

Kingdom Families Mark 1:29-34

Our kids have others kids over to our house a lot and I always wonder what they think when they are there. What do they see in our home? What do they see in the way we live—the food we eat, how we spend our time, how we talk to each other, the pets we have, even how our house smells.

I wonder because I remember as a kid going over to other people's houses to stay the night and you got to see their family up close. They ate different food than my family. Their house was arranged differently. They had gerbils and fish and rules that my family didn't have. Their furniture was different. They had three TV's compared to our one. The Dad drank a beer on the back deck and read a book. The Mom did macrame at the kitchen table and listened to the radio.

Their family was different.

What do people see when they look at our family? What do people see when they look at our lives? What do people see when they look at you?

Do they see something different? Do they see the Kingdom of God?

Jesus gave us a good definition of the Kingdom of God in the Lord's Prayer.

Jesus prayed, **"Your Kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."** (Matthew 6:10) So the Kingdom is where God's will is done, meaning God's good pleasure is being carried out. So

The Kingdom is the world that pleases God.

Living in the Kingdom of God means that we live like Jesus' family.

And when we like Jesus' family, things will look a lot different.

Jesus' first disciples were four men from two different families. Those two families were partners in a fishing business around the Sea of Galilee. Jesus met at least three of these men about 130 miles south of Galilee along the Jordan River where they were disciples of Jesus' cousin John the Baptist.

And I know when we think of fishermen making their living along a large lake in first century AD, we think of some poor, illiterate men just scraping out a living, barely making ends meet, battling poverty, starvation and disease. But that wasn't the case. These two families did well. One of their homes was in the prime fishing location along the Sea of Galilee. It was the very best real estate for a fishing family along the 64 square miles of Sea of Galilee.

Mark Chapter One tells us that Jesus was teaching and healing in the synagogue (which was like the town church) in a village called Capernaum and Jesus' fame had spread far and wide. Everyone, everywhere in Galilee was talking about the teacher, healer and wonder-worker Jesus of Nazareth. They said:

What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commends even the unclean spirits and they obey Him!

Mark 1:28

After Jesus taught in the synagogue one Sabbath day, he walked about 75 yards over to the house of two of His disciples, Simon (later know as Peter) and his brother Andrew.

And immediately he left the synagogue and entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John.

Mark 1:29

We might read that passage and it seems routine. Jesus went to Simon and Andrew's house right along the Sea of Galilee for a little bit of lunch right after church. That's nice. Who doesn't enjoy a nice lunch after worship?

There is so much more going on here. The Greek word for house is *oikos* means far more than just someone's domicile, the physical building in which they live. In addition to home it means family, especially extended family. So when the Bible says, "house of" it is usually talking about an extended family. Genesis 46:27 says that the number of people of the house of Jacob who came to Israel was 70. In Jeremiah Chapter One, God promises to make a new covenant with the House of Israel and the House of Judah. No one make a covenant with a 3-bedroom ranch. But they do make covenants with people, families.

So, Mark is not saying Jesus had a nice Sabbath lunch with friends. He is telling us that Jesus became a part of Simon and Andrew's family. Jesus' birth-family from Nazareth was not at this point wild about His work as prophet, teacher and healer. They actually thought Jesus was out of His mind. And the people in Jesus' hometown of Nazareth tried to kill Him by throwing Him off a cliff right outside of town. So Jesus made the seventeen-mile walk over to Capernaum and found a new family to become a part of.

So, what happens when we invite Jesus into our home? What happens when we allow Jesus to become a part of our family? What happens when we give Jesus, through the power of the Holy Spirit, access to the inner workings and relationships of the people with whom we are most close?

It's simple. We begin and our family begins to live like the royal family of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

What does look like?

Jesus heals us.

We serve.

And we share Jesus.

First, Kingdom people and Kingdom families seek healing.

Now Simon's mother-in-law lay ill with a fever, and immediately they told him about her. And he came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and the fever left her...

