

Introduction:

- What subject did Jesus speak on more than any other? The Kingdom.
 - The Kingdom was a continual theme of His preaching.
 - He was always explaining The Kingdom to His disciples
 - After the resurrection, Acts 1:3, He talked to them about The Kingdom...for 40 days.
 - The message of the Kingdom is not just a component of what we believe it is foundational.
- As I have been studying the subject of the Kingdom of God I noticed something. No where was Jesus ever asked, "Can you tell us what the Kingdom of God is?" Don't you find that interesting?
 - Yet Jesus is constantly explaining the Kingdom of God.
 - He explains the culture of the Kingdom - Sermon on the mount.
 - He explains the power and influence of the Kingdom in parables.
 - He explains the operation and advancement of the Kingdom in parables.
- I believe the reason why he is never asked is because they understood what it meant when He said, "Kingdom." My goal this morning is to help us understand what the Kingdom of God means.

I. What We Don't Know Can Hurt Us

- A. If we are going to study the Kingdom of God then we have to have revelation of what it means to have a king and be in a kingdom. Here is the average Americans revelation of a king: Generally speaking, we don't like kings. We had a king once, and we didn't really care for it. That mentality carries over into our understanding of Kingdom. There are basically two reasons why we don't like kings:
 1. The first is our memory. We see a king as a distant tyrant across the ocean who mistreats the people and "taxes their tea". Kings are single entities that abuse people.
 2. The second reason is that we picture a king as a meaningless figurehead that is treated as a celebrity. A historical office held over from the past that no longer wields any real power.
 3. Because of those two reasons, we totally reject the idea of a king as Americans then we turn around and pretend to sing songs about our King even though we have no idea what it means. We have no idea what it means to have a king yet we believe we know what it means to be in the Kingdom. Who are you trying to fool? Therefore we end up doing something that we really don't understand its significance.
 4. To help us understand kingdom let me give us a few distinguishing features of what it means to have a king.
- B. What are the distinguishing features a King? What does it mean to have a King? I will give us four today. There are more but these are major ones.
 1. A king's authority is absolute. We have no idea what this means! It is absolute! We do not know what it's like to not back-talk a leader, protest a leader, or challenge a leader.
 - a) A king is sovereign. Which means the king holds supreme power and authority. When the king speaks, he speaks with absolute authority. No one can countermand his orders, negate his pronouncements, set aside his decrees, or amend his statutes. His decrees are unchanging.

- b) Most kings today have no authority or very little authority. They are basically figureheads with celebrity like status. A long ways from what being a king meant in the past.
 - 2. Kings are born. They are born into power. We see this in scripture as the sons of kings came to power. It is what makes a king different than a dictator.
 - a) Kings are not voted on or voted in, they are born into office.
 - b) A king is king by birthright. IE. We see this in Jesus (*The Word became flesh and dwelt among us*) and the declaration that He was of the lineage of David. Kingship is not conferred by men. IE. The wisemen did not come to confer on Jesus the kingship. They came to Worship the King. His authority was revealed to them. We do not make Jesus king, all we can do is acknowledge that He is king. His power is conferred upon him by his birth and family line. IE. If God is your Father, that is quite a family line!
 - 3. A king is a head of state who inherits his position from his family.
 - a) The king is ruler for life unless he abdicates, and is usually revered as the sovereign leader of his nation.
 - b) The king sets the government. He embodies the government of his kingdom. Is 22:22, speaks of government upon His shoulders. Disciple is: person who put their faith in Jesus, Governs their life by Jesus teaching, and passionately pursues His mandate of making disciples.
 - c) The king personally owns everything in his domain, everything and everyone.**
 - 4. A king has subjects not citizens. IE. You do not owe Jesus anything! Your salvation is already paid for. But if that is your attitude you do not have a revelation of the absolute authority of Jesus towards you...motivate by love. The woman at Jesus feet understood this!
 - a) The word that is translated citizen means a gathering of people under a common domain (polites). In many cases where the english word 'citizen' is used it does not even exist. The context would imply people associated with this person or territory.
 - b) As Americans we are citizens of this nation. We pledge allegiance to our flag because of the principles it stands for. But in a kingdom we would be subjects of and subjects to the king. I am citizen of the USA, I am not subject to No King! As a Christian I am first a subject of my King Jesus and then I am a citizen of the USA.
- C. The issue for us.
- 1. As Christians we do not necessarily reject the kingdom, we reduce it to less than it is.
 - 2. In doing so we make it powerless. IE. We have reduced our understanding of kingdom to something we get/reward, when we die therefore, reducing it significance as given for this life now.

