

Jesus and the Kingdom of God

The Gospels: part 3
(The Story: part 24)
March 26, 2017

DAY 1: The kingdom of God

Mark 1:15 "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!"

1. The “kingdom of God” was the theme of Jesus’ teaching and ministry. In three of the Gospels—Matthew, Mark and Luke—the kingdom takes center stage, being mentioned over 60 times.
2. What defines the kingdom of God? God’s rule in the hearts of His people.
3. God’s kingdom is not a nation with physical borders and capitals. His kingdom crosses every physical nation and every ethnicity.
4. For much of Israel’s history, God was king of His people. The King created the universe, commanded a flood, led the Israelites to freedom, and awed foreign kings like Nebuchadnezzar.
5. The Old Testament prophets predicted a coming kingdom led by a new kind of king—the Messiah.

Zechariah 9:9 Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.
6. This was fulfilled on Palm Sunday in the life of Jesus Christ.
7. Jesus Christ is that new, lowly king, a Nazarene carpenter.

DAY 2: God's kingdom: fruit

1. Jesus taught about the kingdom. He did this with many illustrations that both defined His kingdom and illustrated how it worked.

Matthew 13:3 ... A farmer went out to sow his seed.

*⁴As he was scattering the seed, some fell along **the path**, and the birds came and ate it up.*

*⁵Some fell on **rocky places**, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. ⁶But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root.*

*⁷Other seed fell among **thorns**, which grew up and choked the plants.*

*⁸Still other seed fell on **good soil**, where it produced a crop--a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.*

*Matthew 13:18 "Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: ¹⁹When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown along **the path**.*

*²⁰The one who received the seed that fell on **rocky places** is the man who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. ²¹But since he has no root, he lasts only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he quickly falls away.*

*²²The one who received the seed that fell among the **thorns** is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful.*

*²³But the one who received the seed that fell on **good soil** is the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown."*

2. People respond in one of four ways when they hear God's word (the bible).

a. **Hard path**: God's seed sat atop the hard path. Before it could send down roots, birds (Satan) snatched it off the path. No fruit would come.

b. **Rocky soil**: The person at first receives the good news with joy. But it does not root itself in the soil. It's along for the ride. When trouble or persecution come, the person walks out the door.

c. **Thorns**: He hears the word. But other priorities take over. The worries and cares of this life, as well as the deceitfulness of wealth chokes out the word. It will not be fruitful.

d. **Good soil**: He hears God's word, and puts it into action. Over time it germinates, sprout, blooms and flowers. Fruitfulness!

3. God's people, as "kingdom citizens," are armed, not with swords, but with seeds!

4. Our role in life is to sow God's word (seed) into the lives of others, in the hopes that they will respond to God in repentance, faith, and obedience.

DAY 3: God's kingdom: our treasure

1. Three principles of the kingdom of God are:

a. The kingdom of God is a great treasure.

Matthew 13:44 "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.

⁴⁵ "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. ⁴⁶ When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.

b. The kingdom of God operates with energies we do not understand or control.

Mark 4:26 He also said, "This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. ²⁷ Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. ²⁸ All by itself the soil produces grain--first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. ²⁹ As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come."

c. The kingdom of God offers us an antidote to worry!

Matthew 6:25 "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes?

²⁶ Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?

²⁷ Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?

²⁸ "And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. ²⁹ Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these.

³⁰ If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?

³¹ So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' ³² For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.

2. Notice the paradox in v. 32. While those without God “run after all these things,” while God already knows what people need!

*³³ But **seek first** his **kingdom** and his **righteousness**, and all these things will be given to you as well. ³⁴ Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.*

3. Matthew 6:33 is a significant teaching for every Christian. It is not enough to seek God as a second priority. To do so is to miss out on God's greatest blessing.

DAY 4: God's kingdom: power

1. Jesus' miracles demonstrate his royal authority and power. Mark 4:35 – 5:11.

Mark 4:35 That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side." ³⁶ Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him.

³⁷ A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped.

³⁸ Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"

³⁹ He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.

⁴⁰ He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?"

⁴¹ They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

2. Go back and underline the words that describe the severity of the storm.

3. What was Jesus' "attitude" toward the storm in v. 38?

4. What were the disciples' attitudes toward the storm in v. 38?

5. How does Jesus respond to the storm?

6. How does Jesus respond to the disciples?

7. What was the response of the disciples to Jesus stilling the storm?

8. After watching Him rebuke the storm and see it calmed, how do you think their understanding changed of who Jesus was?

9. How does this event change your view of who Jesus is?

DAY 5: God's kingdom: Father

1. This prayer is commonly referred to as, "the Lord's prayer."

Matthew 6:9 Pray then like this: Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

¹⁰ *Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.*

¹¹ *Give us this day our daily bread;*

¹² *And forgive us our debts, As we also have forgiven our debtors;*

¹³ *And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from evil.*

2. Jesus introduces us to God who is King and who is "our Father." The word for "father" is "Abba," which means "daddy," or "papa."

3. Is this one of the images in how you see and understand who God is?

4. Immediately following calling God "daddy," Jesus tells us to pray, "Hallowed by thy name." This is to see God as holy, and worthy of our highest respect and honor. It is wise to live in the fear of God, to reverence Him by obeying and honoring Him.

5. In the same sentence, Jesus combines two qualities of God that, in one sense, almost seem contradictory. Of course, there is not a contradiction.

6. For what things does Jesus tell us to pray?

7. What kinds of things are not mentioned?

8. Jesus is giving us the priority items that require prayer.

9. Which of these items is most in your prayers?

10. Which items should you be including in your prayers, more often?