



**Mark 1:14-15**  
**Jesus Has Big News**

**Summary:** What is the Kingdom of God and how do we get in?

We're here at the beginning of Mark's gospel, his biography of Jesus – we've learned about John the Baptist and his ministry calling people to confess their sin, repent, and be baptized. We've learned about Jesus' time in the wilderness being tempted by Satan. The backstory has been developed. Now Mark tells us what all this is actually about. It's the first time we hear Jesus speak, and He's got a big announcement to make.

What do you think it might be? What do you think might be the first thing that Jesus would say as His public ministry begins? How would He introduce Himself? How would explain what He was doing? Well, read with me and notice the answer:

**Mark 1:14** Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, 15 and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel."

By now you're probably getting used to Mark's style – his is the shortest of the gospels, but he packs a lot into little chunks. We'll spend our time this morning unpacking Jesus' announcement – what He said, what it means, and asking "What in the world is the Kingdom of God?" why would it be the kind of thing that Jesus speaks about first? What is the Kingdom of God? I've got ten points to share with you.

**1. The Kingdom of God is actually a common concept in Scripture**, also known as the Kingdom of Heaven, it's mentioned over 85 times in the New Testament and features prominently in some important places like the Lord's Prayer – say it with me:

Our Father in heaven,  
Hallowed be 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 debts,  
As we forgive our debtors.  
And do not lead us into temptation,  
But deliver us from the evil one.  
For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen (Matt 6:9-13)

You can find the Lord's Prayer in Matthew chapter 6 which is part of Jesus' famous Sermon on the Mount which also includes the Beatitudes which make reference to the kingdom of

Heaven twice – blessed are the poor in spirit and those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, [For theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven](#).

Jesus mentions the Kingdom of God in many of the parables often using analogies to explain “[The Kingdom of God is like...](#) a mustard seed, or leaven in a loaf of bread, it's like seed being scattered, it's harder for a rich man to enter than for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, but those who approach with faith like a child may enter.

At the Last Supper Jesus tells His disciples He will not drink wine with them again until He drinks it new [in His Father's Kingdom](#).

Over and over Jesus makes reference to the Kingdom of God. So, where is it? What is it?

Well, 2. **the Kingdom of God is not a territory**, it has no geographic borders. One thing history has clearly taught us is that religious states may sound like a good concept to some people – who wouldn't want to live in a place filled with people who believe exactly the same things as you do? - but it all tends to fall apart in actual practice. Look at the nation of Israel – they were a people chosen by God, living in the Promised Land, with David, a divinely appointed King. But did it result in a nation of holy people, completely devoted to pursuing and honoring God? Of course not.

Think of times and places when Christianity was intertwined with national politics. In every one of those nations or empires Christianity quickly became little more than a cultural common denominator. It was rarely, if ever, broadly and enthusiastically, genuinely, accepted by the nation. Even in places with a legacy of revival or awakening the commitment rarely survives the transition from one generation to the next because, again, you cannot force people to comply. There is no way to ensure that every person born into a “Christian” nation, or a Christian home for that matter, will authentically embrace the faith.

Instead, [the Kingdom of God](#) is the rule and reign of God received by individuals, a subversive allegiance to the Lord that passes through families and borders and transcends every other identity so you can find Roman centurions, Han Chinese, Dalit Indians, and mixed-ancestry Americans - who are also citizens of the Kingdom of God.

Christianity is a globally unifying, historically enduring, demographic transcending reality unlike any other community in history. Whatever your ethnic heritage and whatever pride or lament you may have in it, your identity in the Kingdom of God is richer, more diverse, more significant than anything else about you.

**3. The Kingdom of God is the rule and reign of God.** Not all kings, presidents, prime ministers, or chairmen are good people. Not all of them are entirely devoted to the good of their subjects. You know the saying, ‘power corrupts, absolute power corrupts absolutely.’

Those of you in leadership positions must keep vigilant watch over your soul because as time goes by it's easy to start giving yourself excuses or reasons for things you said you

were never do, or becoming like the kind of leadership you criticized in your younger years. Meanwhile, our Holy King is pure, kind, generous, good, compassionate and concerned for His people. He is the kind of leader we should all model our leadership after.

