

Thy Kingdom Come

i. Scripture introduction

- A. Please turn to book of Acts (Acts of the Apostles): chp 1
 - 1. Two weeks ago Ben preached through vv 1-5
 - 2. Today we'll look at vv 6-11
- B. Before we read this, let's pray and ask for the Spirit's aid

ii. Prayer

iii. Scripture Reading: Acts 1:1-11

iv. Introduction

- A. **Now I know it's not proper to go to the end of a book and read the last chapter**
 - 1. But I want you to turn to the very end of Acts: Acts 28
 - 2. Look at vv 30-31
 - 3. This is talking about the Apostle Paul: vv 30-31 (**READ**)
 - 4. How does Acts close?
 - 5. With the Apostle Paul proclaiming *the Kingdom of God* and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ
- B. **Compare that with what we read about Jesus in beginning of Acts**
 - 1. 1:3 – *He presented himself alive to them after His suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.*
 - 2. Acts opens with this concept about the Kingdom of God
 - 3. And Acts closes with this concept about the Kingdom of God
 - 4. This concept: *The Kingdom of God* acts like 2 bookends
- C. If we were to ask: *What's main message of book of Acts?*
 - 1. You guessed it
 - 2. The main message is *The Kingdom of God*
- D. **But what is the Kingdom of God?**
 - 1. Throughout the Gospels, Jesus' main message was: *Repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand*
 - 2. We are told in the Lord's Prayer:
Our Father, hallowed be Thy Name...
Thy Kingdom come... [lit. "Bring in Your Kingdom"]
 - 3. Matt 6 instructs us to:
Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness...
- E. **So, what is the Kingdom of God?**
 - 1. I can't answer that in 30 minutes time
 - 2. Jesus took 40 days of meeting with His Apostles to teach the Kingdom of God
 - 3. And after 40 days they still didn't fully grasp it (they would... but not at this point)
- F. **Thankfully we will answer that question as we make our way through Acts** (will be a continual learning experience)
- G. **For today, I simply want us to see that the Kingdom of God is something much more amazing than we can imagine**

H. Let me explain it like this

1. Tom & Lori Milo, members of PPC, embarked on a cruise this weekend
2. Traveling with their daughter, son-in-law & 2 grandkids
3. I asked Tom Friday morning:
 - a. *So are Liam & Belle excited about the cruise?*
 - b. He said: *Oh yes, they're so excited, but they have no clue what a cruise is*
 - c. *All they know is that they're going to live for a week in a big boat*
4. Can you imagine what these little kids are going to think when they see the enormity of the ship...
 - a. When they see the pools and play areas
 - b. When they go to the restaurants & buffets (desserts)
 - c. It's going to blow their minds

I. This is how Jesus wants us to see the Kingdom of God

1. No, not as a cruise
2. But as something bigger than we can comprehend
3. Something more amazing than we can fathom

J. In this passage, Jesus expands our vision of what the Kingdom of God is

1. The Apostles understood it, but they really didn't grasp it
2. Same for us: we may understand it, but we really don't grasp it

K. And I love the patience Jesus has here...

1. With His Apostles...
2. And with us

L. In this passage, I see 3 areas where the Apostles needed help in understanding the Kingdom

1. 3 areas where Jesus expands their vision
2. 3 areas that we also struggle with

1. First area has to do with the nature of the Kingdom:

Apostles saw THE KINGDOM OF GOD AS SPACIAL

Something that is external, tangible, and measurable

Jesus says: IT'S NOT SO MUCH SPACIAL, IT'S SPIRITUAL

A. Look at the question they ask Jesus in v 6: very telling

"Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"

1. In their minds...
 - a. They were thinking spacially, literal geography
 - b. Were anticipating a restoration of Israel as a nation
 - c. They were thinking Jerusalem and surrounding areas would be liberated from Rome - independence
 - d. They were thinking Jesus would be the King to sit on David's throne
 - e. Were thinking Jewish Kingdom would be restored...
 - f. That it would expand spacially for Israel to get back all her land
 - g. They were thinking way too literal and too small
2. *Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?*
 - a. I love how Jesus answers
 - b. Doesn't say: *No you numskulls! Don't you get it?*
 - c. He doesn't even say *yes* or *no*

