

10.17.20

Matthew 4:12-25

Jesus Introduces Something New: The Kingdom of Heaven on Earth

We find ourselves today, in our study of the Gospel of Matthew, looking at the very beginning of Jesus' ministry.

After being baptized by John the Baptist and being filled with the Holy Spirit, Jesus is almost prepared to begin the ministry He came to earth to do. He is almost ready but as we said last week, the Holy Spirit leads Him out into the desert to be tempted by Satan. This too, I think, is preparation for the ministry that lies out in front of Him.

In order for Him to identify and be the leader of all humanity, Jesus had to experience and overcome every temptation that is common to all of mankind. You can refer back to last week's sermon to hear more about the temptation of Jesus.

At the end of His temptation we read this.

Matthew 4:11, "Then the devil left Him (Jesus); and behold, angels came and began to minister to Him."

Jesus did battle with Satan, overcame all the temptations Satan threw at Him and in His weariness, the angels came and ministered to the needs of Jesus. I have no doubt food was provided, as well spiritual, emotional and mental support as Jesus needed it.

Then we read in **Luke 4:14, "And Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Holy Spirit, and news about Him spread through all the surrounding district."**

Jesus' baptism, the filling of the Holy Spirit and the temptations He faced in the desert, the ministering of the angels to Him, all these things prepared Jesus to begin His public ministry.

Next you can read that Jesus fulfills some of the prophecies concerning His departure from Nazareth in verses 12-17 but then in verse 17 Jesus begins to preach.

Matthew 4:17, “From that time Jesus began to preach and say, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.’”

In our study of John the Baptist, I passed over the following scripture. I was waiting until today to talk about it. Look with me at it now.

Matthew 3:1-2, “Now in those days Joh the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.’”

Sounds familiar doesn't it? Both Jesus and John have the same message. I like the way Mark writes it.

Mark 1:14b-14, “...Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.’”

Jesus and John are preaching that something new is on the horizon, it's almost here, so get ready.

I thought about what must have been going on the minds of the people. Some of them knew the prophecy of the coming Messiah. Most of them had preconceived ideas of what the Messiah would look like and how he would handle himself. But Jesus and John were preaching repent, prepare you hearts for something new and when it is preached then believe it.

How many of you like new things? Most of us do when they are not forced upon us. We like new things if it is our idea that is. New restaurants, new people, new places to visit, new changes in our jobs, new things in our church or maybe in the ministry we a part of. If it is our idea then we are okay with change but if it is not our idea then we struggle a little bit at times with change don't we?

If the change is not our idea then it can be easy for us to shut off our hearts and not be open to the new thing or new person who has been thrust upon us.

I think this was happening with Jesus came on the scene. He was new and what He was bringing to the table was a new idea of how interacting with the God of the universe was going to be. Jesus knew change was hard for people so one of the things He said in His message was repent and believe.

Repent, get your heart ready, tender and open before your God so when this new thing, the Kingdom of heaven comes you will be able receive it, believe it and begin to live in it.

John the Baptist then Jesus introduces the people and us, to a new concept and that is the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth. Jesus said the time is fulfilled and God My Father is ready through the work of His Son on the cross to begin a new thing, a new way of living and the power to do it.

Russell, when you list the next three points would you just add a point to each slide, point 1, point 1 & 2, and point 1, 2 & 3. Any questions give me a shout. Thanks!

As we prepare to go into the teachings of Jesus I wanted to make you aware of

1. Jesus' **#1** message is the Kingdom of Heaven/God is coming to Earth

Mark, in his gospel called it the gospel of God and in other places it is called the gospel of the Kingdom. Gospel means good news and that is certainly what Jesus and all He was about to do was all about. Who He was and what He was about to do on earth and in the heavens was good news.

Depending on the translation of the Bible you are using, Jesus refers to the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven over 90 times. No other subject fills Jesus' teaching as much as the teaching of the Kingdom.

In fact, you can wrap up all of the teachings of Jesus within His teaching of the Kingdom of heaven and God.

Now, for clarification sakes when Jesus is teaching on the Kingdom, the writers of the Gospels interchange the terms, the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven but they usually mean the same thing. God's rule on earth and in the heavenly places.

A lot of times, when people read the phrase, the Kingdom of Heaven, they immediately jump to thoughts about the after life and the place Christians go to when they die. Certainly heaven is a real and wonderful place were God, Jesus, angels and those who have died in Christ all reside. But that is not what Jesus is talking about.

2. The Kingdom of Heaven/God is God's **rule** and **reign**

When Jesus, John and other apostles speak and write about the Kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of God they are speaking about the rule and reign of God. The rule and reign of God in heaven and now on earth.

As we move into the teachings of Jesus as found in the gospel of Matthew we are moving into Jesus' teachings of how things operate in heaven and now will be operating on earth. Jesus is bringing the kingdom principles that govern heaven to earth.

