

## **KINGDOM BREAKTHROUGH**

### **SERMON EIGHT**

#### **KINGDOM FEASTS**

As one reads through the various Scriptures both Old and New Testament relating to the breaking through of the Kingdom of God into the history and experience of mankind, a common picture and emerges out of all these significant accounts and it is the picture of a feast or a banquet. God in his infinite wisdom has sought to explain the coming of the Kingdom of God both past present and future in the picture of a feast or banquet. I would suggest that there is good reason for this. A feast speaks of celebration and a lavish provision for those attending, and is this not the picture of the coming of the Kingdom of God. This morning I want to invite you to join with me as we consider Kingdom banquets, past present and those still to come. As we do, allow God's Spirit to minister something of God's extravagant provision for you and me in the coming of his

kingdom and the extravagant blessings that wait for those who will share in the coming kingdom.

#### **1. EXODUS FEAST**

We have already seen in this series that the Kingdom of God first breaks through with God setting his people free from the oppression of the Egyptians and beginning a journey with them to the Promised Land. In Exodus 12 the final plague of death is about to be carried out against Egypt, their freedom and salvation is immanent and in the first 11 verses of that chapter God gives to his people a simple instruction to have a feast of lamb as a celebration for the coming of the Kingdom and their freedom from Egypt. It became known as the Passover feast and is still celebrated today. In the feast they celebrated God's extravagant love for them that would set them free from bondage. This feast marked the beginning of God's journey with His people.

## **2. COVENANT FEAST**

The next significant moment happens on Mt Sinai where Israel became a kingdom of priests and a holy nation in Ex 19:6 where God makes His covenant with His people and enters into an intimate relationship with them. The climax of this covenant making takes place after the sacrificial blood had been sprinkled on the people and is described in Exodus 24:9-11, “Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel went up and saw the God of Israel. Under His feet was something like a pavement made of Sapphire, clear as the sky itself. But God did not raise his hand against those leaders of the Israelites; they saw God, and they ate and drank”. They saw God and they feasted with Him at His table. Who had provided the food for the feast other than God? As God enters into this intimate covenant relationship with His people he invites them to come and eat at His table and to enjoy His blessings. What

an awesome picture of the Kingdom. In the Kingdom we are invited to eat at the King’s table and he will not lift up His hand against us. This reality just blows my mind! This feast marks the beginning of the intimate covenant relationship that God chose to have with His people.

## **3. PROPHETIC FEAST**

God speaks through His prophet Isaiah about the future coming of the Kingdom in Isaiah chapters 24:1-27:13 the climax being found in 24:23 where it says, “The moon will be abashed, the sun ashamed; for the Lord Almighty will reign on Mount Zion .....” . Following on from this amazing announcement of God’s final reign we are painted a picture of a glorious feast that will celebrate the reign of the King in chapter 25:6-9. Listen to how glorious this banquet will be for those who believe.

“On this mountain the Lord Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine – the best of meats and the finest of wines. On this mountain he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations; he will swallow up death for ever. The Sovereign Lord will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove the disgrace of his people from all the earth. The Lord has spoken”. What an awesome picture of God’s extravagant love and celebration. God gives this picture to his people who were struggling in order that he might encourage them to persevere. This is going to be the party of all parties! Note what is provided, only the best, the finest. This will be a celebration of the achievement of God’s plans and purposes at the end of the age.

