



## BELLVILLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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# THE LIFE OF JESUS THE KINGDOM OF GOD

## Mark 1

~ Brent Russell ~

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- I really want us to concentrate on the statement Jesus makes in Mark 1:15 about the **Kingdom of God**
- We understand that nothing in the scriptures are **there by chance**
- And the things recorded are done so because God wants us to know something
- And so here right at the very **start of Jesus ministry**;
- Immediately **after being baptised and then tempted** in the desert
- **Before finding his twelve** helpers for the three years of travelling ministry
- **Here, Mark records the start of Jesus preaching ministry**
  
- **And Jesus himself describes it in these words: "The time has come, the Kingdom of God is near, repent and believe the good news"**
- It is the **Kingdom of God that is central and basic to Jesus ministry** all through his life
- All of his teaching rest on the truths of this Kingdom
- Jesus **speaks to people from all walks of life about the Kingdom of God**
- He uses it in the **parables** he uses to **illustrate** the finer points of understanding God's love for us
- For Jesus there are two sides to this **eternal battle for good and evil**
- And you are either in the **Kingdom of God** or in the **Kingdom of Hell**
- And all of Jesus preaching and teaching was about this **central principal of the KOG**
  - Do you **belong to the kingdom of God**?
  - And how do **those who belong to the Kingdom behave**?

- **The KOG is spoken of 100 times in the NT**
- And **86 of these are in the four Gospels** recording the three years of Jesus life and ministry
- Matthew being a **more devout Jew** uses the term "**Kingdom of Heaven**" rather than the "Kingdom of God" the thirty three times he mentions it
- God being too holy and awesome to have His name spoken aloud, so Matthew talks of heaven rather than God
- 86 times **Jesus himself** speaks of or about the Kingdom of God
- **Jesus speaks of the Kingdom in parables, but it is never completely explained to us**
- Jesus in teaching of the Kingdom He tells us it is like a **mustard seed, a fishing net, like yeast, like buried treasure, like a king, a merchant, an owner, like a landlord, like a sower**
- **So central to the message of the Gospels is the Kingdom of God that it is important that we build some foundation on it as Rod and I teach you about Jesus**
- **Every event** of Jesus life
- **Every lesson** of Jesus teaching
- **Every action** of Jesus ministry is founded on the **reality and reign of the Kingdom of God**
- This Kingdom that **has always been**
- This Kingdom that is **present now**
- This Kingdom that **will come**
- Please keep your Bibles open I am going to make you work for this one
- **We are going to do lots of reading...and we are going to look at a number of statements Jesus makes about the Kingdom of God**
- **To help us understand some of the basic principals about the Kingdom**

## 1. KINGDOM OF GOD IS IN YOU – LUKE 17:20-21

- **Jesus in Luke 17:20 speaks of the Kingdom of God being in us**
- **Let me start by explaining that the Kingdom of God is not a place**
- You **cannot drive** there in a car
- You **cannot fly** there in a spaceship
- **It does not exist as a location or a place or a space anywhere in the universe or universes if you understand a little more of the theoretical physics of Stephen Hawking**
- The **Kingdom of God is not heaven**, which of course does exist as a place, and is as real as my house in Durbanville
- **Heaven is IN the KOG, part of the KOG; but it is NOT the KOG**
- **The best way to explain the KOG is that it is everywhere that you might find the power and the reign of God**
- **His Kingdom exists in every place that he has rule over**
- Can you **see electricity**?
- Can you **store it** in a bottle?
- Can you **touch and smell** it?
- **Yet you can see it's power everywhere**
- Every **light bulb**, every **TV**, **computer**, **radio** and **oven** is evidence of it
- **But you can contain or see it**
- **But you can see where it is and you can see it's effect**
- **So it is with the KOG**
- **It is anywhere where you might see God's presence, his rule and his power**
- you may **not see Him** – but you can **see where he is action**
- When you see **people loving with selfless Love** there is God's kingdom because it is only by His power that we can love in this way
- Where you see **God's blessing and provision**– there is God's kingdom because it by his power that we get these things
- Where we see **ordinary people doing extraordinary** things there is God's power because it is made perfect in human weakness
- **Where God's spirit rules – there is God's kingdom**
- You cannot see, touch or taste the kingdom of God, but you can see it's power and experience it's fruit - **Romans 14:17 *For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit***
- **When we are under the rule of the Holy Spirit then we are in the kingdom of God**
- **Or more wonderfully true the Kingdom in us**
- **Where we are, we carry the rule of God into the world**

