

Introduction To The Sermon On The Mount

I. Forerunning God's Coming Kingdom

(Matthew 3:1-6 NASB) "Now in those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, 2 "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." 3 For this is the one referred to by Isaiah the prophet when he said, "The voice of one calling out in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way of the Lord, Make His paths straight!'" 4 Now John himself had a garment of camel's hair and a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey. 5 At that time Jerusalem was going out to him, and all Judea and all the region around the Jordan; 6 and they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, as they confessed their sins."

- a. Before Jesus began His public ministry, His cousin, John the Baptist, took on the role of "preparing the way of the Lord". He devoted his ministry to proclaiming the forthcoming arrival of the Messiah. As a new prophet and the son of a priest, John did not adhere to traditional methods of ministry; instead, he chose the path of the wilderness, living a life set apart as a forerunner of God's Kingdom. His message was straightforward yet revolutionary: "Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand."
- b. The first part of his message, repentance, involves someone coming to their God-inspired senses, acknowledging that they are in opposition to Him, and being convinced to change their mind and actions. Repentance wasn't a new concept to the people, but during this time, there was a sense of urgency attached to the necessity for repentance. The reason for this urgency was that the Kingdom of heaven was at hand.

(2 Timothy 2:24-26 NASB) "The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, skillful in teaching, patient when wronged, 25 with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, 26 and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will."

- c. John proclaimed, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." The phrase "at hand" is a Jewish idiom meaning something is "immediately present." Through this declaration, John was announcing that Jesus, the King, was initiating His earthly reign. However, many people of that time did not realize that Jesus was not coming initially as a conquering warrior king, but rather as a servant and a sacrificial lamb. His complete earthly dominion would not be fully realized until His second coming and the establishment of His literal and physical kingdom. John's forerunner lifestyle and constant proclamation highlighted the arrival of the "already but not yet" kingdom.
- d. When Jesus began His earthly ministry, He was not delivering an entirely new and revolutionary message; rather, He echoed His cousin John's sermon: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." This repetition is significant because Jesus was not merely validating John's message, but was also establishing a sort of "vision and mission statement" for His own ministry. Jesus came to announce the inauguration of His kingdom and to offer a way for people to embrace it.

(2 Peter 1:3-11 NASB) "for His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. 4 Through these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world on account of lust. 5 Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, 6 and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, 7 and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. 8 For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they do not make you useless nor unproductive in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 For the one who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins. 10 Therefore, brothers and sisters, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choice of you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; 11 for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you."

II. The Early Ministry of Jesus

- a. In the Sermon on the Mount found in **Matthew 5-7**, Jesus outlines the value system of His Kingdom. However, before He preached on these core values of His Kingdom, He went around “proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom”. Jesus then affirmed the truth of His message by demonstrating the Kingdom's power and authority through various acts and miracles.

(Matthew 4:23-24 NASB) “Jesus was going about in all of Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every sickness among the people. 24 And the news about Him spread throughout Syria; and they brought to Him all who were ill, those suffering with various diseases and severe pain, demon-possessed, people with epilepsy, and people who were paralyzed; and He healed them.”

- b. Gospel of the kingdom – The “gospel of the kingdom” is the announcement of His perfect and complete leadership and the good news of His coming kingdom that will be everlasting and unshakable. The Gospel of the Kingdom has been proclaimed since mankind’s fall in the Garden (the protoevangelium), but the book of Daniel gives us a clear synopsis of the “gospel of the kingdom”.

(Genesis 3:15 NIV) “And I will put enmity between you [the serpent] and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he [Jesus] will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.”

(Daniel 7:13-14 NASB) “I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a son of man [Jesus] was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days [The Father] And was presented before Him. 14 And to Him was given dominion, Honor, and a kingdom, so that all the peoples, nations, and populations of all languages Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed.”

- c. Jesus promised that the “gospel of the kingdom” would be preached to all nations, and He commissioned His followers to go into all the world to proclaim it, live it, and disciple people in it. The mandate for those who follow Christ isn’t just to tell people Jesus died for them, but to proclaim His coming kingdom and to live a kingdom lifestyle.

(Matthew 24:14 NASB) “This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.”

(Matthew 28:18-20 NASB) “And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. 19 Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to follow all that I commanded you; and behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.””

- d. Healing every disease and every sickness – Jesus then demonstrated the undeniable authority and power of the kingdom He preached about by operating in signs, wonders, and miracles. It is also the destiny of the church walk in the footsteps of Jesus ministry, meaning that when we preach the gospel of the kingdom, we should also walk in signs, wonders, and miracles.

(Mark 16:15-20 NASB) “And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation...17 These signs will accompany [gk. parakolothéo - to be always present, to attend one wherever he goes] those who have believed: in My name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues; 18 they will pick up serpents, and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not harm them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.”... 20 And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them, and confirmed the word by the signs that followed.”

(Acts 4:29-30, 33 NASB) “...grant it to Your bond-servants to speak Your word with all confidence, 30 while You extend Your hand to heal, and signs and wonders take place through the name of Your holy servant Jesus. 33 And with great power the apostles were giving testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and abundant grace was upon them all”

(1 Thessalonians 1:5 NASB) “for our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sakes”

III. The Sermon on The Mount As An Invitation

- a. The Sermon on the Mount is a profound teaching on the ethical and moral principles of the Kingdom of Heaven. It describes the attitudes and character traits that are blessed, such as meekness, mercy, and purity of heart. In the sermon on the mount Jesus emphasizes the fulfillment and deepening of the Law, urging His followers to transcend mere obedience and embody genuine righteousness, including loving one's enemies and avoiding judgment. Jesus provides instructions on practices like prayer, fasting, and giving. The sermon concludes with a call to trust in God, seek His righteousness, and build one's life on the solid foundation of His teachings.
- b. The Sermon on the Mount isn't just a dogmatic list of rules to follow to impress God and earn a spot in Heaven, but an invitation to embrace the values of His Kingdom and live a lifestyle that prophesies of the age to come and Jesus' perfect leadership. As we embrace the value system of His kingdom, I believe we'll walk in it's power and authority. When the body of Christ embraces a Kingdom lifestyle (sermon on the Mount lifestyle), we will inevitably provoke believers to walk wholeheartedly and unbelievers to come to the knowledge of God which results in the hastening of the 2nd coming of Jesus.

(Hebrews 10:19-25 NASB) "Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, through His flesh, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 let's approach God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. 23 Let's hold firmly to the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; 24 and let's consider how to encourage one another in love and good deeds, 25 not abandoning our own meeting together, as is the habit of some people, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near."

(1 Peter 2:11-12 NASB) "Beloved, I urge you as foreigners and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts, which wage war against the soul. 12 Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God on the day of visitation."

(2 Peter 3:11-12 NASB) "...What sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, 12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God"