Our King takes care of us. He provides for us. He watches over us. We are like sheep and He is our good shepherd. Contrast that with the way most government operates today. My son and I were just having the conversation earlier this week about the fact that government cannot give anything to one person or group that it does not take from some other person or group. The government doesn't have its own wealth or resources. It takes and reallocates and it's never satisfied. It never stops.

But this is nothing new. You remember that originally the nation of Israel was being led by the Lord through Moses, then Joshua, and then a series of judges. But soon they said, we want a king. We want to be like everyone else around us. They said, in the words of songwriter Andrew Peterson, "we want a king, on a throne, full of power, with a sword in his fist."

And so God told the prophet Samuel, I'm going to give them what they want, but they need to know what it will be like. You can read about it in

**1 Sam 8:7** And the LORD said to Samuel, "Heed the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them. 8 According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt, even to this day—with which they have forsaken Me and served other gods—so they are doing to you also. 9 Now therefore, heed their voice. However, you shall solemnly forewarn them, and show them the behavior of the king who will reign over them."

10 So Samuel told all the words of the LORD to the people who asked him for a king. 11 And he said, "This will be the behavior of the king who will reign over you: He will take your sons and appoint *them* for his own chariots and *to be* his horsemen, and *some* will run before his chariots. 12 He will appoint captains over his thousands and captains over his fifties, *will set some* to plow his ground and reap his harvest, and *some* to make his weapons of war and equipment for his chariots. 13 He will take your daughters *to be* perfumers, cooks, and bakers. 14 And he will take the best of your fields, your vineyards, and your olive groves, and give *them* to his servants. 15 He will take a tenth of your grain and your vintage, and give it to his officers and servants. 16 And he will take your male servants, your female servants, your finest young men, and your donkeys, and put *them* to his work. 17 He will take a tenth of your sheep. And you will be his servants. 18 And you will cry out in that day because of your king whom you have chosen for yourselves, and the LORD will not hear you in that day."

19 Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, “No, but we will have a king over us, 20 that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles.”

Contrast a king, president, congress, parliament, party, whatever kind of government you wish, contrast that with the Kingdom of God where the Lord reaches out to you, watches over you, sacrifices for you, heals you, forgives you, counsels you, and gives you spiritual gifts promising that you will bear fruit as you abide in Him.

There is great nobility in giving yourself to a life of service, as many of you in this room have done in various capacities. But we serve a nation that needs more from us than it can give to us.

Meanwhile, we're offered citizenship in a Kingdom that also requests our service, but offers to give us more than we contribute, because our King covers His own expenses. Consider that. Consider the fact that God funds His own Kingdom. He asks nothing of you that He does not first give to you.

In fact, 4. In the Kingdom of God your **Needs are met**. From the Garden of Eden, to the Promised Land which flowed with milk and honey, to the description of Heaven in Revelation 20 and 21 we see God that God provides abundantly for His people. When the Kingdom is fully realized there will be no tears, no hunger, no pain, no need. Meanwhile, Jesus teaches us to pray, asking God for whatever we need because our Father knows how to give good gifts to those who ask.

But it's not just your material needs, 5. in the Kingdom of God **Justice and Peace triumph**. Scripture says there is a day coming when people will beat their swords into plows, tools of war and conflict will become tools of cultivation and farming. Justice will be served, every wrong made right. In the Kingdom of God, everything sad becomes untrue and undone. This is beginning now as we learn to love one another as God has loved us and as we work for peace, truth, justice, and righteousness on earth, but one day it will be completely established.

If all of this sounds good to you, you need to know 6. that the Kingdom of God is **physically real**. The Kingdom of God is not a disembodied, spiritual realm, it's not us with angel wings and harps on clouds. God made everything in our physical world and will remake it. We live with physical bodies in the Kingdom of God – now and in the future. The kingdom is meant to have an effect, now and forever, on real, physical things and people. This is not all spiritual mumbo-jumbo.

I try to make this point whenever I can, because I find it to be essential when we live in a culture surrounded by stories from Hollywood to Bollywood and everywhere in between. The Christian faith is not a myth, not a legend, not a missing installment of the Marvel Cinematic Universe. It's not a prequel or sequel to Star Wars. Jesus never slipped past the muggles on His way to platform 9 ¾ to catch the Hogwarts Express.

