? Am I also a true member of Christ's kingdom... which is known only by God."

Hearing with the Heart: It's not enough to physically "hear his blessed word with your ears"; one must "truly hearing that precious word of the Lord with your heart," "taking to heart the word," and "trusting in the Lord Jesus as your only hope and refuge."

Proof of Faith: True faith is evidenced by "godly work of righteousness in your daily life and by the avoidance of all that is sinful and contrary to God's word."

Urgency of Self-Examination: The Advent season is presented as a time to "Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith. Prove your own selves. Make sure that the kingdom of God is within you. Because if it is not within you, then you are not a part of God's kingdom at all." This self-examination is urgent because "the time is short."

#### E. Comfort and Encouragement for True Believers (The "Blessed Lot"):

Future Revelation of the Kingdom: While currently hidden, the time will come "very quickly... when the Lord again will appear for his second advent, bringing to light then all the hidden things of darkness." This is compared to "the lightning that lighteth out of the one part under heaven shineth unto the other part under heaven."

Contrast of Fates (Noah and Lot): The days leading up to Christ's second coming will be like the days of Noah and Lot, where people "did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded," engrossed in worldly pleasures, until sudden destruction came. This illustrates the "terrible lot of all the unbelievers" who will face "everlasting fire and torment of hell."

Suffering and Tribulation for Disciples: True believers "will first have to like our savior bear the cross before we enter into glory." They "will be hated... of all men for his name's sake." The world is "a sinful thing and it's full of sorrow and trial," and Christ's kingdom "is not of this world."

Longing for Christ's Return: Disciples will "often long to see one of the days of the son of man," desiring a glimpse of heavenly glory or Jesus' physical presence, but are told this will not happen on earth in this present age because "his kingdom cometh not with observation."

Glorious Future Reward: This suffering is "not for long." When Jesus returns, "He'll make right all the wrongs and the troubles that you had to go through and suffer for his name's sake." He "will also glorify you and me as his word promises us. And then he will take us out of this veil of tears to all the glory and joy and peace... of his heavenly kingdom."

Triumphant Hope: The ultimate comfort is that Christians "can now triumphantly in our Lord and Savior, our precious King, Lord Jesus... lift up our eyes above all the fleeting treasures and disappointments of this present world to the glories that await us in heaven and cry out victoriously and joyfully with the apostle of the Lord, 'The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.'"

### III. Key Takeaways & Action Points:

Understand the True Nature of God's Kingdom: It is spiritual, internal, and ruled absolutely by Christ, contrasting sharply with earthly power structures and observations.

Prioritize Internal Faith over Outward Affiliation: While local church membership is important, it is not a guarantee of salvation. True membership in Christ's kingdom is by faith in the heart.

Engage in Self-Examination: Actively assess the reality and depth of personal faith, ensuring it is genuine and produces godly works.

Embrace the Cross: Expect suffering and tribulation in this world as a true disciple, understanding that earthly life is not heaven.

Anticipate Christ's Return with Hope: Despite present struggles, look forward to Christ's sudden, glorious return, which will bring justice for unbelievers and eternal glory for believers.

Live in Hope and Joy: Find comfort and encouragement in the promised future glory that far outweighs any present suffering.

NotebookLM can be inaccurate; please double check its responses.