

WHAT IS THE KINGDOM- INTRO TO KINGDOM SERIES

LUKE 17:20-21

I have been thinking a lot about what it means to be **Counter-Culture**. In most settings it is a description about what we are against. Interesting to me is that much of the political narrative of late is filled with rhetoric describing what each person is against. Equally interesting is our almost unending propensity to want to believe that a particular candidate could be the person to shift the culture.

Now not to sound to entirely negative or naive I understand that one person can make a very large difference in our national landscape for the good or bad. But here is what has me most concerned is our belief that we need to be counter culture. Some may say of course we are! The virtues and values of the Kingdom run completely opposed to modern culture so the conclusion seems only natural. Yet this is not what Jesus proclaimed when He arrived in His humanity - beloved the first words in Red - Jesus first sermon recorded Mark 1:15 'The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand, repent and believe the gospel'

- **Jesus seems convinced that that His ministry was not about a reforming of culture but the invasion of a completely different One called the Kingdom of God!**
- **So what does this mean for us? It means we are not 'counterculture' it means we are about creating a completely different culture called the Kingdom beloved!**

I want to take some time over the next several weeks to talk about the topic Jesus talked about the most - The Kingdom of God.

- It is easily one of the most often used terms in Christian circles....
- Yet I ask the question what is the Kingdom of God?

Over the years of Church history there have been 4 predominate views of the Kingdom

The Political Kingdom - According to this view Jesus sought to establish a Davidic-like kingdom in Jerusalem. This kingdom was political in nature and sought to free Israel from the Romans.

The Spiritual Kingdom - During the height of theological liberalism the kingdom of God was understood as God's rule in the human heart. Liberal theology, which was built upon a belief in continual evolutionary progress and the ultimate goodness of humanity.

The Future Kingdom - Since the kingdom of God was seen by most Jews in Jesus' day as a future, supernatural kingdom that would bring history to a close, it was logical to think that Jesus thought similarly. Jesus' sayings concerning the kingdom of God would have been understood by his audience as referring to such a kingdom, and since Jesus made no radical attempt to correct such thinking, we must understand his teachings on the kingdom of God as eschatological.

According to this view Jesus taught that the kingdom of God, which would bring history to its end, was future.

The Present Kingdom - According to this view Jesus did announce the coming of the awaited kingdom. However, he did not announce that it was coming in the near future. On the contrary, he announced that it had already arrived. Now in Jesus' ministry the kingdom of God had already come.

There was therefore no need to look for something in the future.

*And the secret is simply this Christ in you!
Yes, Christ in you bringing with Him the hope of all the glorious things to come.
Col 1:27b JB Phillips*

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The Son of Man had already come, and he had brought with him the kingdom. Nothing is still awaited. In its entirety the kingdom of God was realized in the coming of Jesus.

- However - too many passages associate the coming of the kingdom of God with the final judgment (Matt 5:19-20 ; 8:11-12 ; 25:31-46 ; Luke 13:22-30).
- It cannot be denied therefore that there are numerous passages in the Gospels that indicate that Jesus understood the kingdom of God to be still future.

So we have a tension.....perhaps...or maybe we are missing the point?

- **That the very Nature of this Kingdom is not something to be wrapped into our linear understanding of time and space....and if it was - why did Jesus not give this more explanation?**
- By the way if you ever want a really good method of interpretation on hot spiritual topics.....may I suggest this one? Major on what the scripture has to say and especially the words in Red....

Here is the point -

- Jesus speaks about the Kingdom and gives a lot of description to what it behaves like but He seems to not be concerned with unpacking what we stumble upon....
- **Is it political - is it spiritual....future- present.....if you read the words of Jesus....the answer is YES!**

So maybe He was speaking as a 1st century Jew to 1st Century Jews about a word that they clearly understood - that has nothing to do with which century we are in but everything to do with what this word meant Kingdom

- Jesus first Sermon Mark 1:15 - *the time has come - repent for the Kingdom is at hand.*
- His final words recorded to His disciples Acts 1:3...*gave many convincing proofs of His resurrection....kept speaking of the things concerning the Kingdom of God.*

So 2 things seem to be clear

- It seems obvious that Jesus when **Jesus says the word Kingdom** it was not a foreign concept to His audience.....so to His 1st century Jewish brothers and sisters this word had some common understanding
 - In a Kingdom - there is :
 - A **King** who reigns and rules -
 - Is a **Domain** of that Kingdom -
 - An **effect** of that Kingdom on everyone living in its domain....
- The second thing that seems clear is because of the frequency that Jesus speaks about the Kingdom....the most He talks about anything -
 - It is obvious that His 1st century Jewish audience needed a re calibration of what it was all about....and may I say to our 21st century ears....

