

## The Gospel of the Kingdom

*“Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.” (Mark 1:14-15)*

**This word for gospel is not good advice, but good news.**

- Jesus did not come to bring *self-help* content in our world.
- Jesus came to *bring* the *Kingdom of God* to our broken, fallen, and oppressed world.
- The Greek word for gospel **euangélion** — and it was the announcement that Rome would make when taking new territories: basically telling all the people of that city, that a new kingdom and a new king is here, and therefore it's time to get with the program— so to speak.
- That's the message that Jesus brought, that God was *finally reclaiming* the earth — and Jesus didn't just **proclaim** that message, Jesus **came proving** that message — by ministering in the power of the Spirit and setting captives free.
  - Years ago, we were in Laguna beach for an outreach. There was a worship and prayer team that was worshipping and interceding in a little church, and then teams would go hit up the bars to preach the gospel. There was a young man named Joel and he blew our minds. He walked into a bar and said, “*JESUS IS KING. HIS KINGDOM IS HERE. AND I AM*

*HERE TO PROVE IT. Who needs prayer?" Then, he starts moving in word of knowledge and calling out people's sicknesses— and a number of people not only got healed and received Jesus that night and got filled with the Spirit in the bars.*

- I considered myself an evangelist at the time. But that was really weird to me. It was cool, but strange. I respected his boldness, but his message was different than the one I was used to sharing.

**Most presentations of the gospel by evangelical Christians, does not mention the Kingdom of God, it almost doesn't have to.**

- I grew up only hearing about how Jesus *saves from hell.*
- I thought of hell as a future destination.
- If you asked me, "What is the Kingdom of God?"
  - I guess if you asked me, "What is the Kingdom of God." I would have probably answered, "*I think it's where believers in Jesus go after they die.*"

Then, when I started listening to pastors on the radio, I came to learn that the Kingdom of God was a future age — a time when one day, Jesus will return to establish His Kingdom. But, I guess I just concluded that that was for ***then***, not ***now***.

So the message I preached was that Jesus came to die on the cross for our sins — so we can go to heaven if we would trust in Him.

- I would go to nursing hospitals three days a week, with my guitar, and just talk to everyone about believing in Jesus, that He died for their sins, so that they can go to heaven.
- I thought, since a lot of them are at the tail end of their life, I really hoped I could somehow get them to heaven.
- I prayed with a lot of people, and sometimes, you would see the light come on people's faces as they cried out to the Lord.

**I had a stack of these little booklets called THE BIG QUESTION, and it was all about “WHERE WILL YOU GO WHEN YOU DIE?”**

- And whoever would give me time of day, I would tell them it that they don't need to go to hell but they can go to heaven — because of what Jesus did for us.

**But I didn't talk much about the Kingdom of God.**

- I didn't really understand the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, even though it was obviously what Jesus and His disciples primarily talked about.
- Jesus proclaimed that the Kingdom of God was here (or now as Dr. Don Williams said, “*the Kingdom of God is in stock now*”).

- ***“But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike” (Acts 8:12)***  
He preached the Kingdom and the King.
- At the end of the book of Acts, we find Paul ***“preaching the kingdom of God and teaching concerning the lord Jesus Christ with all openness, unhindered” (Acts 28:31)***
- Something about Jesus and the apostles, was that they didn’t just proclaim the Kingdom of God — they demonstrated the Kingdom of God.

Jesus sent his disciples out to proclaim the gospel of the Kingdom and demonstrate it:

- *“7As you go, preach this message: ‘The kingdom of heaven is near.’  
8Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give. “ (Matthew 10:7-8)*

Paul was not just talking about the Kingdom of God, but demonstrating the power of the Kingdom of God:

- *“And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that*

*your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. — (1 Corinthians 2:4,5)*

**If the gospel of the Kingdom of God is what Jesus and his disciples preached...**

- **#1: How did we end up having a gospel presentation that doesn't even need to mention the Kingdom of God?**
- **#2: What is exactly is the gospel of the Kingdom of God?**
- **#3: And what are the ramifications for not preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of God?**
- **#4: What will happen when we actually start preaching the gospel of the Kingdom?**

## **Question 1: How did we end up having a gospel presentation that doesn't even need to mention the Kingdom of God?**

### **The evolution of the gospel presentation in the last 200 years.**

- In the late 1800s and early 1900s there was a movement gaining traction and getting churches swept in. This movement became known as the **social gospel**.
- The message and thrust of this movement was about how the primary role of Christians are to solve the social problems or problems in society, such as poverty, crime, war, child labor, unfair working conditions, alcohol, etc.
- They talked about how this was building the Kingdom of God on the earth.
- At the same time, the social gospel movement was moving towards a **low view** of Scripture— they were questioning the authority of Scripture.
  
