

Kingdom Series - Autumn 2005 - King's Centre Church
Week 14 – Mission - (12.12.05)
Nick Allan

INTRO

Final sermon in this kingdom series. Not to say that we have covered everything there is to know about the kingdom of God – far from it. I could keep preaching for a whole year on this! But we have explored together some key themes and teachings of Jesus who inaugurated and established the kingdom of God on earth.

Today – broad topic of mission – come up a few times over the past week at KC

What have we covered?

- Realities to grasp
- Cost of Discipleship – precious pearl
- Kingdom power & works
- Upside Down
- Eyes to see?
- Prayer
- Forgiveness
- Money
- Healing
- Ready, Willing & Able?
- Spiritual Warfare

The final words of Jesus

We started this series with one of the first things Jesus said – “The time has come, the Kingdom of God is near, repent and believe the good news.” (Mark 1:15)

We’re going to end the series with the last recorded words Jesus left ringing in the disciples’ ears as he returned to heaven (what is often called the ‘Great Commission’) – “¹⁸Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." – Matt 28:18-20

The version recorded in Mark 16 is also complimentary to this – although you’ll see from your bible that it may have been a later addition to the biblical text.

¹⁵He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. ¹⁶Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. ¹⁷And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; ¹⁸they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well." ¹⁹After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God. ²⁰Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it. (Mark 16:15-20)

Disciple's response

The disciples took Jesus' command seriously, these last words left ringing in their ears – and that's how the early church was established. That's how the good news of Jesus spread from an initial group of less than 150 (recorded) to 3000 at Pentecost (several weeks later) and kept growing from there. That's why the early missionary movements started – which continue today – taking the life-changing good news out from Jerusalem and the Jews in Judea, to the foreigners and hated neighbours in Samaria, and then to many countries around the Mediterranean, Italy, North Africa and the ends of the earth.....

Overview of Jesus' kingdom teaching

- Introduced (& inaugurated) the concept of K of G 'at hand'
- Demonstrated and embodied the kingdom – signs & wonders, forgiveness and freedom
- Delegated authority and responsibility to his followers
- Stayed to coach disciples & followers through the early stages
- Taught about the upside-down nature of this new reality
 - Heart attitudes & approach - Character
 - Counter-cultural/ counter the status-quo
 - A matter of power (actions) not just of words
- Willingly chose to die – to sacrifice his own life – in order to achieve eternal forgiveness, new life and restored relationship with the Father for all humans who would believe in Him
- Ends by passing on the baton (Great Commission) and promising the Holy Spirit to aid his new followers from that time onwards
- Is now in heaven, seated at the right of the Father, interceding on our behalf – hopelessly in love with us, rooting for us, cheering for us, talking and instructing us through His spirit, and finally taking the judgement for us – so that we might be eternally free

The point is – having set the example, Jesus now expects his followers to do the same (and more! John 14:12). And at the same time, he promises that he will always be with us as we do step out.

And that is where I felt it was important to lay the stress for our final kingdom sermon in this present series. God the Trinity sets the example & our mission, and gives us his Spirit.

UP IN OUT Triangle. – There is a balance of all three through out Jesus' teaching & action on the Kingdom. **There needs to be with us too.**

Let's unpack the detail

¹⁹Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.

- **Go (we are sent – active)**
 - Take the initiative
 - Take the message
- **Make disciples (not converts – sign the pledge)**
 - More than life after death – its life before death!
 - More than 'do you know where you are going to when you die?'
 - Lifestyle of discipleship
 - 'Laid down lovers' – phrase has helped me
- **Baptise into the Trinity – the full expression of God and all that means**
 - Not concentrate on just 1 or 2 of the Trinity (which is easier to do than you might think)

- When I talk to non-Christians these days, particularly post-modern minded ones who are happy with a concept of ‘God’ on their terms, I am careful to introduce the words Jesus and Spirit into my conversation. God is fairly easy to stomach – Jesus is often the word that makes people sit up and listen and really think about it
- Holy Spirit as a person – not “the Holy Spirit”
- **Teach them to obey all of Jesus’ own teachings & example (the kingdom!)**
 - Example - Annual Vineyard conference called ‘Doing the Stuff’ – appropriate title. That’s what a life of discipleship is about – that’s what we are called to.

The parting message of Jesus was to say that this open invitation to become radical disciples of the Trinity isn’t ours to keep to ourselves. ‘freely you have received, freely give’ (John 10:8). The whole life of Jesus is an example of giving away, of service, of sacrifice on behalf of others, of putting others before yourself. If we are going to obey his commands and teachings, then so should ours be.

To quote Shirley Guthrie (USA theologian), he says, “What does it mean to be a Christian? To be a Christian is to be called out of the world in order to be sent back into the world.” That is one of the messages of the kingdom too. Why? Because we have a job to do. It is not only to be blessed, to be loved, to be saved by God – that’s just consumer religion. No. It is to be a blessing, to love, and to serve the world that God loves, and that God plans to save. We are called, and sent for the world.