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The Kingdom is more than a Political, Spiritual, Future or Present reality...but about a real time Ruler and Domain that would effect all of their life!

Luke 17:20-21

Once, on being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, "The coming of the kingdom of God is not something that can be observed, nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is in your midst."

The Kingdom is about a Lifestyle and Rhythm of Relationship where the Invisible realm finds its Reign - Representation in the Visible realm.

So the next several weeks we will be looking primarily at the words in Red concerning the Kingdom.

- **Little wonder why Jesus spoke to this reality so much - because it is at the very core of what we were created to be - and what was lost in the fall.**
- **To understand the Kingdom most Jewish men and women would look to David's Kingdom...but to really understand the Kingdom we have to look back farther...to Genesis 1 and 2.**

So lets go back to the beginning when God created man and woman Gen 1:27....

This is a big thought.....**God did not create Humans in need of Salvation.....**

- **So what was God going to do with human beings if they had never fallen?**

Genesis 1:26-28

*Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. 28 God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and **fill the earth, and subdue it**; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth."*

Look at vs 28

- **Rule-Reign**
- **Fill the Earth**
- **Effect - multiply and increase**

Directive - verse 28 - **fill the earth and subdue it...what can clearly be missed....**

- Earth was NOT fully subdued...
- Earth was NOT filled....
- Earth was NOT ruled.....Limited space called the Garden....

Purpose of the plants and animals in the Garden was to serve Man...

- **Purpose of the Garden.....Meeting Place....**
- **Invisible and Visible - experience Relationship where the Invisible would be Represented...by mankind.**

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You look at Verse 28....**God establish's Adam as Ruler - King if you will of the Earth...to Rule**

- Fill the earth....move the boundaries of the garden....
- Effect upon the earth....

Fascinating - the book ends Revelation 21.....in same place....

- The Garden because of Jesus has now become a City.....the same place
- Visible and invisible meet....
- Earth if Filled with the Glory of the Lord....was His intent all along!

Jesus the 2nd Adam....King of all Kings and Lord of all Lords....

**What is required for a Kingdom?
King - Domain - Effect**

What about this Kingdom called the Kingdom of God?

1 - It has a King – Jesus

- That will rule and reign forever...
- A King that has defeated every enemy and removed every obstacle....to Relationship!
- This King is a Righteous and Just Ruler

The God who longed for the Reality of the Garden Relationship -

- Became the fulfillment of His own promise....
- Became the 2nd Adam who will rule forever....

Beloved this Kingdom has a King! Daniel 7

2 - This Kingdom has a Domain....of Influence....

That Domain has been established by the will of the King!

- Psalmist talks about the Boundary lines falling in pleasant places - Psalm 16
- Paul later describes those places in Romans 14:17
 - Righteousness
 - Peace and
 - Joy in the Holy Spirit....

Beloved the boundary lines have no longer and are no longer set by the failure of man...but by the righteousness of one man!

Who has made perfect forever those who are being made holy!

by the Cross He has forever CRUSHED the boundary lines of Genesis 3

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- Sin - sickness and separation
- Unquenched Desire
- Futility...

Been demolished into a Kingdom of Peace and Joy no matter the circumstance!

- He has caused us to be born again into a New Family...Romans 8:15-17
- by which we say Father...to this invisible uncreated Holy God...

This Kingdoms Domain is a changeless Eternal Work!

- Beloved you DO NOT HAVE to TALK or CAGOLE your way in.....
- Don't have to attempt to talk God into being Gracious, Merciful and Kind...He already is by His nature and He is towards you....do you know the Domain?

This Kingdom has a King and a Domain!

3 - This Kingdom has an Effect...

- 1 Cor 12:4-7.....variety of effects -
- **What we are talking about is the atmosphere and shift of a culture....**
- **That when we walk in a room the atmosphere has shifted because Christ in you the Hope of Glory came in with you!**
- This Genesis 1 Relationship has been restored and we have been enabled to once again hear the words of Genesis 1:28...fill the earth and subdue it...
- **No I am not talking about political influence but the reality of men women boys and girls living deeply from the place of relationship - Visible and the Invisible**

This beautiful Triune God is represented in living color – Representation!

Counter - Culture?

- NO - we are talking about a completely other than culture!
- Marked by the Virtue - Victory and Vastness of One True King!

Kingdom -

- Ruler
- Domain
- Effect

What does this mean?

Who is King in my life?

Whose Domain am I living under?

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