- So in the early 1900s, there was an uprising against the social gospel movement, and they were called the **American fundamentalists movement**.
- These were Christians, who preached that the primary role of the church is not to solve the social problems, but to lead

individuals into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ resulting in salvation for their soul.

- Also they had a very high view of Scripture.
- And they shied away from emphasizing the Kingdom of God, because they were *reacting* or maybe *over-reacting* to the **social gospel movement**.
  - This reminds me of how the reformers moved away from the belief and emphasis on *miracles* because the Catholic Church had emphasized *miracles* to validate their saints.

**The primary gospel that was developed by the American fundamentalism was what we would call the gospel of salvation.**

- It goes something like: “*Jesus died for our sins, and if we accept Him as our Personal Savior, we will be saved and go to heaven after we die.*”
- That is wonderful news indeed!
  - I am so glad Jesus died for our sins.
  - I’m so glad that Jesus is a Savior we can put our trust in.
  - I’m so glad that we can have the promise of eternal life — not on the basis of our works, but His grace, and us trusting in Him.

**While this is a wonderful and needed message, it is not the same as gospel of the Kingdom.** (It’s more the gospel of a good afterlife...)

- While we call it the gospel of salvation, it doesn't actually present a full view of salvation, but only a sliver of it.
  - A priceless sliver indeed. But a sliver, nevertheless. The whole pie would be the gospel of the Kingdom — which includes that slice and more. The gospel of the Kingdom is a *fuller gospel than the one we may have gotten accustomed to.*

### **Question 2: What is the gospel of the Kingdom of God?**

- **The Kingdom of God goes back to God initially giving mankind *dominion* over the earth (Genesis 1:26).**
  - Adam and Eve were not given a *religion*, but *God's Kingdom*.
  - They were *ambassadors* of the Kingdom of God.
  - They were given Kingdom *responsibility* (to expand His Kingdom) and Kingdom *authority* (the right to dominate on behalf of God).
  - *Authority* is measured by who is backing you. True *authority* has to be given to someone by someone with *authority*.
  - God was *authorizing* Adam as long as Adam was in right relationship with God. Adam used the authority that God gave him to cultivate the earth.
    - It's like this, let's just say you are a woman who had a wealthy husband who was always very generous. Because you were his wife, you were authorized to



use his credit card. As long as you are in right relationship the credit card works. But if you are going to leave him — and shack up with Mr. Slithery Snake — your card may be deactivated.

- **Adam and Eve committed high treason, because they sided with the enemy of God.**
  - (This act is considered treason because there was a great trust given to Adam, and Adam broke the trust.)
  - They chose allegiance to the enemy of God and broke up with God their Father.
  - By that act of obedience to the serpent, Adam was declaring independence from God.
  - Adam was separating Himself from God. He was siding with the accuser of God.
    - He was choosing another kingdom the Kingdom of Darkness. It was a sure demotion because while the Kingdom of God is a Kingdom of sons, now he is part of a Kingdom of Darkness which is a Kingdom of slaves.
- **Think Judas.**
  - Judas also committed the act of treason.
  - He was given power and authority through His devotion to Jesus. Remember, Judas not just saw, but ministered in healing, deliverance, and miracles.

- But Judas took what Jesus gave him, and basically handed it over to the enemy of Jesus.
- Judas was one of the few who knew the secret place where Jesus and his disciples would go to unwind from a busy ministry day.
- And Judas gave that secret information to those who wanted to destroy Jesus — all for thirty pieces of silver.
- Did you know that after meeting with the enemies of Jesus and cooperating with them, later that night Satan entered Judas (John 13:27)?
  - This act of betraying Jesus, led to Judas own death and destruction.
  - He got destroyed by the spirit of accusation — and hung himself.
  - **While he stayed close to Jesus and stayed aligned to him — the devil couldn't touch him.**
  - But when Judas linked up with the enemy of Jesus, Satan entered him.
    - Judas went from having power over Satan, to now being a puppet of Satan.
    - As a result of submitting to God's enemy, Adam **forfeited his legal right to rule and reign on the earth.**