3. Jesus brings the kingdom principles that govern heaven to earth

Think about how things operate in heaven for a moment. How do you think things, angels operate in heaven? What rules or principles govern how they handle themselves in the presence and service of the Most Holy God, the Creator of the Universe?

This is what Jesus begins teaching His disciples and us as He begins His ministry. You will see in the coming weeks Jesus dives right in this Kingdom teaching with what is called the sermon on the mount.

The crowds have come to Jesus as well as His disciples and we are told that Jesus opened up His mouth and began to teach them kingdom principles. How to live life if you are going to be a subject in this new kingdom which has come to earth.

In rapid fire succession, Jesus covers a multitude of kingdom principles throughout this sermon that covers the fifth, sixth and seventh chapters of Matthew.

I am excited that we will be able to spend some time in Jesus' teachings for I feel that in the hostile environment of today that is so governed by hot emotions, agendas, pride and a number of other worldly attitudes, it is important for us to not only hear the words of Jesus but to try and understand them and incorporate them into our daily lives.

But before we go into Jesus' teachings, lets see what happened prior to His delivery of the sermon on the mount.

In Jesus' typical style, He doesn't go at ministry alone.

Matthew 4:18-22, “Now as Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers, Simon who was called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. And He said to them, ‘Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.’ Immediately they left their nets and followed Him. Going on from there He saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and He called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him.”

Jesus was about to begin His earthly ministry but He wasn't going to do it alone. He pulled these four men and as you know eight others, to be His inner circle of 12 disciples. He wanted them to see first hand the things He was about to do and to hear the things He was teaching the people.

Now these were not just any random men Jesus happened to come across. We know these men were chosen by Jesus as He was prompted by the Holy Spirit. Choose Simon, Andrew, James and John the Spirit directed Him and we know that these men stayed with Jesus during His entire ministry and they carried on the ministry of the Kingdom of God after Jesus went back to heaven.

So now that Jesus has these men going with Him the following occurs.

Matthew 4:23-25, “Jesus was going throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the Kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people. The news about Him spread throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all who were ill, those suffering with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, paralytics; and He healed them. Large crowds followed Him from Galilee and the Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judea and from beyond the Jordan.”

People were coming from quite an area and two things were happening. Jesus was proclaiming, preaching about the gospel of the kingdom. It's now being called the gospel or the good news of the kingdom of God. And the other thing that is occurring is

4. The **power** of the kingdom of God is being has come to earth

Everyone who comes to Jesus is healed. That is one of the things we know should occur when the gospel, the good news of the kingdom and Jesus Christ is preached.

Look at what Paul said to the church in Corinth.

1 Corinthians 4:19-20, "But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I shall find out, not the words of those who are arrogant but their power. For the kingdom of God does not consist in words but in power."

When we are operating in the power of the Kingdom of God then our actions and words, prayers and service have the power from heaven to bring healing to people. Maybe physical healing at times but certainly spiritual, emotional and mental healing.

Now here's the really cool thing. Remember these points.

1. Jesus' #1 message is the Kingdom of Heaven/God is coming to Earth
2. The Kingdom of Heaven/God is God's rule and reign
3. Jesus brings the kingdom principles that govern heaven to earth
4. The power of the kingdom of God is being displayed

Now look at this next passage.

Luke 17:20-21, “Now when He (Jesus) was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, ‘The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, ‘See here!’ or ‘See there!’ For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.” NKJV

When we begin to learn the teachings of Jesus, the principles of the kingdom of heaven and God, these are not just some good rules to live by. They are that. But these kingdom principles have the power to bring healing in its many forms to people.

5. You have the power of the Kingdom of God in you!

Remember the four men and then the other eight men Jesus choose to walk with Him and learn about the kingdom of God? Look at what they were able to do.

Luke 9:1-2, “And He called the twelve together, and gave them power and authority over all the demons and to heal diseases. And He sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to perform healing.”

The power and authority these twelve disciples were operating in was the authority and power associated with the kingdom of God. Through the miraculous work of Jesus He imparted this power, kingdom power to His disciples.

Guess what? Who are you? Well... I pray you are one of Jesus' disciples. That is what we are called to be isn't it? We are not just called to salvation after this life is over we are called to salvation in this life and then to become the vessels through which the message of salvation flows through us into others.

This occurs when we are operating in the kingdom power that has been placed inside of us. And this power occurs when we are operating in the kingdom principles Jesus taught.

So I would say the words of Jesus to you this morning. Repent. Prepare yourself before the Lord. Repent of a hardness of heart if that is necessary. Pray that your heart would be as tender as possible to receive the teachings of Jesus. Pray that as you hear the truth that you will not just be a hearer of the word but an effectual doer of the words of Jesus you hear.

Jesus has a lot of great things in store for us and I look forward to learning from Him and seeing Him operate in and through each of you. You have the kingdom in you. Now we can learn together how to release the power of the kingdom of heaven and God into the world and into our lives and that is what we want. Amen? Amen!