

*Mary Craig Ministries, Inc.*

*Series: "The Kingdom of God"*



*Message: "Jesus on Power and Status"*

[Click/tap to hear the live recording](#)

*Dr. Mary Craig*

*July 11, 2021*

According to worldly values, much of our destiny is set according to where and to whom we are born. These determine to a large degree our quality of life, our medical care, education, work, shelter, and how long we live.

Social power rises and falls on the ladder and hierarchy of world society. Power is the ability to affect social life, to make things happen. To make things happen we need resources, like knowledge, money, and position. Depending on our resources, four major types of power flow: financial power, expert power, organizational power, and personal power. If someone is attractive, personable, wealthy, intelligent, and CEO of a large corporation, that person can flex power.

Titles, clothing, language, seats, the ability to reward or punish, the ability to hire or fire, the ability to ask for favors, to control someone else's life (retirement, scheduling, privileges, salary, bonuses, etc.) mean power in the secular world.

And what of status? We can list seven formative factors which influence our status in society:

1. biological constraints – energy levels, appearance, male or female, IQ
2. cultural values – as being taught to work hard, to tithe, to be useful, to live off the government
3. personal motivation – profit, personal gain, selfish ambition, serving God, country, others
4. community assets – the neighborhood, church, school, stores, tech
5. family stability – heritage, large family, prominence
6. financial inheritance – money, business, farm, property
7. chance – favor

Ladders of power and prestige stand everywhere—in families, clubs, work places, and churches. The two most basic social processes involve comparison and domination.

Enter Jesus Christ. When we are born again, receiving Jesus Christ into our hearts and lives, we are defined by the Word of God. We are who God says we are in Christ. That is a truth, and the truth transforms us no matter what. We have been bought with a price, redeemed by the Blood of the Lamb, reconciled with the Father, forgiven, and set free from the power and penalty of sin. Jesus Christ owns us. We are controlled by the Holy Spirit. We enter the Kingdom of God.

In the KOG, we have the Most High God and Jesus His Son coming and speaking with authority and power. Jesus' right to rule does not come from coercive political force but from the Most High. Jesus came without the traditional trappings of authority, but He did come with authority...His words had their own authority. Jesus is a man of authority. He commands demons. He teaches without quoting others. He has power of attorney from His Father. God gave Him the right to speak. He sought to glorify the Father and not Himself. He used His authority to serve and help others, who were the beneficiaries of His power. His message had

authenticity. He was not self-seeking, self-serving, self-enhancing, or self-assertive. John 5:26-30; John 7:16-18; John 8:28; John 12:49-50. Jesus is God come in the flesh.

For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak. And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak.” John 12:49, 50 NKJV

In the KOG the way up is down; the way out is in. Children were as important as adults. We say, “Act your age.” Jesus said to grow down to childlike behavior. Children haven’t yet learned social and ethnic culture. They start off trusting, dependent, believing for good parents, etc. The world says that to be great one must be on top, powerful, a master, first, a winner, a ruler, an adult. Jesus says be the servant of all, like a slave, last, on the bottom, like a child. Service to others becomes the yardstick of stature in the KOG. Today we use the language of service to promote selfish interests. Such self-serving service was not what Jesus had in mind.

The servanthood of Jesus ended on the cross. He healed the sick on the Sabbath. He forgave sins in odd places and not in the temple. He didn’t discriminate in ministering. The least is the greatest in the KOG.

The KOG is a flat society. Everyone stands side by side as people of the land with Almighty God Supreme and Sovereign Ruler. Therefore, we serve one another in love and with compassion knowing we’re all in the same boat. Everyone is important. Everyone makes a difference.

Jesus was a menace to society. He was leading a political movement that promised to reorder social and religious life. He shouldn’t have by all worldly standards, but Jesus was drawing a crowd. Common people might rise up with His message of hope and change. Jesus told stories that stirred imaginations and flipped social worlds upside-down. He heralded a new set of values in a new kingdom. He was a prophet who spoke of a radical obedience to God’s reign with an allegiance that pushed all other gods aside. Jesus came with an utter abandon to the reign of the Most High God, even in the face of the cross, and that was scary. Two factors undergirded Jesus’ use of power:

1. Jesus influenced; He did not manipulate. He beckoned people to follow Him. His words and actions created a crisis. He invited a person to make a voluntary decision, to make a choice. And yet those who responded had been chosen before the foundation of the world.
2. He used power and mobilized resources to serve the needs of the hurting and the stigmatized, not for vain glory and selfish ambition. He used power to empower others, to provide others with resources.

Power is not inherently evil or wrong. It is how power is used. The Spirit of God brings order to the life of God’s people.

Jesus also knew the power of symbols. The symbols of the kingdom are the manger, the stable, a donkey, the basin, thorns, the cross, and the tomb. Of these, the basin, cross, and tomb become the pivotal signs and symbols of the new kingdom.

The Passover centered on slaying a sacrificial lamb as atonement for sin and eating a special Passover meal. When Jesus celebrated the final Passover meal He did it in such a way as to recall all the historical meanings of liberation and exodus from slavery. The meal initiating the new kingdom proclaims Jubilee. Jesus takes bread and the fruit of the vine and overturns the

entire sacrificial system. His death on the cross will bring liberation, Jubilee, freedom from slavery to sin.