- **Where we go the Kingdom of God is**
  
- **Isn't that great when you walk into a room you bring the kingdom of God with you**
- **Wherever** you go **whoever** you meet **whatever** you do you bring the rule of God, the Kingdom of God with you
- **And like an ambassador of a foreign country is not under the rule of that country**
- **So we who are in the world do not belong to it**
- We are in the world, but do not **operate under it's rules**
- **Our allegiance belongs to another King**
- **We are aliens, foreigners in every way in this world, our home nation is the realm Kingdom of God**
- **The kingdom within us will make us act differently to the world**
- **Where God reigns, different rules apply:**
  - **The world says buy, grab and take – the effect of Kingdom of God in us makes us generous – Our thanksgiving offering was over R160 000**
  - **The world says look after yourself - the effect of Kingdom of God in us makes us build a house for others**
  - **The world says be promiscuous – the Kingdom says be holy**
  - **The world says outward appearance is important – The Kingdom is about the heart**
  - **The world says there is no hope – we say all hope is in King Jesus**
  - **The world says there is no truth – we say there is only one truth and that truth is Christ**
- **We are in the world but because we are citizens of the Kingdom of God we work by it's rules**
- **And that Kingdom is within us as we allow Jesus reign in our lives**

## 2. KINGDOM OF GOD HAS ONE ENTRANCE – JOHN 3:1-6, 16-21

- There is **one door** to this Kingdom
- There is only **one way that God has given to all humanity for us to enter the realm of his rule**
- Like a **fortified city would have only one gate** by which people might enter
- There is but **one entrance to the Kingdom of God**
- There are **other places that look like they may offer entrance to this city**
- Other places by which **people suppose we might get in**
- **But there is no other way for God to be in your life except by Jesus**
- When **Nicodemus** comes in the dark of night to Jesus
- He is told the **way the Kingdom of God is to be born again**
- And to born again is to be **born of the Spirit of God**
- And it is **by this Spirit**, in the **name of the Son** that we **come under the wing of our heavenly father**
  
- **Jesus is the way the truth and the life and no one comes to the father except through him**
- **The only entrance way is found by those, who believing in the eternal son of God have been born again**
- **If you want to be part of the Kingdom of God there is one door and one door only given to us through which we can be part of this Kingdom**
- **Acts 4:12 tells us** "*Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.*"

### 3. KINGDOM OF GOD IS FOR THOSE WHO COME LIKE CHILDREN – MARK 10:13-16

- Some have suggested that we should come to God with **naïve faith**
- That we should **not question** God
- **or seek to understand** his ways
- **But I don't believe this to be true**
  
- **Children ask lots of questions**
- Children will ask it again and again "WHY?"
- And at some point they will **accept the truth that parents know things that they don't**
- And despite the questions the **accept in simple trust that the parent will look after their best interests**
- **The Kingdom of God is just not for those who blindly accept things**
- It is not just for those who have **no questions**
- It is not just for those who find it **easy to believe**
- **The Kingdom of God belongs to those who come like children to be blessed by God despite not knowing everything and despite their doubts**
  
- **Coming to God like children is not working with naïve blind faith**
- **But rather coming to God with all our doubts and suspicions**
- **Coming to God with all our fears and worries**
- **The Kingdom of God belongs to those who come believing that *"in all things God will work for the good of those who love Him and are called according to his purposes"***