3. **Instead, He says (v 7):**

It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth

- a. He says: *as to times/seasons, it's not for you to know*
- b. *It's not for you to be concerned about*
- c. *But, you will receive power when the HS has come upon you*
- d. The word *receive* – it's a great word
 - Yes it means to receive
 - But it's more active than passive
 - Means: *You will grab, you will take hold of, you will possess*

4. *When the HS has come upon you, that's when you will take hold of power*

- a. The coming of the HS will make all the difference
- b. That's why Jesus told His Apostles to wait in Jerusalem for the promise
- c. In a few days, you will be baptized with the HS

5. So to sum up, the Kingdom of God...

- a. Is not spacial, it's spiritual
- b. It's not external, it's internal

6. **What's interesting is that this was not a new teaching**

- a. Jesus had been teaching this all along
- b. In Luke 17 we have an account of the Pharisees asking Jesus about the Kingdom of God
- c. Luke 17:20-21

Being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, he answered them, "The kingdom of God is not coming in ways that can be observed, nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There!' for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you."

- d. The Kingdom of God is not a tangible thing
- e. It is something within God's people
- f. It is the God's Spirit indwelling God's people

B. I want to pause here to say I think we can be just as guilty as these pre-Pentecost Apostles

1. It's easier to visualize a spacial & tangible Kingdom than a spiritual kingdom
2. When I hear the term Kingdom...
 - a. I think of a king sitting on a throne
 - b. He's living in a big castle with a wall
 - c. I think of land extending from the castle into the multiple villages and land around
 - d. I think of the visions in Revelation
 - e. The New Jerusalem coming down to earth
3. But those are just physical pictures pointing to the spiritual realities
4. The Kingdom of God is about the Spirit dwelling in each of us as individuals, and in us as a collective
5. **Kingdom of God is about us taking hold of true spiritual power**
 - a. This also has application for the Church
 - b. One thing we said we said when we bought this building, and we still say it
 - c. The Church is not this building; we are the church
 - d. If this building caught fire and burned down, we wouldn't be cease to be the Church
 - What makes us the Church?
 - The Spirit of God in our midst

C. **Before we move on, I want to answer one more question**

1. How do we maintain this proper vision of the Kingdom?
2. In John 3, we have the story of Nicodemus
3. Nicodemus was a Pharisee; went at night to talk to Jesus
4. And Jesus said something profound
 - a. *Unless one is born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God*
 - b. In other words: unless you are born again, you are blind to the Kingdom of God
 - c. You won't be able to see it
5. This being "born again" is what we call regeneration
 - a. How God had regenerated our hearts
 - b. How God has saved us when we were dead in sin
 - c. He made us alive in Christ Jesus
6. Only when we are regenerated can we see the KOG
7. How are you regenerated?
 - a. It's a work of God's grace
 - b. But if you're worried that you're not regenerated...
 - c. Pray to receive it; ask for life
 - d. As we saw in Rom 10: *Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved*
 - e. And if you're questioning whether or not you've been born again, and you want to be, that's an indication that the Lord has already worked in your heart

C. So, that's the first area where we need our vision expanded

1. The Kingdom of God is not spacial, it's spiritual
2. It has to do with the nature of the Kingdom

2. 2nd area has to do with the composition of the Kingdom:

Apostles saw THE KINGDOM OF GOD AS NATIONAL

That is to say it's just for Israel

Jesus says: NO, IT'S NOT NATIONAL, IT'S INTERNATIONAL

A. **Consider again their question:** *Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?*

1. "To Israel"
 - a. Question not just will you restore the kingdom?
 - b. But will you restore the kingdom to Israel?
2. **In their minds they may have been thinking** (I'm speculating here)...
 - a. That with Jesus now risen from the dead, amazing things were about to happen
 - b. Maybe all the OT prophesies were about to come true
 - Nations would come streaming to Jerusalem
 - Gentiles would come and convert to Judaism
 - Perhaps they thought of Micah 4

It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and it shall be lifted up above the hills; and peoples shall flow to it,

And many nations shall come, and say: "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths."

