

The Story chapter 24 No Ordinary Man
– Jesus and the Kingdom
CCC – 2/10/2019

Intro: Cuba

Thanks for praying for me while I was away at the large church conference and a mission trip in Cuba. I am encouraged by what I saw there. Our partners, Joel Magdeleno and his team are doing GREAT. This year, they planted 13 churches so they now have 83. And they are still dreaming of 120 by the end of 2020. They send their warm greetings, appreciation and a request to pray for this audacious goal to be met!

One church I got to attend is the church of Pastor Aniel. We gave him a gift from beyond belief to move his church from a ditch where rainwater poured through and ruined the building on a monthly basis to a better, stable neighborhood. I got to preach Sunday night on the Prodigal Son. I took it up to the closing prayer and handed it over to Pastor Aniel who did an incredible invitation. He said “Who has never come home to Jesus who wants to come home today?” four people raised their hands, came forward and put their hands in the middle, as if they were in a basketball huddle. Pastor Aniel did a repeat-after-me trusting in Jesus prayer. (then said on 3 salvation! – JK) He called on four people from his congregation to go in the back with these four and start their discipleship process.

Later I cornered him and said “Way to go! Four conversions in one day!” He said “Yes, and we had three this morning.” Seven... would not want to underestimate...

Friends, this is what the kingdom of God looks like when it is happening.

Citylight KC

Today is the opening service for Citylight Kansas City. We sent two of our best staff – Eric and Terry Carpenter – to open this church. And because of your Generous giving to beyond belief, God has provided for them a good sum of money to start this great work. Looking forward to seeing the results on Facebook later today and celebrating.

And this is what the kingdom of God looks like.

A couple of weeks ago, you saw hundreds of students taking over the church for the morning – doing everything from greeting to music to preaching. It gives us inspiration for today and hope for our future.

And this is what the kingdom of God looks like.

Question: What was the gospel Jesus preached?

- Unfortunately, most people would probably get the answer to this question wrong
- Most evangelical Christians would get this answer wrong
- Most CCC people would get the answer to this question wrong

Most would say that the gospel says – Jesus died on the cross for your sins so that if you trust him, you go to heaven. Many of you are saying “yup, that’s about what I’d say!”

They would never use this phrase, but their view is that the gospel is, in the words of John Ortberg, the 'minimum entry requirements to get into heaven after you die.' It is a short summary of key points you need to acknowledge. If you do, you get the heaven contract done.

New Testament scholar N.T. Wright points out that many of the creeds that have been traditionally spoken in churches reinforce this idea. They go directly from the incarnation of Jesus to his death. The Nicene Creed, Athanasian Creed, and Apostles Creed all do the same thing. This can leave the impression that for the rest of Jesus' life, he was just treading water. That Jesus only function in coming was to die. That the relevance of Matthew is only in Chapters 1, 27 and 28. Chapters 2-26 are irrelevant.

I think we best get our ideas about the gospel from Jesus himself. Because he was the clearest communicator EVER!

Matthew 4:23 MEA

Jesus went throughout Galilee teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the gospel of the **kingdom of God**, and healing every disease and sickness.

Mark 9:1

And he said to them, "Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see that the **kingdom of God** has come with power."

Mark 10:14

When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the **kingdom of God** belongs to such as these.

Luke 9:2

² and he sent them out to proclaim the **kingdom of God** and to heal the sick.

Acts 1 - Acts 1:3

After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the **kingdom of God**

52 times in the gospels, the **Kingdom of God** is mentioned, summarized, referenced, and explained. This is all over Jesus teaching and most Christians just miss it!

If you were going to summarize the main message, the gospel Jesus taught, the phrase you would use is the

Now, of COURSE, it is the case that Jesus died on the cross to bring about forgiveness for humanity. OF COURSE it is the case that Jesus came in order to bring about the death of death. OF COURSE it is the case that you can have eternal life in his name.

But if you read the gospel Jesus taught, you will read the gospel of the kingdom. And Jesus taught a ton about the kingdom. The Sermon on the Mount, which you read in the story this week, is all about life in the upside down kingdom, where the poor get blessed and you are supposed to love your enemies.

Jesus told parables... which you also read in the story and many of them begin with the phrase "The Kingdom of God is like..."

- A net that caught many fish
- A pearl of great price
- A treasure in a field
- A man who went out to sow seeds
- A wedding banquet
- A mustard seed

The good news Jesus taught was all about a coming and present kingdom that was different than anything. Now for Americans, this is weird and surprising. Kingdoms are so castles and roundtables and Game of Thrones. But for Jewish people and those who have been reading the story, this is not surprising language.

They had been waiting for a king and a kingdom. God prophesied through David that one of his descendants would sit on his throne. They waited 1000 years for him. Isaiah and Ezekiel prophesied a coming king – born of a virgin, called God with us. Micah gave the location of his birth and the fact that a forerunner would come before him. The Jews were deeply oppressed by the Romans and wanted a new king. So as they waited, this would be "Good News". And Jesus showed up saying "Good News! I am that king!"