- II. What We Understand We Must Implement** Jesus taught so much on the Kingdom because he wanted us to understand it. And by implementing what we understand, Zoe/vitality, would fill us.
- A. The Gospel is the Good News of the Kingdom "...*Jesus went into Galilee, where he preached God's Good News. "The time promised by God has come at last!" he announced. "The Kingdom of God is near! Repent of your sins and believe the Good News!"*" (Mark 1:14-15, NLT)
1. When I 'got saved' I came into a relationship with God through His Son Jesus Christ. That was the 'ultimate' for me. It doesn't get any better than this. That became my message. It was what I began to announce/tell to others.
 2. But in God's eyes, I was just at the entry point because there was so much more he wanted me to know. I prayed the prayer and received the reward...done. Goal achieved. But God is saying, "There is so much more!" Luke 4:18-ff. Poor heard good news, captives are released, blind see, oppressed are delivered. This was Jesus message. He brought the Kingdom! He preached the Kingdom! He demonstrated the Kingdom. He encouraged us to seek the kingdom. He wants us to enter the fullness of the Kingdom It was central to who He is!
- B. If it is Good News, then it must be 'good' directed at me and to me! It must be something that makes my heart happy and causes my soul to rejoice. And my instruction from Jesus in Mark 1:15 is to believe it. Trust it. And put my faith in what He is saying.
1. The Gospel of the Kingdom makes it bigger and better than what we ever thought possible.
 2. The Kingdom holds the supreme good and we should all want it.
- C. Defining the Kingdom. But what is it? What is this kingdom of God? What is this good thing that is directed at me?
1. Its parts:
 - a) In our secular understanding kingdom by itself implies three things:
 - (1) a king
 - (2) Kingdom people
 - (3) Kingdom principles that govern the people.
 - b) Another way of expression is:
 - (1) A sovereign ruler. (One who holds all the power)
 - (2) Those who are ruled, subjects
 - (3) And the 'rules'
 - (4) Note to self: the reason the disciples never asked Jesus to define the Kingdom because they understood the basic principles of kingdom. They were intrigued by Jesus teaching because He gave definition to those three things like no one had ever done before.

- c) The Kingdom of God has these three things too. What makes it outstanding is that it is the only Kingdom among kingdoms that deserves the title "The Kingdom."
2. It's definition. The Kingdom of God is eternal therefore it has no beginning or end. Because of this, it has two expressions:
 - a) The present Kingdom - the Kingdom of God that is here and now.
 - b) The ultimate Kingdom - The Kingdom of God that was before time and after time.
 - c) George Eldon Ladd describes it this way: The Kingdom is the 'now' and the 'not yet.'
 - d) Therefore Jack Taylor defines the Kingdom of God as this: It is, *"God's rule (reign) over everything and everybody, everywhere, in eternity, past, present, and future."* There has never been a time when it did not exist nor will there be a time when it ceases. The ultimate Kingdom guarantees the present Kingdom on earth.
3. Simplest definition: The Kingdom of God is the rule of God. When Jesus announced the Kingdom He was declaring the end of Satans rule and the beginning triumphant rule of God in the earth. To humanity it meant that the authority of God was now in the earth through Jesus Christ. *When we look back at the marks of a king we see they all have to do with rule and authority.* (point 1)
- D. With all this being said, we must seek first the Kingdom of God. Mt 6:33 so we can implement God's goodness to all people. We must seek first the 'rule of God' so we can implement God's goodness to all mankind. Jesus did this in Luke 4:18-ff

III. Jesus Message and His Ministry

- A. What we don't understand can hurt us and what we do understand we must implement or put into practice. This is easily learned from reading the Gospel and watching the main characters. There were those who embraced the Kingdom and lived and those who rejected it and perished.
- B. Four things we can learn from Jesus as we look at His life and ministry. He taught four very clear Kingdom principles.
 1. He taught us a Kingdom prayer: *"May your Kingdom come soon. May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven."* (Matthew 6:10, NLT)
 2. He taught us Kingdom priority: *"Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need."* (Matthew 6:33, NLT)
 3. He taught us Kingdom passion: *"Jesus traveled throughout the region of Galilee, teaching in the synagogues and announcing the Good News about the Kingdom. And he healed every kind of disease and illness."* (Matthew 4:23, NLT)
 4. He gave us Kingdom purpose: *"And the Good News about the Kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, so that all nations will hear it; and then the end will come."* (Matthew 24:14, NLT)

Conclusion:

- May we truly be seekers of the Kingdom of God.
- Invitation...