How do you view your involvement in church?

- **Is it serve–us, or service?**

Evangelism & Mission – What’s the difference and who cares anyway?....

- Evangelism is taken from the Greek word, evangelon, which sounds very similar and evangelon simply means good news. So evangelism is sharing the good news of Jesus Christ, of his death and his resurrection, of forgiveness of sins.
 - Romans 10:14 How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"
 - Evangelism is one of our tasks, and it is a ‘beautiful’ thing
- Rick Warren says, "There is only two things that you can't do in heaven."
 - listed things that you can do. sing, serve, pray, fellowship, rest,
 - 2 cant's. You can't sin and you can't tell those who don't know about Jesus.
 - "Now which of these two do you think God wants you to work on while you are still here on earth?" Now lets see.... sin or share.
- But I think **the Great Commission is deeper than that.**
 - **Its about *integral mission*. Its lifestyle mission. Its living the kingdom**

What is mission?

It is ‘God’s relationship and God’s action with the world.’ – that’s what we are a part of. The starting point is that firstly it’s God’s business, not ours. (Jesus – I only do what I see the Father doing)

Advent – God the Father made the first move, by sending his son to earth to save it.

- Its *his* Kingdom we are following
- His initiative
- As disciples, we follow God’s lead.

- There is need everywhere – if we responded to every needy situation, every need around the corner, then we would go under!
- That’s why Jesus said he only did what he saw the Father doing – he took his direction from his Dad.
 - For example – person of peace principle of evangelism
- God has specific deeds, walk, call for each of us
 - But it is important that we follow it! We are voluntary radical disciples of the King, and we follow His flag.

Unpacking mission

- What is Mission – in all its formats, sharing the kingdom with others, and the truth about J
 - **Lifestyle as mission**
 - ‘Mission’ is more than evangelism. It’s an holistic lifestyle – the whole of our life and what we do with our time. Its not about passing on ‘religion’ – its about a lived-out reality.
 - We live the truth, we live the truth of healing, we live the truth of repentance, we live the truth of joy, we live the truth of peace, we live the gospel!
 - **A missional lifestyle**
 - Deliberately seeking opportunities
 - **Discipleship of others through normal life**
 - Your colleagues, family, boyfriends, shop keeper
 - **A mission-shaped church**
 - One of Marjorie and my themes for 2006 (the topical buzz-word in the Anglican church at present) and also a priority of St Thomas
 - Questions to ask...
 - Who does church exist for?
 - If a neighbour, friend, or a non-christian came to Sunday church, would they want to come back again?
 - Is church just ‘Sunday’? What about our weekly activities?
- Holy Spirit is our aid, our helper, our power – we’re not do it in own strength
 - Practicalities of this – find space, learn to connect, open yourself up, don’t be proud, etc
 - Its quite hard for a person to argue against the proof of a physical healing!
 - Power evangelism – in today’s increasingly post-modern culture the church no longer has the right to ‘preach at’ people, but it can demonstrate the gospel. It can tell a story – your story – of God’s changing, redeeming power.
- Notice in Acts 1:8 (you will receive power...”), Jesus doesn’t say that you are to be my defence lawyer, or that you are to be my salesman. He says you are to be **my witness**, and a witness is somebody who simply says what they had seen and what they have experienced. That’s all. You don’t have to be a great theologian. You are the expert on your life. **All you need to do is share what God has done in your life**
 - But, you can’t be a silent witness alone. Many of us want to be silent witnesses and you say, "Well, my deeds are my witness," and I would say, "Your deeds can be a mighty witness for sure. But, if you don’t explain why you are doing your deeds, who gets the credit?"
 - So you have to tell people why you do what you do, so that God can get the credit, that its God’s work.

- Bible = when the Holy Spirit comes in you, then you will be my witnesses. – in the power of the Holy Spirit
- So deeds without words are kind of a half a witness, but perhaps that is better than words without deeds, but God wants both.

The Cross is the only absolute

What is perhaps the only absolute? The Yardstick when trying to communicate to other people, other cultures, other situations...

- **The cross**

- A profound truth – perhaps the highest and greatest truth ever in the world. Its worth *us* grasping it, in order to share its good news. Advent is a good time to think again about the glory of Jesus' incarnation and his life, death & resurrection
- Effect of the cross
 - Wide open arms of salvation
 - God so loved *the world* that *whoever* believes...
 - Jesus draws people IN, not keeps people out
 - Small groups are about welcoming people, discipling them, without compromising on the message
- The message of the cross is vast, because its focussed on Jesus not on our local expression of church. It's a position of grace
 - The first initiative is always from God the Trinity
 - The time has come...
 - For God so loved....
 - That.....
- **If Jesus has turned our life around (and upside down) then we are going to want to tell others about it too!**