## 4. KINGDOM OF GOD HARD TO ENTER FOR THE WEALTHY –

### MARK 10:17-25

- **All of our society, everything on radio and TV**
- **Almost everything around us** is driven by the never ending mechanism of the **commercial engine**
- And our **measures of success or failure** in life are often shaped by our **perception of our wealth and status**
  
- As much as we might **know this to be wrong** and against God's will
- **We all find it hard NOT to get sucked into this commercial measure of our worth**
- **It is a sign that we give our wealth too much power in our lives**
  
- The warning by Jesus is so **uncompromising** here
- **If you are wealthy** – and that means if you own two or more cars or have rooms in your house used largely for storing stuff you don't really need
- Then it will be harder for you to enter this Kingdom of Heaven than for those who are poor
- If it is **hard for you to make your monthly payments**
- If you have to **eat cheap and basic foods** because you **can afford no other**
- **Then you will find it so much easier to enter this Kingdom of which Jesus speaks**
- **Because The way to the Kingdom is narrow and if we are carrying our wealth with us we will find our progress on the road to the kingdom, slow and hard going and we may be tempted to stop and hang onto our bags of wealth rather than leave it behind and find this kingdom of God**
  
- **Jesus warns us, do not underestimate the power of your wealth to keep you outside this Kingdom of God**

## 5. KINGDOM OF GOD IS WORTHY OF ANY SACRIFICE –

### MARK 9:42-48

- **Just how desperate are you to live?**
- If you had to put **some value on your life**, what would you be willing to **pay**,
- What would you be **willing to do or to give up, to remain a living breathing human being?**
- I imagine that for most of us we would give a lot and do almost anything to remain living
- We would pay huge medical cost to add a few weeks or months to our lives
  
- A couple of years ago a young guy went **hiking in an American canyon** and had his arm trapped by a boulder that dislodged in the valley
- His name was **Aaron Ralston**
- And after a number of days of being trapped **he finally broke the bones in his arm**
- And then with his **penknife, sawed through the tendons and the flesh** and finally made his way to safety less an arm
  
- **He was so desperate to live that he was prepared to do the unimaginable**
- **And the question Jesus is asking us here is: "Just how desperate are you to live?"**
- Not with Biological life – **Bios, with the air in our lungs and the beat of our heart**
- But how desperate are you for eternal life – **Zoë the life of Christ**
- **Just how desperate are you to be part of the Kingdom of God?**
  
- **For where the rule of God is; the rule of death has been overcome**
- **Where God's kingdom is – there is eternal life**
- **Death has been swallowed up in victory**
  
- **And just how desperate are you for this life, for this Kingdom?**
  
- **The scriptures tell us to "seek first the kingdom of God"**
- **The image is one of storming a city**
- **With a sense of hunger, a sense of urgency ,with a sense of purpose**

- **The kingdom of God is not for the apathetic**
- **It is not for the lazy**
- **The kingdom of God is for those who are desperate for God to rule their lives**
- **The Kingdom of God is for those who will seek God's kingdom first and above all else**
- **The kingdom of God is not for those who will put family before Jesus**
- In Matthew's Gospel Jesus himself tells us if you love your husband or wife or children more than me you are not worthy of me
- **This is fanatical stuff Jesus is talking about here**
- **But the kingdom of God is for those who are desperate to be part of it**
- **It is for those who are desperate to have eternal life and all the blessings that come with being part of the kingdom of God**
- **It is for those who are willing to make every sacrifice for it even to the point of sacrificing money, relationships**
- **Jesus making the point using a little hyperbole tells us we must even cut off our body parts if any of these would keep us from the kingdom of God**
- **The kingdom of God is where God reigns**
- **The Kingdom of God has one entrance – Christ**
- **The kingdom of God is for those who come as children to God accepting his sovereignty**
- **The Kingdom of God is hard for the rich to enter**
- **The kingdom of God is for those who are desperate for God**
  
- **The kingdom of God is within those who have allowed themselves with all their questions, all their sin all the problems to be consumed by the rule of God in every area of their lives**
- Read together Matthew 6:25-34: "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? "And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.