- In a single moment, Adam and Eve and all humanity in their loins — came under the *jurisdiction* of *Satan*.
  - Since then, humanity was made subject to sickness, oppression, fear, perversion, and even death.
  - This explains why evil is so prevalent in our world today.
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- **But in the third chapter of Genesis, we are given some good news — it was prophesied that the seed of the woman would crush the head of the serpent (Genesis 3:15).**
  - Someone would come, born of a woman, who would crush the ancient serpent under His feet.
  - The serpent's tyrannical reign over *humanity* will come to an end, and the Kingdom of God will return!
  - Yes, Satan triumphed over the man by tempting a woman, but God will redeem the woman — and she will give birth to a man — who will disarm and defeat the serpent! This man will snatch the keys to the earth from the devil and give it to his bride — the church.
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- **Then God promised a King would come from the loins of David who would build an everlasting Kingdom (1 Chronicles 17:11-14).**

- **Then Isaiah promised a child who would sit on the throne of David and rule forever (Isaiah 9:6-7).**
  - So for many years, the faithful students of Scripture were waiting for the son of David to come!
- **You will remember that in Daniel 2, King Nebuchadnezzar dreamed of a great idol or statue.**
  - It showed all the empires of the world.
  - And then, all of a sudden, a stone cut “without hands” struck the idol (verse 34, NASB).
  - It smashed the manmade statue, became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.
  - That stone, Daniel told the king, was the kingdom of God. **“The God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will endure forever” (Daniel 2:44).**
    - So basically the students of Scriptures were waiting the fulfillment of these messianic prophecies – and they believed **the Messiah would usher in the Kingdom of God.**
- **John the Baptist comes on the scene, and tells everyone to repent because the Kingdom of heaven is at hand (Matthew 3:2)!**
- **Then Jesus comes and says the Kingdom of God is here!**

- Jesus came not just proclaiming the Kingdom of God, but demonstrating the Kingdom of God.
  - So he came setting the captives free! Healing the sick. Raising the dead. Casting out demons! Changing hearts and minds. Calming storms.
  - And Jesus had his disciples also bringing the same message, the Kingdom of God is here — so repent.
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- **Later on, the early church is bringing forth this same message of the Kingdom of God — not just in proclamation but in demonstration.**
  - The book of Acts is full of the apostles and early church preaching the Kingdom of God and demonstrating the Kingdom of God— and the result is the Kingdom of darkness is being toppled. It was said that the early church has turned the world upside down! (Acts 17:6) They did it by the power of the Holy Spirit!

### **The Gospel of Salvation vs. The Gospel of the Kingdom**

- **The gospel of the Kingdom is very much about *salvation* as well — however, presents a much fuller salvation.**

- Sometimes the way the gospel of salvation is presented makes it sound like Jesus came to *save us* from God.
  - But the gospel of the Kingdom is about how Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil— and we are enlisted!
  - The gospel of the Kingdom is about us being saved from the tyrannical rule of the devil! And now the devil who once took advantage of us through sin, death, and deception — is now dethroned and under our feet.
- **While the gospel of salvation may focus on Jesus as the suffering Savior, but the gospel of the Kingdom presents Jesus as the King of kings!**
- The gospel of salvation asks people to receive Jesus as their Savior, where the gospel of the Kingdom will ask people to confess Jesus as *Lord*.
    - Adding Jesus as a convenient Savior is not the same as making Jesus our unquestionable Lord.
    - ***“If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that god raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.” (Romans 10:9)***
  - **The gospel of salvation usually focused on his death. But the gospel of the Kingdom focuses on His life and ministry.**

- In the wilderness, Satan came after Jesus, and tried to get Jesus to submit to him as he got Adam to. But Jesus overcomes where Adam failed. Jesus lives every moment in *submission* to and faithfulness towards His Father. Even on the cross, Jesus stays devoted to His father!
- Everywhere Jesus goes, He is destroying the works of the devil. Proclaiming the Kingdom of God and demonstrating the Kingdom of God.
- **The gospel of salvation historically focused how Jesus had to die. But the gospel of the Kingdom finds relevance in the resurrection, ascension, and enthronement of Jesus.**
- He was more than just a sacrifice that paid for our ticket to a better afterlife. He is the risen King!
- Those who say to the risen King, “Jesus is Lord”, they get what He’s got: They get the resurrection, they get the Holy Spirit, they get the authority over the kingdom of darkness, and they the sonship!
  - And He’s not just a Savior who bails me out of Hell. He is my Lord and my God. He is my King. What He says, I do. And I live daily in close fellowship with Him, and I too am given the responsibility and authority to proclaim and demonstrate the Kingdom of God.