3. If they thought this, they were on the right track
4. But it was bigger than this

B. Consider again Jesus' response to their question

1. v 7: *It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth*
2. Here is what Jesus is saying: It's not so much that the nations will stream into Jerusalem; it's that you all will stream into the nations
 - a. Yes, you'll start here in Jerusalem...
 - b. Jerusalem will be the epicenter
 - c. But you will move from here south & north (to Judea & Samaria)
 - d. And then you'll move to end of the earth
3. And all the while you are going as my witnesses
 - a. Pause here: What does Jesus mean by witnesses?
 - b. Peter gives us insight
 - c. He and the others are needing to replace Judas
 - Peter sets the qualifications
 - Look at v 21 ff (**READ**)
 - Being a witness here is one who witnessed Jesus' resurrection
4. Essentially Jesus is telling His Apostles: Armed with the power of the Spirit, you are going to tell others about me
5. You are going to deliver the Gospel
6. It's going to be international

B. Now this is a very crude analogy, but it works

1. Two weeks ago Tara and I flew from Atlanta to Seoul Korea
 - a. There in the Seoul airport, 3rd floor
 - b. I saw that famous white sign with green lettering
 - c. Krispy Kreme Donuts (piece of Winston-Salem)
2. A week later we're driving down a busy street in Manila, Philippines
 - a. I had to do a double take
 - b. Krispy Kreme donuts
 - c. Same colors, same logo
3. Krispy-Kreme has gone international
4. Spreading the good news of "Hot donuts now!"
5. Something so delicious has made it's way around the world

C. And how much more delicious is the Gospel!

1. The message that brings eternal life
2. As Paul said, *I am not ashamed of the Gospel, b/c it's the power of salvation for all who believe!*

D. How can we apply this to us?

1. In a local sense, it's tempting to think just because we're here as a church, people will stream to us
 - a. It's the "Field of Dreams" approach to evangelism
 - b. If you build it, they will come
2. And it happens... but very rarely
3. We have to be deliberate to take the Gospel to those outside the church
 - a. Yes, we do this in our support of missions
 - b. Do your neighbors know where you go to church?
 - c. Do your neighbors even know you go to church?

E. Because if you're a Christian, it means several things

1. One: That you have been born again
2. Two: That your spirit has been resurrected (made alive)
3. Which means you're a witness of Christ's resurrection
4. And it means you have the Spirit of God
5. Which means you have power

F. And it's amazing how God wants to expand His Kingdom through us

G. Kingdom of God is not natural, it's international

3. Final area of vision expansion has to do with the activity of the Kingdom of God:

It's tempting to see THE KINGDOM OF GOD AS WORSHIP

And it is, but IT'S NOT JUST WORSHIP, IT'S ALSO WORK

A. Here's where Christ's ascension takes on meaning

1. Apostles knew it was final; Christ completed His work
 - a. For the previous 40 days Jesus appeared to them...
 - b. Then He'd disappear for a while
 - c. But here, this is it
 - d. Apostles knew it was His final act
2. He was lifted up and ascended into the heavens
3. And we read the Apostles continued to gaze upwards
 - a. What were they thinking as they saw Him?
 - b. Probably were awestruck
 - c. Watching until he was far too high to see
4. I remember watching the eclipse several years ago
 - a. After it was over, there was a reverent awe
 - b. I continued to marvel
 - c. I imagine the Apostles were blown away
5. We don't know how long they stood around...
 - a. But it must have been long enough that God had to snap them back into reality
 - b. God sends two angels
 - c. Now they are ones to ask the Apostles a question
6. I love their question: *Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.*
7. **What's their point?**
8. **Or, perhaps we should ask why God sent the angels**
 - a. In Luke & Acts, Luke shows us how angels appear when someone needs to get busy or get ready
 - An angel visited Zechariah to announce John
 - Same angel visited Mary to announce Jesus
 - Angels at Jesus' birth: announced to shepherds
 - Angels at tomb to announce Jesus' resurrection
 - b. Now, two angels appear to Apostles
9. **And I love their words!**
 - a. Their address: *Men of Galilee*
 - Not: *you Apostles, you disciples...*
 - *You men of Galilee*