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The events of the Christian faith are firmly anchored in time and space. Notice, Mark says these events happened [after John the Baptist was put in prison](#). We'll come back to that story in chapter six, but for now you just need to know that John had been arrested for doing exactly what God called him to do. Preaching a message of repentance, confession, and turning to God. Since Jesus was preaching a very similar message, it made sense to avoid unnecessary conflict down south in Jerusalem, so He headed up north to [Galilee](#) instead. It's a region larger than Rhode Island, a little smaller than Delaware, but with a population around 3 million which makes it larger than fifteen of the United States. Again, these were real events, involving real people.

And they happened at a specific time. Notice that Mark quotes Jesus saying, "[The time is fulfilled](#)." God promised this would happen and now it was. That's important for you to know, because sometimes we need to be reminded: God owns the clock. Maybe you need that reminder this morning – God owns the clock. He's not in a rush, never in a hurry, and just because something hasn't happened yet doesn't mean He's lost track, overlooked you, or forgotten. He owns the clock. He has the power to ensure that things happen when they are supposed to happen and He has the supreme knowledge to know exactly when that time should be. You can trust Him.

**7. The kingdom of God requires action.** As citizens of the Kingdom, we were not just saved *from* something, we're saved *for* something. God had work for Adam and Even to do in the Garden of Eden. He had work for the people of Israel to do in the Promised Land. There is work to do in the eternal age and there is work to do in and for [the Kingdom of God](#) here and now. Today. And it's more than just what you do at church. It's also what you do at work. At home. At school. Wherever you go, whatever you do, are you reflecting the Kingdom of God, or of those who rebel against it?

You see, the call to Christ is more than just a call to moral renewal, it's the discovery of your purpose – what are you here for? How do you fit? What's your role to play in the Kingdom? God offers you direction for life, strength for life, and spiritual gifts right now, but then carrying on forever. Because

**8. All of this is certain** – there is no need to hope these things will happen. Jesus announced, it *is happening*. The Kingdom of God *is* established. He *is* preparing for the new administration. The past has an effect on what is happening today and will have even great effect on what is coming. These are settled facts. On top of that,

**9. It's permanent.** This is not a temporary arrangement, it's forever. Madeleine and I have moved a lot, like many of you. But we've been in our current home for 12 years now and it's a different feeling when you sign a 30-year mortgage and you know – we're not going anywhere. You look at things differently, make decisions differently. Well, the Kingdom of God is a permanent arrangement, it's not going anywhere, it's only growing more expansive.

But, it is important to know 10. **the Kingdom is already and not yet.** On the one hand, Mark tells us Jesus **was preaching the Kingdom of God is at hand** and yet Jesus also teaches us to pray, **Your Kingdom come.** How can both be true? All analogies break down at some point, but a handy way to think about the Kingdom of God is to think of a politician who has won their election in November, but the inauguration isn't until January.

They *have* won, they *will* take office, but it's not happening *yet*. The stock market might be reacting to the news. Some people are reviewing their resumes, knowing they'll be out of a job with the new administration while others are hoping to get appointed. Policies are being drafted, all kind of work is occurring – it's a done deal, *but it's not completed yet*. The newly elected official has not been sworn in, they're not actually in the seat.

And, in the meantime, the outgoing administration still has some power, they're doing all kinds of things to try to accomplish their agenda, but they know time is running out.

That's kind of like **the Kingdom of God.** Jesus was announcing: this is happening, it's a done deal, and you can be part of it. There's a spot for you in the new administration. So repent, turn around, and come in – remember Jesus came preaching the message of gospel.

Yes, He performed miracles, and Mark will tell us about some of them, but according to Jesus, the reason for the miracles was to draw attention to and validate what He said. Remember, the word gospel means good news. Jesus came to make an announcement, a very important announcement, about what God was doing. He didn't come to raise an army. He didn't come to launch a rebellion. He didn't come for a showdown with Caesar or anyone else. He came **preaching the good news of the kingdom of God.**

I'm focusing our attention on this methodology because it shows God wants to draw people in, not take people by force. God is after our hearts and our minds, and you can't win or change hearts and minds with force – whether we're talking about toddlers or teenagers or terrorists, you cannot change hearts and minds by force.

You can punish them, you can 'win' in the short-term, but you can't change their affections, their loyalties, their heart's desire. You have to show them your way is better and they have to believe it and want it for themselves. So, Jesus is telling people: God is on the move, the Kingdom is at hand – wherever you're going, change direction and come here instead – repent and believe. God is calling out to you – He is inviting you into His kingdom.

