

# The Way of Jesus

## Week 9 - The Gospel Jesus Announced, Part I

### Key Verse:

"Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel."  
Mark 1:14-15 (RSV)

"Jesus then came into Galilee announcing the good news from God. 'All the preliminaries have been taken care of,' he said, 'and the rule of God is now accessible to everyone. Review your plans for living and base your life on this remarkable new opportunity.'" Mark 1.14-15 (DW, quoted in DC, p.15)

### Key Terms:

- **Our Kingdom** is "the range of our effective will... where our choice determines what happens." (DC, p.21)
- **God's Kingdom** is the range of his effective will, which extends throughout creation, except for the Satanic realm for a while (DC, p.26)
- **The Gospel of his Kingdom** is the good news that his kingdom is present and available to any and all through simple trust in Jesus, bringing the remarkable resources of his kingdom for life and living.

### Reflections on God's Kingdom

1. **Definition:** The Kingdom of God was the major teaching topic of Jesus in his earthly ministry. God's Kingdom is the extent of God's effective rule and the dominant reality of all creation. It is where God is King and where He redeems and rules and reigns through His Son.
2. **Time:** It is eternal. (Exo 15.18; Psa 145.13; Luke 1.33; Rev 11.15) For believers, eternity begins now. "Old age" is lived in that light. This life's lessons, wisdom, & responsibilities carry over into eternity and set the stage for what is to come. Nothing is wasted.
3. **Access:** The Kingdom is fully available in Jesus. The door is "wide and low"; anyone may come - just stoop and enter. See the Beatitudes in Matt 5. This was apostolic preaching (Acts 1.6; 8.12; 20.21; 28.23, 31). The name of Jesus unlocks the door and the resources of the kingdom.
4. **Identity:** You are a "never ceasing spiritual being, with an eternal destiny in God's great universe. Spiritual in substance. Never-ceasing in duration. Creative governance in destiny." (DW) Your life as a human being is completed only by living in and from the kingdom, that is by trusting Jesus Christ, who brings us into the redemption and rule of God, and through our

discipleship to him enables us to fulfill the covenant of Genesis 1.26-31 for eternity.

5. **Authority:** All "say" is given to Jesus (Matt 28.18). So we can have full confidence in Jesus for all of life; every relationship, circumstance, opportunity, crisis, or decision. We can go to him with complete confidence in his wisdom and his leading. His authority is shared with his partners (Luke 9 & 10; Willard, Hearing God, pp 130-33).
6. **Discipleship:** Faith and Obedience are the primary connection between us and Jesus in the life of the Kingdom. We are his apprentices, those who live with and study and apply the teachings of a master for every part of their lives, and become like the master on the inside so that we act like him on the outside. It is not possible to be a disciple of Jesus without the intention to follow him. The major barrier to this apprentice life is our 'self-life', which must be set aside (Luke 14.25-33).
7. **Grace** is not just for the forgiveness of our past, but also for living in the present (2 Pet 3.18). Kingdom life depends on grace from moment to moment; the greatest saints burn grace like a rocket burns fuel on its launch!
8. **Human Effort** is commanded in every book of the Bible. Passivity born out of a misunderstanding of saving grace has undermined our sanctification and our impact. Grace calls forth our full, active, intelligent effort. Sanctification and Kingdom ministry cannot happen without him. He will not do it without us. "Grace is not opposed to our effort, but to our earning." (DW)
9. **Purpose:** We were made for a kingdom; we were made for dominion (Gen 1.26). Your Kingdom is the range of your effective will, what you have 'say' over. It is integral to your personhood and the image of God in us. Adam and Eve's fall came because they did not trust God to create what was best for them. Our Kingdom growth makes us more and more trustworthy to rule and reign in His Kingdom. God's intent for each of us is where we would grow to the point where he can empower us to do what we want, because we shall want what He wants. Thus, we are in "training for reigning" (Gen 1.26; priesthood of all believers, Rev 5.10, etc) with creative governance in our destiny.
10. **Prayer:** In the Kingdom, prayer is talking with God about what we are doing together. It is an enormous Kingdom power. It flourishes in a conversational relationship with God that exists for the fulfillment of the purposes of the Kingdom. Much 'prayerlessness' comes because we are activists by nature, and we don't think prayer does anything. That is very wrong.

**Reflection Question: Summarize the key ideas in the Reflection in your own words.**

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## **Bible Study: God's Kingdom**

**1. These are passages on what Jesus taught and told his followers to teach about the gospel. Look up the following verses, and summarize them in the spaces below.**

Reference: Matt. 3:1-2

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Reference: Matt. 4:17

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Reference: Luke 10:5-9

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Reference: Acts 1:3

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Reference: Matt. 10:5-8

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Reference: Acts 28:30-31

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Reference: Col 1:13-14

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**2. How would you summarize the Gospel from these verses?**

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**3. If you were trying to explain the Gospel from these verses to someone else, how would you phrase it?**

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**4. Have you heard a great deal of teaching on the Kingdom of God? Why – or why not?**

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## **Spiritual Tool for the Week**

The following exercise is to be done this week. Record your experiences in the spaces below.

### **Spiritual Tool: Fasting from Media**

Take a 24 hour fast from media. This is not a silent retreat, but a break from the stream of urgent messages designed to grab and inflame us. No TV, no radio, no magazines, no newspapers, no internet, no movies. Try and create space for just you and the natural sounds around you. Maybe you could spend some of that time sitting outdoors or going for a walk or turning over some passages of scripture or being creative, or engaging in conversations.

Be aware of what happens to your emotions, of your capacity to sense God, of your awareness of his presence. Be alert to what you hear, outside you and inside you.

### **Reflections on your experience**

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**Readings for Next Week:**

Complete The Divine Conspiracy, Chapter Two

Complete Study Guide pp 21-28