- It's tender and a little humorous
- Reminds them of their humble beginnings
- Would be like: *you sweet people from Concord*
- b. Then the question: *why do you stand looking into heaven?*
- c. It's a soft rebuke
- d. If I could paraphrase it, the message would be:
 - *Guys, it's time to stop stargazing...*
 - *It's time to get busy*
 - *The Kingdom of God is at hand...*
 - *And you all are the ones to kick it off*
 - *Jesus will return as you saw Him go...*
 - *But until then, it's time to get busy*
 - *It's time to work for the Kingdom*

B. To be honest, I can relate to these Apostles

1. So often I want, as the hymn says, to be lost in wonder, love, and praise
2. There are times we sing a song & I don't want it to end
3. Are times I just want to lie on a beach chair at ocean, looking up to heaven and praying for Christ's return
4. It's at those times I need the message of these angels
 - a. *Mark, it's time to stop stargazing...*
 - b. *It's time to get busy*
 - c. *The Kingdom of God is at hand...*
 - d. *And you are one of the ones to keep it advancing*
 - e. *Jesus will return again...*
 - f. *But until then, it's time to get busy*
 - g. *It's time to work for the Kingdom*

C. That's what I mean when I say the Kingdom of God is not just worship, it's work

1. And, as we will see, it's the best work we can engage in
2. It's dangerous, It's never boring
3. It's exhilarating, it's amazing
4. And it's incredibly rewarding as we see sinners turn into saints by the Gospel

v. Conclusion

A. So when Tara & were in the Philippines, we met a missionary named Gary

1. Gary is from Oregon
 - a. He told us about his historic craftsman home
 - b. How we loves life in a beautiful state; loves to visit home
2. But Gary fell in love with the poor people of Manila
 - a. He moved into one of their poorest neighborhoods
 - b. Called Banaba
 - c. Been there for years; poured himself into the people
 - d. Loving them, meeting their needs
 - c. Discipling them
3. Well, Tara and I were sitting with Gary in one of the poorest slums of Manila
 - a. And Gary was holding a 2-year-old boy named Kai
 - b. Gary explained to us

c. *Kai is going to be my grandson*

4. You see, Gary had applied to the Manila government to adopt Kai's father as his own son
 - a. Gary is the last surviving heir of his family
 - b. He has 5 sisters; no brothers
 - c. And Gary isn't married
 - d. And so he is adopting this family as his own
 - Giving them his name
 - Giving them all that belongs to his estate
5. So here we are
 - a. We are in the slums
 - b. A small river of sewer water trickling down street
 - c. Poverty everywhere (we're in a place that floods every year)
 - d. We asked why they don't move away; Gary said they have no where else to go
 - e. So each year they lose everything, evacuate, and then return to rebuild (so sad!)
6. And I look at this little 2-year-old Kai
7. And I think to myself
 - a. *You have no clue what is happening*
 - b. *You have no clue what inheritance awaits you*
 - c. *This hard life in the slums of Manila will one day be traded for a house and land you can't even comprehend*

B. Oh church, this is the view we need for us

1. If you are in Christ, you have been adopted
2. We are heirs of Christ
3. He came into the squalor of our world
4. He came to live in our continual brokenness
5. He came to pour Himself into us
6. He came to love us and adopt us as His own
7. We have no idea of what awaits us
8. The Kingdom of God is at hand
9. And we get to be part of it!