Mark 1:30

Jesus' first act when He entered the household, when he became a part of the family of Peter and Andrew was to heal Peter's mother-in-law. She had a fever which to us may not sound like a great big deal but when the New Testament talks about a fever it means an illness that causes someone to shake and shiver and maybe even be delirious. Fevers in the ancient world were always visible because there were no such things as thermometers. We're not talking about a body temperature of 98.9 here. Fevers were serious.

And Jesus' healed her, saving her life.

Healing was a big part of Jesus' ministry. In Mark Chapter One alone, Jesus healed dozens, perhaps even a hundred people. Jesus' disciples filled with the Holy Spirit healed thousands. Simon Peter, the very man whose household and family Jesus became a part of, was so filled with the healing power of the Holy Spirit, that the book of Acts tells us that people laid their sick out in the streets of Jerusalem just hoping Peter's shadow would fall across them and heal them. Paul raised a man from the dead.

Why is healing such a big part of the ministry of the family of God?

It's because pain, sickness, disease, disability, death is not a part of the Kingdom of God. I know that we don't always see the kind of physical healing we want in this life but those by-products of living in a sinful world are not a part of the world that it is to come. They are not a part of the Kingdom of God.

The Holy Spirit gave a man named John a vision of the world to come. John saw King Jesus descending from heaven on the throne—meaning that the Kingdom of God was arriving in full and in force—and a loud voice cried out from heaven proclaiming a new order was arriving:

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

Revelation 21:3-4

If we are going to live in the Kingdom, we need Jesus' healing. We must allow Jesus access to our lives to bring healing where we need it—be it physical or emotional or spiritual.

And you might hear that statement and say, "Well, of course. Who wouldn't want healing?!"

It's not so easy. We don't simply give up our hurts, our wounds, our pain as we like to think. That's because we define ourselves by our hurts and pains. We find our identity in our pain. And if you

doubt me, consider the stories you tell. If you doubt my try explaining away someone's pain sometime. Listen to heart-rendering story of someone's pain and say, "That doesn't sound so bad." Nothing makes people angrier than denying their pain.

We tend to hold our hurts, pains and wounds more closely than almost anything else—even what we love.

Most of the rot in our cultural identity comes from this very place—an unwillingness to let go of our pain. We have come to a place where our culture no longer encourages us to heal but instead to marinate in our pain and use it as a cudgel to beat up someone else to make sure they feel the full measure of our pain.

Marxism, sexual brokenness and gender identity confusion, critical race theory, the destruction of the family, racism, sexism, identity politics, fundamentalism, unfettered rage, hyper-judgmentalism all come from a place of unresolved pain.

And there are a lot of people willing to exploit that pain. There are a lot of people deeply committed to keeping others in a state of hurt and pain so they can manipulate it for their purposes.

But Jesus is deeply committed to your healing because we will never know the fullness of God unless and until we turn over that which is most central to our identity—which is usually our pain.

When Jesus heals us, something exciting happens.

Second, Kingdom people and Kingdom families seek to serve.

And he came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and the fever left her, and she began to serve them.

Mark 1:31

The first thing Peter's mother-in-law did after Jesus healed her was she got up and began to serve.

Peter's mother-in-law was dying. She was not going to make it outside of miracle. And Jesus provided it. We are dead in our sin. Without a miracle, we are not going to make it. And just like He did with Peter's mother-in-law, Jesus heals us. And it feels so good to set free from the burden of sin.

And a lot of us know how that feels. Many of us know how good it feels to experience Jesus' healing. A lot of us know the power of the resurrection and the new life it brings. And the temptation when we receive it is just to enjoy that new life and live our best life now.

But Jesus heals us so we can serve. We are not saved by our service. We are saved to serve.

Some of you will remember Rosaria Butterfield who spoke at an event we had here last year. Rosaria put it like this:

When we receive God's saving grace can we serve? Can we give until it hurts? Yes, because God tells us we are strong.

Kingdom people and Kingdom families are not consumers of religion looking to feel good through a little dose of spirituality. Kingdom people seek to serve because Jesus has made them strong. Kingdom people do not get up off their death bed to move to couch. After the Great Physician Jesus heals them, Kingdom people get up off their death bed to serve.