This is critical to know if you're going to get Christianity right. You need to understand that the message of Jesus is not good advice or instruction. The message of Jesus is not, primarily, about what you need to do. It's about what has happened to you, it's about what God has done.

Jesus wasn't saying, God is now accepting applications and here's everything you need to do to get ready, to put together a strong package. No. He's saying, you've already been offered a slot, you're invited, now here's what to do next. Friends, those are two radically



different messages and it's part of what makes all of this good news – God has done something and you get to benefit from it - [the Kingdom of God is at hand](#).

So, how do we enter this Kingdom? [Repent and believe](#).

We've already said much about the call to confess our sins and [repent](#). It was the call of John the Baptist, and now we see Jesus repeating the message. It's the beginning of the gospel. God is doing something great, but you can't receive it if you're moving in another direction. You can't live for yourself, with God. Tim Keller says to repent is "to turn away from the things Jesus hates to the things that Jesus loves."

I like that because it highlights the fact that repentance is not a feeling, though your feelings may help. Repent is a verb, an action word – it's a change of heart and mind made evident by a change of direction, habit, and commitments. It's not something we do before coming to God, it is the process of turning toward Him. It's not always easy, but it's possible – God wouldn't be telling you to do it if it wasn't. You can change, you can live victoriously, find freedom from sin and enjoy a transformed life as a citizen of the Kingdom.

But, you must [believe](#). You must exercise the faith that God is giving you. You must believe that God is the kind of God Jesus says He is, that He is working for our good and paying every price – He is funding every aspect of the kingdom. You must believe the gospel – that God has done something for you. He's not giving you advice on how to win, or sharing some tactics with you so you can get the job done, He's calling you to [believe](#) in what He has done, for you. This is the [gospel](#), the good news, and it is distinctly Christian – God has done something for you because He loves you and cares about you! You are not alone.

So, here's what I hope you'll be thinking about today.

1. **The kingdom of God has come.** It is here, it will grow and expand over time, but it is real, right now. The kingdom has been established. It is not in question, it is certain. What difference does it make in your life and the way you see the world?
2. **The kingdom was established without you.** You didn't have to work for it, or vote for it. You don't have to maintain it or protect it. God has all that covered. But you're invited in, to participate, to benefit, to contribute. So, what will that look like, today? What is your role in the Kingdom God has established?
3. **Where do I need to repent and believe?** Where am I tempted to drift toward another kingdom, another way of life? Where am I tempted to try and replace God as the King of my life and the King of this world? In what ways do I actively or passively support the rebellion against Him? Whether you need to repent and believe for the first time and become a citizen of the Kingdom, or whether you're already adopted in but prone to drift like the rest of us the process is the same – confess your sin, your shortcomings, your wanderings to God and He will receive you.

Hear the message of Jesus: “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.”

Let’s pray.





## Sermon Application and Discussion Questions

### Mark 1:14-15 Jesus Has Big News

**Summary:** What is the Kingdom of God and how do we get in?

- What would you say are some moments when you experienced big news that affected your life?
- Mark is telling us the story of Jesus – who He was, what He did, and why it was important. If you were to tell the story of Jesus, what would you open with? Why?
  - o Are you surprised that Mark opens with an announcement of the kingdom and a call to repent and believe? Why, or why not?
- What are some things that help you know the Kingdom of God is here and now, i.e. how does the Kingdom affect your life today?
- What are some things that make you feel like the Kingdom isn't real enough, things that make you ask: God, why do You allow this?
- How does the tension between the arrest of John the Baptist and the announcement of the Kingdom by Jesus illustrate the already, but not yet aspect of the Kingdom?
  - o For more information on what happened to John, skip ahead and review Mark 6:14-29.
- Why might it be a good idea if the Kingdom of God was an actual territory, a place you could go and live today? Why would it be a bad idea, or where and how would the concept fall apart?
  - o What are the strengths of a distributed, global, kingdom populated by individuals instead of families, tribes, clans, or nations?
- Make a list of ways that the present reality of the Kingdom of God can affect your daily life and approach to your work/studies. How can you be a citizen of the Kingdom contributing to it's goals and values today?
- What other kings and kingdoms compete for our allegiance today?
  - o What do they give you? What do they ask of you? What do they take from you?