Euangelion - it is our big word of the week.

You may recognize that this is the the word from which we get evangelism or evangelist - a bringer of good news. Interestingly, it is not unique to Christianity. The word Euangelion was first used of the birth of a new Caesar in 7 BC. In a formal document, you can see that the term good news was reserved for his birth, rise to power and recovery to good health. Further he was referred to as their savior and Lord. Seriously... when the early Christians said "Believe the good news, JESUS is savior and lord, it was a totally "IN YO FACE" to Caesar! It was VERY Spiritual and VERY political! This is the gospel.

Can you imagine the threat to Herod, to Rome, to the religious institutions when Jesus delivers this bomb. There is a new kingdom and I am king. It is bigger and better than anything you can imagine. This is the main message Jesus taught. It was his gospel. And way to often, we followers of Jesus miss it.

But I just can't escape the text. His Gospel was the gospel of the kingdom. And all of the healing and exorcisms and miracles were evidence that this kingdom is very different than the status quo. So lets define what the kingdom of God is.

Let me start basic. Everybody has a kingdom. Everybody. Your kingdom is the area in which your will is done. Where what you say goes.

Little kids have a kingdom - 2 year old's favorite words - NO, MINE - testing their kingdom

When I was a kid, we used to take family vacations to Florida. As the middle of three boys, I got one third of the back seat of the Ford LTD. For the time, it was MY KINGDOM. And my brothers and I would test the invasion of each other's kingdom. Dont cross my line. Don't touch me. Don't almost touch me! But whose kingdom does Dad think the car is? Dont make me come back there! He says. Sure... We

say... at 65 miles an hour come on back. So Dad sends Mr. Hand back there. And the kids retreat to the corners of their kingdom to escape. Dad knows there is a way to get them within range. A tap on the brakes puts them right into play.... YOUR KINGDOM COME!

We are constantly pushing on this. Constantly pressing. Learning the limits of our kingdom. Then people partner together to expand their kingdoms. Marriages and families are a part of this. Companies, clans, economic systems, political systems, businesses, nations are all sprawling examples of kingdoms in this world. And if you add up all of these systems all over the planet, you get kingdom of earth.

The kingdom of God is not that much different... If your kingdom is the range of your effective will. Where what you say goes... then God's kingdom is the range of God's effective will.

Kingdom Definition: The range of God's effective will

Wherever what God says goes is his kingdom. It is not bound by place or time, but by people who do his will. Best place to see the definition of the kingdom is straight out of the Lord's Prayer. Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Where God's will is done is the place where God's kingdom is.

You remember when Jesus taught us about this in the Lord's prayer? He said pray "Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

So many Christians live with the mistaken notion that when you get saved, you just hang on in a sin-scarred world until you get beamed up to heaven post-death. This is not the gospel that Jesus taught.

He did not teach us to pray "Keep me safe until I go to your kingdom." He said pray "YOUR KINGDOM COME". In other words, "God, make it down here like it is up there." God, change THIS world to look more like THAT world. This is what disciples do...

I want you to imagine a place where God truly rules... and his will is carried out in every corner. Everybody is loved. A place where the experience of the people is one of inclusion and peace.

- Imagine a culture where people get on magazine covers, not for being rich or beautiful... but because they are servants or exemplify humility.
- Imagine a place where movies are made that inspire us to find the lonely, the outsider and invite her in with the love of a family.
- Awards are given out not for great acting or sports accomplishments, but for kindness and integrity.
- Imagine a society where the only gossip that happens is a result of your secret virtues. Where people talk about how someone is secretly better than anybody else knows. 'Don't look now, but I think your husband is being faithful to you.'
- Imagine a system with no barriers for race or age or culture or gender. Where respect is given for character, sacrifice, and servanthood.

The kingdom of heaven, in its perfect form, begins with the perfect love of the Trinity for one another. It spills over to the angels, and when all people arrive, they get the benefit. It is a place where there is no

more crying, or death, or pain, or disease. No more anxiety, or depression. No more abuse. No surgery or medication. No divorce or broken relationships.

Lets contrast that to the kingdom of earth

- In Cuba two weeks ago, a tornado hit Havana. We got to see the destructive path of wrenched and twisted metal. The Cubans told us that there were aid organizations trying to help and blocked by the Socialist government because they wanted to be the heroes. A Baptist pastor helped bring food to the poor anyway and was imprisoned.
 - The president, who visited in his limo was boo-ed back into it and retreated – a first in Cuba. The Baptist relief group is being thanked ... that's the kingdom of God in action
- In China, the government is cracking down on followers of Jesus – shutting down churches and persecuting Christians.
 - Yet, there are more Christians in China than in all of Europe today... the kingdom of God is coming
- In Mali, it is still true that one in every 40 women die in childbearing
 - But when we started the hospital for women there in 2006, it was one in ten. Three fourths of those deaths have been cut out as doctors are trained, nurses are raised up and over 20,000 babies have been safely born! The kingdom of God is coming...
- In North Omaha, it used to be that 2-3 murders happened monthly.
 - But because of God's grace, great policing, neighborhood cleanups, light houses, churches being planted, kids being tutored and so much more, we went this year with 120 days an zero murders in the city. The kingdom of God is coming!

