



Sermon Series Notes

“The Kingdom of God, Part 2” (Acts 28; Matthew 13)

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Intro: God really drew my attention to two verses in Acts 28, vv.23b & 31. Our focus last weekend was on the kingdom of God, and we continue with that theme this week as well.

Brief summary of last week:

Paul explained & proclaimed the kingdom of God. Explaining is two Greek words, the first means to expose, set up, exhibit, and the second means to testify, solemnly affirm; To proclaim means to herald with authority.

The kingdom of God is referred to throughout the gospels. We looked at several references last week in the gospel of Matthew alone.

See Acts 1:3; For forty days after his resurrection Jesus spoke to his disciples about the kingdom of God. I wish those messages were recorded and I could have listened to them before preparing this message!

Kingdom = Realm, empire, territory, domain, dominion, rule; the territory subject to the rule of a king.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as ***as it is in heaven.***

WHAT IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD?

- A place where God reigns supreme, and Christ is King

WHERE IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD?

- John 18:36 My kingdom is not of this world...my kingdom is from another place.
- Acts 1:9-11
- Rev.4:1-3; 5:6a
- Luke 23:42-43 “...Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” Jesus answered him, Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.”
- II Cor.12:2-4 Paul caught up to the third heaven/paradise

KINGDOM CONFLICT

- D-Day (June 6, 1944). The Allied forces invade Normandy, breaking the back of the enemy and ensuring their total victory. Yet, the war lingered on even though the Nazis were defeated. It wasn't till V-Day (May 7, 1945) that the peace treaty was actually signed. Sadly, more people were killed during that period between d-day and v-day than any other period of the war. Like that period b/t D & V day, we are living in a period between the inauguration of the Kingdom and the Consummation of the Kingdom.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD INVADED EARTH THROUGH JESUS

- Jesus' healing ministry, miracles, the casting out of demons, demonstrate and testify to his sovereignty over Satan and the kingdom of darkness. All sickness, disease, demonic possession, etc. are a result of the power of the kingdom of darkness.
- Paul suffered no ill effects from viper bite; Mark 16:17

THE COMING KINGDOM OF GOD ON EARTH

- Isaiah 9:7 Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end.

JESUS IS THE KEY TO THE KINGDOM

- Matt.16:19 Jesus told Peter "I give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven," based on Peter's declaration that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God.

THE PRIVILEGE OF EXPERIENCING A TASTE OF THE KINGDOM HERE & NOW

- Rom.14:17 For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace, & joy in the Holy Spirit. (Note context, and v.19).
- The more I allow Christ to rule and reign in my heart, the more of the kingdom I experience here on earth.

Our focus on the kingdom of God today takes us to Matthew 13.

vv.1-2 This would have been Lake Gennesaret, or better known to us as The Sea of Galilee. The location they believe this event took place is now called the "Cove of the Parables." It is an inlet approx. 1 mile southwest of Capernaum. The land slopes down like a natural, horseshoe-shaped amphitheater, which means it provides environmental acoustics for someone's voice to carry a great distance. Israeli scientists have tested the acoustics here and found that Jesus would have been easily heard by the crowd.

v.10 This was a new method of teaching by Jesus, and the disciples wanted to know the purpose behind it.

vv.11-15 This is the Scripture Paul used in Acts 28 when, despite his clearly proving from the OT prophecies that Jesus is the Messiah, they would not believe.

vv.16-17 These disciples had the privilege of living in the time of the Messiah's coming. Not only that, unlike others, they believed Jesus was the Messiah, left everything to follow him, and ultimately persevered in their faith and commitment to him.

vv.18-23 This first parable teaches that some will hear the message of the kingdom, and immediately the evil one snatches the word they have heard. This is the person that does not respond. The second person responds with tremendous emotion, but they have no root, and when persecution & trouble comes, they quickly fall away. The third person becomes unfruitful over a period of time because they are consumed by the things of this life. And the fourth is the person that perseveres and is fruitful for the kingdom of God.

The parable has to do with the message of the kingdom, and that message is centered in the person of Jesus Christ. Remember Acts 28:23, 31.

Now back to the question the disciples asked Jesus as to why he was now teaching the crowd in parables. Some suggest, based on Jesus quoting the prophecy of Isaiah, that he was hiding the meaning of the parable from the crowd, and only giving it to his disciples. But the truth is just the opposite. The purpose of a parable is to illustrate truth. A parable is meant to take something familiar and paint a picture. The word parable comes from two Greek words which together mean "to throw alongside."

Parable: A simple story used to illustrate a moral or spiritual lesson.