Part of the reason the Church in America is struggling is because people pick churches the way we pick health clubs and spas and resorts. We ask, "Who has the best services? Who has the greatest amenities? Where do I get the most for my dollar?"

Instead of looking for a Church to serve us, maybe Jesus wants us to be a part of a Church where we can serve.

And Churches should look to serve the world around us, to make ourselves indispensable to our community. Every Church needs to ask, "If we shut our doors tomorrow, would our city miss us? Would our city mourn us? Would it feel like something was missing from our community?"

Or would our passing even be noticed? Kingdom people and Kingdom families are noticed. The world takes note of what we say and do.

That's why our Vision Statement is "New Life through Jesus for Edmond the world." We want our community, we want our city, we want our world to be different because we are here.

When we get off our sick bed to serve, the Holy Spirit creates new life. And where the Holy Spirit creates new life, things get exciting and messy.

Finally, Kingdom families and Kingdom people seek to share Jesus with the broken, beaten down and the abandoned.

That evening at sundown they brought to him all who were sick or oppressed by demons. And the whole city was gathered together at the door. And he healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons. And he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him.

Mark 1:32-33

Jesus was teaching on the Sabbath and the Jewish Sabbath is over at sundown on Saturday. So, a few hours later, when the Sabbath was over and Jesus had moved into Simon Peter and Andrew's house in Capernaum, something amazing happened.

Their house became the center of town and the broken, beaten down and abandoned from everywhere came there to be healed.

To fully appreciate this story, we need to understand that a first century home was built like a fortress. First century homes, where several nuclear families of the same extended family lived together, were built like a little fort because there was no police or 911 to call. So they had stone walls with several rooms built around a courtyard with one main door kept shut with an iron bar to let people in or go out. **(insert picture)**

And the house that we believe belonged to Simon Peter and Andrew was no exception. It was a first century fortress designed to keep people out.

Jesus threw that big, barred door open and invited the whole town to come in. This included people who were sick, likely lepers because it was as common as it was devastating. People came in their home who were highly contagious and, remember, in that day, a fever could be fatal. But it wasn't just the sick. We are told there were people possessed by demons. Strangers, and not the kind of people that you would necessarily readily welcome into your home poured into Simon and Andrew's home.

And Jesus healed them all.

Simon and Andrew's house was so full that elsewhere in the Bible we are told that four men brought a friend on a mat who couldn't walk. And when they saw they couldn't even get inside the house, they followed a staircase that led up to the roof and went to the center of the home and began digging through the roof, to let their friend down to Jesus who was teaching and healing in the biggest room of the home.

Can you imagine being in Simon Peter and Andrew's house and the place is full of strangers, lepers and demoniacs and people coughing all over everything, getting into your cabinets, laying down on your bed, changing the channel on the TV and you're already incredulous about what this Jesus guy is doing. Suddenly you see dirt falling from the roof and then big chunks come falling down. And then you see the faces of four men looking down and a man on a mat is lowered down into your living room.

Pandemonium! And it all began when Jesus moved into your formerly very tidy, cozy, secure home.

You would have to ask, "What has this Jesus guy gotten us into?"

This is just how Kingdom families and Kingdom people roll.

When we live as people who are part of the family of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords we often find ourselves out of our comfort zone, where things are little chaotic, a little crazy, uncertain, riotous, fluid.

If nothing is getting broke, God is probably not at work.

That's how new life works. Dying is predictable. There are a lot of dying churches and fruitless Christian lives that are nice, orderly and predictable. Sliding into irrelevance is as easy as slipping into a nice, warm bath. But new life cannot be contained. New life is wild and woolly, scary and hairy.

And that's because if we are expanding the boundaries and borders of the Kingdom of God into untamed and wild lands, its going to be get a little bit nuts. When you make way for the broken, beaten down and abandoned, things get crazy.

That's how God's family does things. That's how the family of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords goes about our business.