

### Intro

In this series we are looking at the life of Christ. Our goal here is to try and do more than present to you an intellectual study, a biography, but rather, to present a vivid picture of who Jesus was.

So far we've looked at:

- The pre-incarnate Christ
- Birth
- Baptism
- Temptation

This week we come to, what I think, is one of the most exciting weeks. His **Teaching**.

### Surprisingly Absent

One of the reasons I'm so excited to talk about this, is because historically the church has done a pretty bad job at it. I grew up in the church. And I never realized how little I understood about the life and work of Jesus. I knew all about his birth, death, and resurrection, but what about that stuff in between?

### Why did Jesus Live? A tough Question.

It's one that for a long time, I didn't know the answer. We all know why he was born, why he died? But why did Jesus live on this earth for 30 years? What did he do while he was here?

I took a poll on reddit to see what they thought. (Results were bad.)

- Why did Jesus live? To die for our sins.
- What is the Gospel? Quoting Paul, Jesus died for our sins.

Maybe, there is something more.

### Let's look at what he said

We'll begin in Mark 1 (Why mark)

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## Mark 1:9-14

9 In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. 10 And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. 11 And a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."

12 The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. 13 And he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. And he was with the wild animals, and the angels were ministering to him.

14 Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, 15 and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."

# Preaching the gospel: The Kingdom of God is at hand.

This was the main theme of all of Jesus' teaching. **Luke 8:1** summarizes the ministry of Jesus as, going "through cities and villages proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God."

## It's in all of his teaching

- When Jesus met **Nicodemus** he said, "If you want to see the Kingdom of God, you must be born again.
- When the little **children** wanted to see him "Do not forbid them, because to such as these belongs the kingdom of God."
- When Jesus Taught on worry, "Seek ye first the kingdom of god"

## What did he mean?

Today we're gonna sketch out main idea of Jesus' teaching. In doing so, we're going to address thee big questions:

1. What is the Kingdom?
2. What happened to it?
3. Where is it now?

# 1. What is the Kingdom?

The best summary of the teaching and work of Jesus is found in a passage we often call the Lord's Prayer, where Jesus teaches his disciples to pray.

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## **Matthew 6:9-13**

*"Pray then like this: '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 also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.'"*

The first thing we need to realize about the Kingdom of God is what it's not. **The Kingdom of God is not Heaven.**

Here in this passage he teaches us to pray, "*Your Kingdom come*" not, "*Let us come to your Kingdom.*"

But what about Jesus talking about "The kingdom of Heaven in Matthew?"

## **The Kingdom is not a place. It's God's right rule over creation.**

We see what this was supposed to look like in the book of Genesis. God's intention for creation. God created a good creation, there was no sin, because he was king.

But how did he rule? **Through humankind.** Adam ruled and reigned over creation, and walked with God.

There was work in God's Kingdom, long before sin. That work was ruling and stewarding over creation as God's ambassadors. Or as Exodus and 1 Peter describe it, a Royal Priesthood.

## **A Royal Priesthood**

Our job as God's ambassadors, as his royal priesthood, has always been to reflect God's glory into creation through worship, and steward his creation through justice and righteousness.

## **Jesus proclaimed the Kingdom was at hand.**

Obviously something has gone wrong. (We'll get to that in a moment.) And the messiah came into this broken world to tell us, not that we get to escape this world

through his salvation and go to Heaven, but that he was making it right. He was bringing the kingdom.

We see this in the **Revelation** (21:1-2). Near the end of your bible, John describes the final return of Christ. And at the end of the story, we don't go to heaven. Rather we are told, "... *I saw the Holy City, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.*"

**Going to heaven is not the main idea of the bible. But rather, renewing creation, ushering in the kingdom of God.**

## 2. What Happened?

The major theme of the First Testament is exile and exodus. Humanity lived in God's Kingdom, in Eden until sin. After the fall, we were exiled from the kingdom. The entire story of the Bible from then on has been the Exodus back to God's Kingdom.

### **The essence of sin is the rejection of God's Kingdom**

Sin is not bad behavior. Bad behavior is a symptom of Sin. Humanity's God given vocation was to rule creation. The bible tells us that the root of our sin is idolatry. Paul describes it in **Romans 1:25** as "*Worshiping and serving the creation rather than the creator.*"

### **Giving away our authority.**

Do you realize what this means? Worshiping and serving creation? We were supposed to rule creation as God's ambassadors. Instead, Creation ruled us.