Jesus poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel. John 13:3-5. This Messiah carried a basin, not a dagger. The towel and basin are the tools of a slave and of a servant, not the royal symbols of sword, chariot, and stallion/horse. Jesus forfeited the privilege of his position. He bent over symbolizing obedient service, humility. This was dirty work. Jesus chose to serve and give personal care. Servants were expected to ignore their own hunger in order to serve their masters. Jesus had food that His disciples did not know about. His meat/food was to do His Father's will and to finish His work.

The towel and basin define our trade in the KOG. They are the tools of shalom. As we become servants, serving one another in love, we all become great ones in God's flat kingdom under the rule of the Most High God who is Lord of all.

Pilate used a basin to rid himself of responsibility for Jesus' death. Jesus used a basin as a sign of love and service, taking responsibility for others, dying for their sins that their sins might be forgiven. Jesus is The Peace, but to the society of the religious, the society of the political, and the society of the people...Messiahs who disturb their peace will hang and bleed.

Jesus invites us to be people of the basin. John 13:14, 15. Mt. 5:19; Mt 7:21; Mt 25:31-46; Mark 3:35. Luke 6:46. We're asked to sell, give, love, forgive, share, teach, serve, and go.

Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 5:19 NKJV

Being people of the basin will lead to the cross. The cross was the natural, legal, and political result of how Jesus ministered. We will struggle to live the way of love. We will be tempted to flee, to fight, and to retaliate when the cross looms on the hill. We may seem like failures and be written off. We may experience shame. If we set our faces like flint for Jerusalem, we must know that there will be consequences to our choosing to take Jesus seriously and follow the Lamb wherever He goes.

After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded...If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. John 13:5, 14, 15 NKJV

Jesus is after loyalty. Following Jesus will be socially expensive. Thus we are to calculate the cost. Kingdom living will require a singularity of focus and energy. It is full time work. Discipleship is costly if one takes Jesus seriously.

Our overriding temptation is to save our lives in both systems. We hip-hop. What we often forget is that the early church was empowered and energized by the empty tomb. With the empty tomb, with the raising of Jesus from the dead, God trumped the powers of sin in a nonviolent but spectacular victory over the principalities of darkness. The empty tomb signals God's steadfast love and care.

The assembly of called out ones, which we call the Church, has a mission to be in the world but not of the world. Ours is an alternate culture, a prophetic ministry. We offer an alternative social reality. We act as salt and light. We are called to be a corporate witness to God's love and grace. We are to embody God's design for human integrity, wholeness, and shalom. We are

to preserve truth and promote justice. We are to keep the faith, to preach, teach, and proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Truth lies in the heart of grace. A joyful delight flows from God's spirit of mercy. Generosity replaces consumption and accumulation. We will be givers not takers. We will give graciously, generously, gladly, and as the Holy Spirit guides, according as we have purposed in our hearts. We will be grace givers. Shalom is to overcome revenge and basins are to replace swords. We are to be peace makers. We are to reach down and lift others up. We are to walk in humility and yet stand firm. We yield judgment to God, who judges with righteous judgment.

Jesus is coming again. We are to watch, be ready, worship, learn to be overcomers, follow the Lamb wherever He goes, witness, and be faithful unto death.

**Pray the Lord's Prayer:** Our Father, which art in heaven. Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Bibliography: Kraybill, Donald B. *The Upside-Down Kingdom* Herald Press, 2011.

Ladd, George Eldon. *The Gospel of the Kingdom*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1959.

© 2021 Mary Craig Ministries, Inc. All rights reserved. [www.marycraig.org](http://www.marycraig.org) [www.mcmtffr.org](http://www.mcmtffr.org)

## Mary Craig, D. Min.

But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you:  
and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria,  
and unto the uttermost part of the earth. Acts 1:8 KJV



Thank you for giving to MCM! Donate: Mary Craig Ministries, Inc., P. O. Box 4610, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33338-4610 or through PayPal® online at [www.marycraig.org](http://www.marycraig.org). Go to [marycraig.org](http://marycraig.org) for the latest articles and words received. Take a look and see all that God is doing through this ministry, in world missions, in evangelism, the Barnabas Project, Craighouse® Christian Fellowship, home visitation, Kinetic Koinonia, media, and more. Worship with us 4:30 p.m. Sundays via teleconference. Reach MCM at 954-491-7270. Send in your prayer requests. Follow MCM Bible teachings and Rev. Jim Craig's sermons; go to [www.marycraig.org](http://www.marycraig.org) and click on "Audio Bible Studies" or "Divine Appointment" radio ministry; or go to [www.mcmtffr.org](http://www.mcmtffr.org) for audio sermons, teachings, and handout sheets. Free. Go to [www.marycraigverses.org](http://www.marycraigverses.org) for "Enjoying God for Life," daily encouragement and growing in your faith. Go to [www.marycraig.smugmug.com](http://www.marycraig.smugmug.com) for some pictures of MCM world missions.

See our new Mary Craig Ministries YouTube Channel here:  
[www.youtube.com/channel/UCs4c-InXmh2HKF36huJQTOA](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCs4c-InXmh2HKF36huJQTOA). Subscribe for free.

Free books by Dr. Craig to download, print, or just open and use, here: [www.marycraig.org/Catalog.htm](http://www.marycraig.org/Catalog.htm).

Mary Craig Ministries, Inc. is a USA 501 (C) (3) nonprofit corporation founded in 1993. Federal ID 65-0429517.