And now, he has invited you to be in the kingdom and to be an outpost for the kingdom. You are to be a light in the darkness. YOU are to be the kingdom in your home, in your neighborhood, in your school, in your life. YOU have chosen to let God have his way with you. And he is transforming you into a kingdom person who interacts with this world a LOT like Jesus does. And you represent him, his values, his healing, his peace everywhere you go.

- Every time you surround a lonely person with love you are bringing the kingdom
- Every time you choose not to spend money selfishly, but give it to the poor, or broken, or needy...you are bringing the kingdom
- Every time you get wrapped up with a poor person, or tutor a kid, or clean up a neighborhood, you are bringing the kingdom
- Every time you counsel a troubled marriage, hug a kid in kids connect, or encourage someone in the middle of the battle, you are bringing the kingdom
- Every time you act with integrity in the marketplace or have a hard conversation well, you are bringing the kingdom
- And do you know what you are doing when you lead a journey group? You are not just having a meeting... you are building a group of kingdom conspirators.

Luke 17:20-21

²⁰ Being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, he answered them, “The kingdom of God is not coming in ways that can be observed, ²¹ nor will they say, ‘Look, here it is!’ or ‘There!’ for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you.

In other words, the kingdom of God is not found with physical borders. It is not a geographical entity or a building or an organization. It happens in people. Wherever people who bow the knee are, there the kingdom is. The kingdom happens in the midst of community as people elevate their personal spiritual life and bow to the leadership of their king together.

Now I know that there are 1000s here at CCC in community who love their group, have each others back, study the Bible and are becoming closer to Jesus. It is great. But I also know that there are 1000s who are not connected. I want to talk to Men for a minute here.

- 1) And he put kingdom conspirators into kingdom platoons for kingdom impact. He never wanted us to do this alone, but with other disciple-warriors who would fight the kingdom battle side by side. This is why we designed a men’s mid size group at CCC called Men of God. We have over 100 guys ready to go – beginning Friday morning around tables. If you are a guy and you need a better or broader network of guy friends, you need this group. If you are a guy and you want to become a serious Man of God, a student of the Bible, a lover of your wife, and a kingdom agent in the workplace then this is for you. If you need to jump start your faith, this is for you. Men, reach forward and grab the handout in the seat in front of you. Fridays at 6am when you have no other competition. An hour and fifteen minutes that is well invested! No need to sign up, just show up and sit at a table and watch God begin a fresh work in you.

Jesus agenda is to do this all in community!

We are just following Jesus’ model for ministry. Do you see Jesus life here? He is making disciples and proclaiming the kingdom has come. Making disciples for kingdom impact. It is what he did and what he calls us to do.

And when this happens, friends, make no mistake... when this happens it changes everything.

Kids get raised with an entirely different mindset, marriages are triumphant, broken people are put together, the lonely find community, the lost get found, songs of joy burst out of people’s hearts, babies are born safely, leaders are trained, congregations begin and LOVE is poured out world wide!

We are the mission of God. This is why our mission statement is “Making disciples of Jesus for kingdom impact.” And we are unashamedly making disciples. Disciples who seek FIRST the kingdom. Pray the kingdom and live the kingdom. If you are new to CCC, come on and join us if this is what you want.

If you want to be a BORED disciple, or a LAME disciple, or a TAME disciple... go to another church, because here, we are making radical, faith filled, surrendered, beyond belief disciples. And if you are “IN”, say “I’M IN” and stand for a closing prayer

And with this message in mind, I’d like us to close by saying the “Lord’s Prayer” together. And as we pray, I dream that this prayer will be new to you. Notice that it begins and ends with the kingdom. Notice that the characteristics of a disciple are woven into the requests. And everytime you pray this, I

want you to be asking God for each of these things with a passion, and not just repeating something that you grew up knowing.

Let's pray it together, with a sense of anticipation and triumph. And if you don't know it, I'll have it up here on the screen. If you like you can just pray with your eyes open looking forward and reading it with me. Let's pray with vigor and anticipation!

OUR FATHER

Who art in heaven

Hallowed by your name

Your Kingdom Come

Your will be done

On Earth as it is in Heaven

Give us this day our Daily Bread

And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil

For yours is the KINGDOM!

And the POWER

And the GLORY forever!

Amen!