Sin is Idolatry. Idolatry means giving away our authority as God's Image Bearers, to the powers of creation, and ultimately to death.

Just like is pictured again and again in the Old Testament, we exiled ourselves into slavery. As Paul said in Romans, we became slaves to sin.

### **What this looks like**

Jesus talks about this slavery in the sermon on the mount. Murder, anger. Adultery, Lust.

We see this all around us. What's wrong with government? Greed. What's wrong with media? Lust.

We're slaves to Greed, Lust, to our selfish desires. These forces now run the world. This is what Paul means when he describes Satan as the "god of this world" in 2 Corinthians 4.

Sin means that we have abdicated our rule as the image bearers of God, and given it to sin and death.

## 3. Where is it now?

The story of the First Testament, the story of Exile from the Kingdom, Slavery, and Exodus finds its climax in Jesus.

### Exiled

Ever since sin entered creation, humanity has been in exile. This began in Eden. The exodus back to the Kingdom began with **Abraham**, and the promise to him. Then continued with Moses and the **Tabernacle**. Finally settling into a Kingdom with the **Temple** at it's center.

This was further unfolded to the people of Israel through the prophets, that a messiah would come who was:

- Better than Moses - to lead them in their exodus
- A king in the line of David, to rule God's true Kingdom
- A blessing to all nations, to fulfill the promise to Abraham.

### Babylon

But God's people were still slaves to sin. And because of this were exiled further. First to babylon. Then, after yet another exodus back to the promised land, exiles under Rome.

### To this people comes a savior. (Illustrates the kingdom)

This was the paradigm that the Jews had when Jesus arrived. Waiting for that Kingdom to finally be renewed. They waited for the promised messiah who would come to restore the Kingdom of God.

And while he was here what did he do? He illustrated God's kingdom for us. He showed us what Humanity was meant to be. What it looked like to fulfill our original vocation.

## **This is why they rejected Jesus**

The reason the religious elite rejected Jesus, is because they wanted a political messiah. They wanted a savior that would break the slavery under the roman empire, and set up a new Kingdom. *They weren't completely wrong!*

The difference was, that Jesus didn't come to end the Jewish exile under rome. He didn't come to start a revolution against Cesar. He came to end the true exile. To begin the revolution against sin and death, and the exodus back to God's true Kingdom.

## **The Kingdom and it's Power**

In **Mark 9:1** Jesus, speaking to his disciples says, "*Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power.*"

We often try to explain that one away. But I think Jesus meant what he said. He came to usher in the kingdom and it's power, and that's just what he did while he was here.

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### **John 12:27-31**

*27 "Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? But for this purpose I have come to this hour. 28 Father, glorify your name." Then a voice came from heaven: "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again." 29 The crowd that stood there and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, "An angel has spoken to him." 30 Jesus answered, "This voice has come for your sake, not mine. 31 Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out.*

## **The Cross, the inauguration of the kingdom.**

Then came what Jesus so often called the hour of his glorification, the climax of his ministry, the cross. And as he hung there serving us even to death, he said, it's finished.

And at that moment the veil in the temple, the barrier between God's Kingdom and our world was torn. Paving the way for the coming of the Holy Spirit.

# The Kingdom of God is Now.

God's Kingdom, his rule and reign is here now because of what Christ did. We, like Paul, can say that we were once slaves to sin, are no longer. Because the power of God that raised Christ from the dead is now yours freely to break the power of sin over your life.

Do you want that? Luke 11 says it's free. Just ask.

We are no longer in exile. We no longer serve greed, lust, and power. We serve the True King.

## What do we do now?

We return to our original God-given vocation as his ambassadors, as his image bearers. We seek to restore creation in his name by reflecting his glory into it through praise, and bringing his wisdom to it through righteousness and justice.

What would it look like if we all bought in on this? What would it be like if we lived like that royal priesthood, taking seriously our calling and vocation? The invitation is yours. We are called to build his kingdom, prepare for his return, and make disciples.

## Prayer

## The Cup.