#### **4. JESUS’S FEASTS**

There are three significant feasts that took place at significant moments in Christ’s life and ministry. Jesus begins his ministry here on earth by performing a miracle by turning water into wine at the wedding feast in Cana. His reason for doing so was two-fold. Firstly he had compassion for the host of the wedding who was about to be very embarrassed by the wine running out and Jesus determined to bless him by turning the water into wine. Secondly, Jesus by performing this first miracle was demonstrating to one and all that indeed the Kingdom of God had come and was now to be demonstrated by miracles, signs and wonders. How the guests at the wedding must have been blown away by the best wine that Jesus blessed them with. How lavish and extravagant God’s provision of the best wine! At the wedding feast of Cana Jesus gave notice that the Kingdom had come. It is significant that Jesus ended his ministry here on earth as He began it, with a feast. The last supper which Jesus would

have with His beloved disciples was a feast looking forward to and celebrating the victory over sin and death that would be achieved in the next few days. It looked back to the old Passover feast but looked forward to the new sacrificial lamb who would die on the cross, his body broken and his blood shed for the forgiveness of sin. The disciples at the time did not understand this to be a celebration of Jesus' victory on the cross but simply a remembrance of what God in Egypt in freeing His people. It is interesting how Jesus links this last feast or supper to the Kingdom of God. In Mk 14:24-25 Jesus notes, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many he said to them. I tell you the truth, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it anew in the kingdom of God" and in Luke 22:14, "When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table. And He said to them, I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds

fulfilment in the kingdom of God". Jesus was eager to eat this meal because for him it was a celebration of what was to come, the ushering of the complete kingdom after his death and final return. Without His death there could be no experience of the fullness of the kingdom. He sought to encourage his disciples that even though he would die he would again feast with them in the coming Kingdom. This future feast of the Kingdom is described for us in Luke 13:29 when Jesus says, "People will come from east and west and north and south, and will take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God".

The third feast marks the beginning of Christ's heavenly reign described for us in Revelation 19:6-9 as the marriage feast of the Lamb. John records for us the vision God gave to him of the feast.

"Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like peals of thunder, shouting, Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns, Let us rejoice

and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear. Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints. Then the angel said to me Write. Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the lamb!....” This is the final feast and celebration that all the feasts before looked forward and ultimately found their fulfilment.

## **CONCLUSION**

And so we see how the theme of feasting throughout the Scriptures is tied with the coming of the Kingdom and God’s relationship with mankind. In order to understand the significance of this we need to understand what it means to eat with someone in Jewish culture. When one ate with someone in Jewish culture it forged a bond and a relationship between the two and it spoke of honouring and respecting the other person.

It was a sign of affection. It was for this reason that the Pharisees had such a problem with Jesus eating with sinners because by doing so he was forming a bond with them and showing them respect the Pharisees did not believe that they deserved.

It is in this context that Jesus tells one of the central parables of the Kingdom of God the parable of the banquet in Lk 14:16-24. We know the story well. A certain master prepares a great banquet and sends his servants out to invite his guests. Everyone they invited had an excuse and turned down the invitation. In verse 21 when the servant reported that the invitations had been turned down the master became angry. We can understand why because in Hebrew culture this was a huge insult in turning down such an invitation. He instructs his servants to go out and fetch the poor the crippled the blind and the lame to come to the banquet.

The banquet in the parable refers to the coming of the Kingdom with all its blessing and the master is Jesus. Those who turn down the invitation do see their great need but those who were broken realised their need and respond to the invitation and feast at the table of God. This speaks so much of God's grace. It is the broken undeserving people who make it to the banquet, the sinners and such like. I am reminded of the parable of the prodigal son. What is the first thing the father does on his sons return? He instructs that the fatted calf be killed and a feast is arranged to celebrate his sons return. What extravagance! The older brother is incensed because the son does not deserve the feasts but this is all about grace. Think of the last supper that Jesus celebrated with his disciples. In the middle of this feast he takes the prized portion of meat and hands it to Judas the very one who would betray Him. It is all about grace! In Psalm 23 the psalmist rights of the Good

Shepherd in verse 5, "You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies".

Kingdom life is best symbolised by a feast.

It is about God's grace.

It is about our great need.

It is about God's provision and lavish extravagant love for each one of us.

It is about invitation to come and feast at the Lord's table.

It is about the responsibility to either accepting or receiving the invitation.

Are you feasting at the Lords table in the Kingdom of God or settling for the scraps that fall off it?