

What is Jesus' Kingdom Really Like?

As we mentioned last week, Mark's Gospel get right to the point picking up on Jesus' arrival on the preaching scene of Galilee, when he begins to proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God, which turns out to be the whole new arena of Jesus' life and ministry on planet earth.

Today, we are starting from the same launching pad as last week but going in a different direction, which I think we will find very interesting and encouraging – Mark 1:15

He records Jesus as saying,

*"The time has come! The kingdom of God has come near!
Repent and believe the good news!"*

Mk 1:15 (NIV)

I love the way Dallas Willard freely interprets this passage: (*The Divine Conspiracy*)

"All preliminaries have been taken care of and the rule of God is now accessible to everyone. Review your plans for living and base your life on this remarkable new opportunity."

Put simply – God's good government through Word and Spirit, is now accessible on earth for those who choose to surrender.

What he is fundamentally saying is, the time has finally arrived! I am here as the embodiment and the voice of God's kingdom, and I am commencing the re-establishment of my Father's kingdom on earth. Repent of your shallow self-absorption, and get on board this amazing invitation to be part of God's life and mission.

a) Questions – If Jesus was reintroducing the kingdom:

i) Where had the kingdom been???

ii) Was there ever a time when the kingdom was fully demonstrated on earth???

b) What elements of God's kingdom-mission are revealed in Gen 1:27-28?

²⁷ *So God created mankind in his own image,
in the image of God he created him;
male and female he created them.*

²⁸ *God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."* (Leave PP up to explain)

i. God created humanity in his image to be his ambassadors on earth :27-28

- ii. They received God's blessing – this included the power of reproduction, which the animal kingdom also received, and further, it signified God's empowerment to fulfil his will as they learned how to walk with God in obedience :28
- iii. They were commissioned to intentionally reproduce; to fill the earth and subdue it in order to harness its capacity to serve and support humanity in healthy ways. :28-29

c) So, what does this tell us about how God intends to relate to his image-bearers?

Question! – How did God bless Adam & Eve? i.e. the mechanism, not the result!

He spoke to them – he is personal

What are the implications of this amazing happening? (Hold this slide until teased out)

- i. They could hear him – he is relational
- ii. They could understand him – he is rational
- iii. They could respond in obedience; or disobedience as it turned out later – he is reciprocal

d) Based on our gathered data, we can now say a number of things about the kind of kingdom that Jesus is re-establishing on earth? –

i) It is Conversational – he enjoys conversational dialogue

Look at the way he calls people –

Adam & Eve – in the Garden at the cool of day

Noah – things are bad; I'm sending a flood, build a boat to save your family

Moses – I feel for your people in slavery, I'm going to rescue them!

Samuel – Samuel thought it was Eli at first

Paul – on the road to Damascus

My experience on my way to work as an 18 y.o. –

ii) It is Collaborative – he invites participation with his image bearers

Adam & Eve were given authority and responsibilities to steward the earth and its capacities for, and with, God!!! He would come and walk & talk with them in the Garden – partnership Gen 3

Noah, build an ark – I'll start over with you and your family! Gen 6

Joseph – big dreams; big problems; but God was *with* him Gen 39

Moses – Oh yes, did I mention, I'm sending you to lead them out!!! Ex 3

Paul & Apollos – co-labourers with each other, and with God 1Cor 3:9; 2Cor 6:1

iii) It is Communal – we work together as part of the family mission

Adam and Eve were commissioned to reproduce with intention in order to fill the earth, harnessing its capacity to serve and support humanity in God-honouring ways.

There is no-way they could pull this off on their own; it had to be a communal effort. We are to work together in God's global mission of reconciliation and transformation.

iv) It is Covenantal – a mutual commitment to faithfulness

This is the New Covenant, sealed with the blood of Jesus, which we are reminded of and requiring fresh commitment to every time we gather around the communion table. We have been grafted into God's eternal purpose through our faith in Jesus the Son, and empowered by the Holy Spirit living within us.

We are accountable to him, and so, responsible for what we do and do not do!!!

In short, the kind of kingdom that Jesus has re-introduced is a missional enterprise based on the reciprocal relationships of love that are evident within the Trinity. It is an interactive and collaborative kingdom, framed by a covenant between our Creator and we his image-reflectors, in which we have been invited to participate as his communicative and collaborative ambassadors of his kingdom on earth.