

Mark | The Making of Christ Followers

05 Jesus' Message

September 10, 2017

I. Introduction

As a preacher we are taught to be concise. We are told the chances of people remembering what we say are slim to none, so be concise. I once took a class for an entire semester (which is 15 weeks) about preaching, better know as homiletics, that asked me over and over again, “What is the one point?” “What is the core proposition?” the thesis statement, the big idea, the main point, the sermon-in-a-nutshell...well, you get the point.

It is difficult for people to remember nine thousand points pummeled over their heads. If truth be told, most preachers don't remember their own points after a few seconds of saying them. I have actually tried this before on myself. I will think about a message I preached a while ago and often end in scratching my head.

But you know what I do remember, the one sentence, that one word or phrase that ate away at my thoughts. In the end, the message was that one point. But it is hard when talking about Jesus, there is so much to say. The most difficult part of preparing a sermon is deciding what not to say!

What about you? What if you were given the task of taking the message of Jesus to the masses in one point? What if I gave you three words, eight words, or maybe a sentence? What would you say?

- Love
- Peace
- Sacrifice

- Atonement
- Freedom from slavery
- Victory

How does one articulate the gloriousness of the Gospel? How does one express its seriousness? What is the core proposition, what is the one thing of the Gospel? How can you make the hearers feel the weight of this message?

Read Mark 1:14-15

In just a few words Jesus gives the bedrock of his message, the essentials of what he is going to *preach/teach*, and, as we will see in the book of Mark, what he is going to *do*...His words and action will be Kingdom work. Lets break apart his summary, his core proposition, if you will, by starting with the last phrase...**kingdom of God**.

Now as you have already seen the past few weeks and very vividly last week with Dr John Meade, Mark unpacks many long standing beliefs rooted in OT scriptures. We have seen clearly what Paul said in 2 Corinthians 1:20, that "...all the promises of God find their yes in [Jesus]."

This could not be more true of Mark's prologue. So far we have seen that Jesus is the Son of David as the better King, the Son of God to represent all of Israel in a better way, and unlike Adam/Eve and Israel remained faithful to God and in turn punched, stomped on, crushed, destroyed, trampled, beat, squashed, (insert any number of intense action verbs) satan.

He triumphed over satan and now begins his ministry of proclaiming and building God's Kingdom. As with the entire prologue of Mark which introduces Jesus by showing Him as the fulfillment of all the OT longings, Jesus himself brings clarity to

yet another OT longing—God’s Kingdom being established forever.

It is such a theme that one scholar named Grame Goldsworthy put it this way, “The entire biblical story, despite its great diversity of forms and foci, is consistent in its emphasis on the reign of God over his people in the environment he creates for them.”¹ Jesus in his summary statement says, that kingdom is here!

II. Kingdom of God

A. In the OT we see Kingdom language used as a longing for God’s Kingdom to be established. The exact phrase “Kingdom of God” is not found but God’s kingdom being established permeates the OT.

1. Micah 4:6-7, In that day, declares the Lord, I will assemble the lame and gather those who have been driven away and those whom I have afflicted; and the lame I will make the remnant, and those who were cast off, a strong nation; and the Lord will reign over them in Mount Zion from this time forth and forevermore.
2. Psalm 93:1-2, The Lord reigns; he is robed in majesty; the Lord is robed; he has put on strength as his belt. Yes, the world is established; it shall never be moved. Your throne is established from of old; you are from everlasting.
3. Psalm 103:19, The Lord has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all.
4. Psalm 145:13, Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations.

B. So it would seem there was a strong belief and understanding that, “The *kingdom of God* [was] is a reference to the sovereign activity of God as he rules over

¹ *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, p 620

his creation and brings his plans to realization.”² The OT builds an expectation of the coming rule of God. He is God and rules completely over all things and will indeed bring his plans about.

There is so much more at play than simple land acquisition, this is not a conquering to gather more possessions, but a conquering of sin to gather followers who come underneath his rule and reign, it really is about kingship.