Beginning in Matthew 13, verse 24, Jesus tells a string of parables related to the kingdom, and I want us to look at each one. But before we do, it will be helpful to understand a principle of Hermeneutics so that we interpret each parable correctly.

Hermeneutics: The theory and methodology of text interpretation.

Expositional Constancy: Consistent use of symbolism in Scripture.

Luke tells us the field in parable # 1 is the world (Matt.13:38; , so when we see a field in other parables, it represents the world. The good seed is the Word of God, so good seed in other parables is the Word of God. The birds represent the evil one, so birds in other parables represent evil.

vv.24-30 Once again the field is the world. Ultimately only the Lord knows who in this life & this world are truly part of the kingdom of God. It is always fascinating to me when I think of how Judas was "a devil from the beginning, and nobody but Jesus knew the truth about Judas' heart. See Matthew 7:21-23.

vv.31-32 Some scholars and commentators suggest that this parable teaches that the kingdom work on earth began with just twelve disciples, and as they shared the message of the kingdom, it grew and grew. But if we are going to follow the law of expositional constancy, this parable means something totally different. The birds represent evil, so as the church (kingdom representatives on earth) has grown and is now very large worldwide, some who are evil take advantage, perching in its branches. This parable has more than one application, but I can tell you as the pastor of this local church, people for 32 years have taken advantage of CCSP. They seek shelter, provision, help, but they do not really know Jesus. Many learn the lingo (Christian language), but their hearts have never been changed. They have never been born again. Jesus said in John 3 that no one will see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.

v.33 "Scripture uses leaven almost exclusively as a negative metaphor, probably because fermentation implied disintegration and corruption...But Jesus seems to reverse the connotation here to symbolize the hidden permeation of the kingdom of heaven in this world...In spite of its small, inauspicious beginnings, the kingdom of heaven will permeate the world." (Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary,

p.86). This statement and perspective completely violates the principle of “Expositional Constancy.” To be consistent we need to view this yeast as evil that permeates the kingdom here on earth (the church).

See I Cor.5:6-7; Gal.5:9

Some pastors today who claim to know Jesus teach that the Bible is not the inspired Word of God; There are churches like the King of Peace Metropolitan Community Church on 5th Ave North here in St. Petersburg. I pulled the following off of their website:

“We are a diverse faith community called to live out the Good News of the Gospel.”

“We are a Christ-centered, spirit-led church...”

11-22-15 the sermon was entitled “Transgender Day of Remembrance.” July 17, 2014 they hosted an evening “Marriage Equality Victory Rally.”

Constantine bringing together pagan culture and Christianity.

vv.36-43

v.44 Treasures were often hidden in fields because there were no formal banks as we know them today. One of the Dead Sea scrolls is called the Copper Scroll. It lists sixty-four places in Palestine where treasures were supposed to be hidden. One read like this: “In the ruin which is in the valley, pass under the steps leading to the East forty cubits...there is a chest of money and its total: the weight of seventeen talents.”

A common interpretation of this parable is that when a person discovers the treasure of the kingdom, they sell everything and buy the field the treasure is hidden in. But let’s not forget the law of expositional constancy. The field is the world. We did not purchase the world in order to gain the treasure of the kingdom. But someone did, and his name is Jesus. Jesus died to purchase/redeem the world, and we are the treasure in the world. Isn’t that cool? John 3:16

vv.45-46 Jesus is not the pearl that we purchased, it’s the other way around. We are the pearls he purchased!

- Matthew 10:29-31 Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father’s care. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don’t be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.
- Jeremiah 31:3...I have loved you with an everlasting love...
- John 3:16
- John 15:13 Greater love has no one than this: To lay down one’s life for one’s friends.

vv.47-50 This is the second parable about the kingdom that teaches that at the end of the age citizens of the kingdom of God will be separated from citizens of the kingdom of the world, and those who are part of the kingdom of the world will be cast into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping, and gnashing of teeth. It’s not a pretty scene, but it is a very real one.

See Matt.8:12; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30

Presently, anyone who has not been born again and become citizens of the kingdom of heaven goes to a place called hell. Jesus spoke many times about hell:

Matthew 5:29-30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15, 33; Luke 16:19-31

vv.51-52 This brings us back to Acts 28:23, 31. Paul proclaimed the kingdom of God, and from the Law of Moses and from the prophets he tried to persuade them about Jesus. See Luke 24:44-47. New treasures hidden throughout the Old Testament. Praise the Lord!

CONCLUSION

See Luke 20:9-18, note v.19. They clearly understood the message Jesus had presented in this parable, but rather than becoming broken, they hardened their hearts, and ultimately were crushed.