

Talk Notes

Title: The Kingdom of God Reflection 1 to 4 – So far so what?

Meeting: Freshwaters

Date: 23/4/17

Introduction

I have been talking about the Kingdom of God since the start of the year and as I was considering where we have got to I felt it would be good to pause and to reflect upon what difference what I have been sharing could make to us and to our daily life.

I have been mainly laying foundations and the problem is that this can become theoretical and abstract unless we ground it in our everyday lives.

So I want to take some time this morning to consider the implication of each of my 4 talks on the Kingdom to our everyday life.

I am going to summarise the 4 talks and I want to ask the same questions after each:-

1. What difference does this make for me as an individual?
2. What difference does this make to the church?
3. What difference does this make to the places of connection with the wider community, at home, work, in Netteswell or elsewhere?
4. What is God saying I should do about it?

Talk 1 – what is the Kingdom of God? – Summary

(Original Talk available on the website Audio page, 8th January 2017)

- It is the sovereign rule and reign of God
- It is perfectly realised in heaven but it is extended here on earth wherever the will, purposes or plans of God are realised
- The principles of the Kingdom are built into the fabric of creation
- The Kingdom of God increases at an individual level as each new area of our life is submitted to God's will and reign. It is a continual process starting long before any confession of faith and continuing until the Kingdom of God comes in its fullness.
- The influence of the Kingdom of God also extends to every area of nature and human existence where His will is brought into being
- The Church is not the Kingdom of God, it is part of the Kingdom and should be a place where the values of the Kingdom are most clearly shown.
- The Kingdom of God is about all of life in all of the earth

- The gathered Church should not take away from but instead strengthen the dispersed church which is building the Kingdom of God in every sphere of society
- The most effective protection against corruption and solution to corruption is that people involved in all walks of life apply the values and principles of the Kingdom of God – in so doing the Kingdom grows and our society become healthier.

Talk 2 the timing of the Kingdom & its priority – Summary

(Original Talk available on the website Audio page, 5th February 2017)

- The Kingdom of God is among (or within) you - In **Luke 17:21** Jesus said **‘You won’t be able to say, ‘Here it is!’ or ‘It’s over there!’ For the Kingdom of God is already among you.’** Some translations say ‘within you’.
- In creation God spoke and it came to be, His will was done – this was the Kingdom of God, in the sea’s and the sky, in the stars in the Oceans and land, in every stone, tree plant and creature – God saw it was good – it was His will – it was His reign, it was His Kingdom.
- God’s will – His reign is built into the very heart of our being – you could say it is our natural state.
- At the ‘Fall’ man’s rebellion didn’t destroy the image of God built into each one of us, not did it destroy the Kingdom of God, what it did was to raise up another kingdom – the kingdom of darkness
- When we return to the true King, our choices and decisions and life begin to resonate with creation itself to release blessing. It makes perfect sense – creation works best when it is under the rule and reign of the creator!
- In **Mark 1:15** Jesus says **“‘The time promised by God has come at last!’ he announced. “The Kingdom of God is near (at hand, or within grasp)! Repent of your sins and believe the Good News!”** Here Jesus emphasises that the Kingdom of God that is already present among or within us, needs to be reached for. It is not automatic, it is not something we are born into, fall into or are pushed into. Instead it is something we need to reach out for – and the way we reach for it is through repentance.
- The Kingdom of God is still to come - The harmony of creation cannot be restored until the false thrones and those who occupy them are thrown down and that will come at Christ’s return. Then we will see the fulfilment of our prayer ‘Your Kingdom come your will be done on earth as it is in heaven’. Then we will see Jesus who has fasted from wine since the Last Supper, celebrating with us in the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Talk 3 – Entering the Kingdom – Summary

(Original Talk available on the website Audio page, 12th March 2017)

- **Matthew 7:21 [True Disciples] “Not everyone who calls out to me, ‘Lord! Lord!’ will enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Only those who actually do the will of my Father in heaven will enter’** - those things that are in accordance with His will could be said to be ‘within the Kingdom’, whereas those things that are contrary to God’s will, that have not submitted to His reign, are ‘outside of the Kingdom’ (i.e. sin)
- Salvation through faith in Jesus can be related to becoming a citizen of the Kingdom.
- It is possible to ‘enter the Kingdom’ by doing the will of God, without having received salvation or become a citizen.
- It is possible as a citizen to do those things that are not in accordance with God’s will and in that regard we are ‘outside the Kingdom’
- This ability to ‘cross the borders’ of the Kingdom in this way is because at the moment the Kingdom of God co-exists with the kingdoms of the world
- One day, the Kingdom of God will be the only one that exists, it will not then be possible to move between Kingdoms, you will need by then to have become a full citizen of the Kingdom of God
- Eternal life is possible only because we have become citizens of a Kingdom that is eternal, while all other kingdoms will pass away.
- The reason that citizenship or re-birth is only possible through faith in Jesus is that sin is a barrier to citizenship. It is like an endorsement on our passport which prevents us from becoming citizens
- As Jesus hung on the cross – He took upon Himself our sentence of death and He offered us a way, not just to have the endorsement removed, but to receive a brand new passport as we are reborn as citizens of the Kingdom
- Now as citizens of the Kingdom we are called to live lives which are compatible with the Kingdom of God.

Talk 4 – Attitudes in the Kingdom – summary

(Original Talk available on the website Audio page, 2nd April 2017)

- The teacher of the religious law described in Mark 12:28-34 understood love is central.
- Love is more important than all sacrifice or offering
- In **Isaiah 1:11-18** we feel the disgust of God for those who make a show of religion but whose hearts are far from Him.
- From **1 Cor 13** we see love in practice, not just a warm feeling but a concrete, practical way to live.
- In **Matt 18:1-4** and **Mark 10:13-16** Jesus encourages us to enter or receive the Kingdom of God ‘like a child’ – with humility, innocence, Trust, simplicity and fun.
- Although called to be childlike we are not called to be childish.