This seems to be the most appropriate way to get at the heart of Jesus statement of Kingdom of God, a people who live under his rule and reign. God is the controlling point of the phrase “Kingdom of God,” it is his rule and reign. Jesus was bringing that Kingdom, a kingdom characterized by devotion to Jesus, the God-Man (which he has to be to usher in the kingdom of God),

...but our devotion is because of what he has done, which began in the wilderness by being anointed and then defeating Satan and remaining obedient to God. Kingdom is understood as rule and reign. When you look up the word (*βασιλεία*) underneath our English word kingdom, it has as its meaning the act of ruling.³ It was understood as the act of ruling not the marked out boundaries of land.

- C. Though true, let's think for a minute how those listening to Jesus preach his message might have heard his words. Now, they definitely hear the word kingdom as kingship, as

² Biblical Studies Press, *The NET Bible First Edition*; Bible. English. NET Bible.; The NET Bible (Biblical Studies Press, 2005).

³ Arndt, William, Frederick W. Danker, Walter Bauer, and F. Wilbur Gingrich. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.

the rule and reign of God. But perhaps they are thinking it will be brought by physical conquering of other rulers, to then establish God's Kingdom.

But then why does Jesus say the response to the kingdom is repent and believe in the gospel, both of which deal with the internal parts of men/women, not only as individuals but certainly as the whole of Israel and in turn the whole of God's people.

A strange response to God's Kingdom being revealed in Jesus. One would think, The anointed King, God's Son is here, so it is time to gather up arms and secure our borders, make ourselves ready to demolish the other regime. No, no, no...repent and believe! What!!

The way one becomes a part of God's Kingdom is to repent from being your own King and believe in Jesus as your only worthy King, who uses his power to lay down his life for you; which is the gospel message! Those who enter the kingdom of God is directly connected to their response to the King. We follow because His majesty, the king, has given himself for us. He conquers our sin from within.

III. Fulfilled/Come near...Already Not Yet

- A. A real sense of focus on the current situation, the Kingdom is here right now in front of you, but that is not the full picture. There is a sense throughout the entire book of Mark and other biblical writers that the Kingdom had indeed come but was not fully here.

That there is and was more to come. Just by looking at all the reference in Mark, the kingdom language moves in and out of current experience of the kingdom and future

experience of the kingdom. So we have come to refer to this as already not yet.

B. Why is this point important? Because...

1. *Sin still entices us*, the rub could be that if the Kingdom, God's rule and reign over his people, has fully come then why do I still struggle with sin.
2. *Evil still exist*, unfortunately natural disasters still wreck havoc on our lives, tragedies still occur, but take comfort brothers and sisters, the kingdom of God will fully come and make all things new!!!
3. *Our work is to led people to Jesus*, being concerned with the kingdom of God seems to be our work as well and since Jesus is the kingdom, we must led people towards him. Acts ends with the apostle Paul "proclaiming the kingdom of God,"

Working towards making our community better through collecting socks, food, and the like are all worthy efforts and we will be about that work, but lets be clear building the kingdom is bringing people to the kingdom which is Jesus, the God-Man.

It has been argued that maybe it is best to say we are to *bear witness* to it rather than build, establish, usher in the kingdom. Revelation 21 Jesus himself says, "I am making all things new." This tells us that he alone will bring restoration upon the land, so if that is true our task as citizens of the kingdom of God is bear witness to it by calling people to repent and believe. God's rule and reign is a heart issue, so as good citizens we work towards that end.

Also, if kingdom is best understood as rule and reign, there is no possible way we bring that about in others

lives, so we proclaim the kingdom by declaring the gospel. We bear witness to the rule and reign of God as we live out our faith choose to follow him rather than man's wisdom. The kingdom is noticed by the way the church lives. In doing so the church steps forth in love to call others to God's rule in their life. What is more amazing is God himself has provided the way to come underneath his rule, by taking the punishment.

IV. Therefore...

- A. The Kingdom of God has come and will come in fulness, so repent and believe!