- **The gospel of salvation doesn't always explain to us why we are here on earth! The focus is very much on the afterlife.**
  - The message I used to preach was all about lets go to heaven when we die, so it kinda makes us wanna die and go to heaven!
  - But the gospel of the Kingdom is about how we are also to bring heaven to earth today – by being obedient to the Holy Spirit.
  - It's not just about getting through the pearly gates. It's about busting through the gates of the enemy and setting the captives free— by the authority we have in Jesus and through the leadership of the Holy Spirit.
    - I had a cousin who had just been introduce to the gospel of salvation, and one day, I was preaching on the Kingdom of God at a church and he was in the audience. He was not devoted to Christ. This was a different message than the one he grew up hearing. That heaven was just a place we go when we die. But after that meeting, he wrote to me and said, *“Today was the day I realized why I am alive — I am here to make earth look more like heaven.”*



- **Question 3: And what are the ramifications for not preaching or understanding the Kingdom of God?**
  
- A lot of times, with the gospel of salvation, there is a response time: And it's maybe: raise your hand if you want to be forgiven of your sins, or come to the front if you want Jesus to be your Savior, or pray this prayer and you will get into heaven.
- But too often, Jesus is just added to people's lives, they treat him like a sticker to stick on. It was so easy to put him on, and it's so easy to pull him off —when it gets inconvenient. So those who hear a weak gospel, lives very weak lives.
- Jesus isn't a ticket. He's a King. He isn't a sticker. He is Lord.
- He is not interested in joining your life. He is after replacing your life with His life.
- And that's what repentance means: it means more than saying "I'm sorry." It means giving up your agenda for His.
  
- **There are a lot of so-called Christians in America and in our region — who heard a very weak gospel.**
- A gospel that presents Jesus as an additive or a nice supplement or a new hobby: "Jesus wants to be your *friend*...Jesus will make life *easier* for you...Jesus will help make your *dreams* come to pass...He will help you with your issues...Give Jesus a try..."

- Is that even biblical? He's not a new drug you use. He's a King. We don't use Him. He uses us.
  
- **That's the wrong message that produces the wrong results.**
  - And people think they have the right to get offended at God.
  - They only serve Him and obey Him when they feel like it.
  - People are addicted to comfort and convenience.
  - They worship Jesus on some Sunday and then worship money and fame and pleasure the rest of the week.
  - They say Jesus is their savior, but they are their own Lord, so they spend their money and time and energy however they want!
  - And they assume they are Christians, because they prayed a prayer or rose their hand and when the preacher said WINK they WINKED and they go to a cool, hip church, full of others who have been poisoned by that same unbiblical, man-centered, gospel.

### **The gospel of the Kingdom demands repentance.**

- The way to the Kingdom of God has always been repentance (Matthew 4:17). Repentance is more than remorse. It's a death to self.
- Repentance is therefore forsaking the life where we were our own Lord, and now having a new Lord.

- Repentance is unsubscribing to the value system of this world, and now submitting to the authority of Jesus Christ.
- Yes, it's a big and bold decision! However, it brings the righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit into our lives.
  - And the authority that Jesus walked in, becomes available to us.
  - The victory Jesus won, becomes ours.
  - We are now qualified to plunder the enemy's camp, and take back all the enemy has taken from us.
- **In biblical times, when a new king conquered the old king, the citizens who were under the tyranny or domain of the previous king, can attain citizenship in the new kingdom under the new king IF AND ONLY IF, he swore allegiance to the new King.**
  - Jesus defeated Satan through his obedience, death and resurrection.
  - And now we can be citizens of an everlasting Kingdom, if and when we receive the new King as our King.
  - There was another time the word gospel was used. To let the citizens know that the old kingdom is defeated — so you can plunder the spoils.

- **Question 4: What will happen if we receive the gospel of the Kingdom?**
  - We will start living the life God originally intended for us to live.
  - Righteousness peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. (Romans 14:17)
  - Our lives will be marked by the power of God.
  
- We will be those who know our authority and walk in it!
- The devil will not take advantage of our ignorance!
- Wherever we go, captives will be set free!
- The church becomes a mighty army — a battleship, not a cruise ship!

**STORIES:**

- MCI
- James
- Text from this morning.