

KINGDOM BREAKTHROUGH
SERMON THREE
THE AUTHORITY AND MYSTERY OF THE
KINGDOM

As we look back on the exciting journey we have already been on in rediscovering the wonderful truth about the Kingdom of God, we have seen that when the Kingdom comes, the King of the Kingdom comes as a confronting, a covenanting and a conquering king seen in the Exodus from Egypt, the journey to and conquering of the Promised Land and the reign of David and Solomon. Last week we looked at the Old Testament promises of the Kingdom which looked forward to the coming of the Messiah who would usher in the Kingdom. These promises looked forward to the fact that God would return as King, Holy Spirit and Saviour. Today we will begin to look at what this new Kingdom looks like and consider

two key factors namely the authority of the Kingdom as well as the mystery of the Kingdom. Let's begin by looking at the authority which Jesus the King of the Kingdom ushered in when he came to earth.

1. THE AUTHORITY OF THE KINGDOM

As we saw when the Kingdom of God came into Egypt God comes as a confronting King confronting the Kingdom of this world. When Christ came and ushered in the Kingdom He came as a confronting King to confront the Kingdom of darkness the Kingdom of this world. In order to confront this Kingdom he needed significant authority to do so. At the outset of His ministry we see Jesus exercising an authority like had never been seen before. In Matt 7:29 after Jesus had taught the crowd we are told that the crowd were amazed "because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the

law”. Jesus spoke and brought with Him an authority the likes of which had never been seen before. This authority was seen in His teaching but also in many other ways.

Let’s look at a few of these.

- 1.1 **Authority over demons.** The demons trembled when he showed up and they always did as he instructed them and hence an authority over the Kingdom of darkness.
- 1.2 **Authority over sickness.** He told disease to go and it did, blindness, leprosy, deafness as well as paralysis.
- 1.3 **Authority to forgive sin.** In Mark 2 Jesus heals a paralytic man and tells him to take up his mat and walk and then notes to those who were listening in Mark 2:10, “the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”. It was this statement that got him into hot water

with the Pharisees because only God had the authority to forgive sins.

- 1.4 **Authority over nature.** In Mark 4:35-41 we have the account of Jesus calming the storm on Galilee and the disciples were terrified and asked in 41, “Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!”
- 1.5 **Authority over death.** Later on in Mark 5 Jesus raises a young girl from the dead and we are told in Mk 5:42 that the people who witnessed it were completely astonished.

Each account of Jesus exercising His authority has one common element and that is to set people free from that which binds them be that demon forces, disease, sin and even death. What Jesus was doing was fulfilling what had been prophesied about Him in Isaiah 61:1-2, “The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has

anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners...” Jesus ushers in a new authority with the coming of the Kingdom of God.

What is important to realise is that this same authority is given to all those who are part of the Kingdom. There are two key passages in this regard. In his last days on earth Jesus taught his disciples about the authority that he would leave with them as he left them. In John 14 having just spoken about leaving them and the miracles that he had performed he says to them in Jn 14:12, “I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these...” and then in Matt 28:18 in what we know as the great commission Jesus says to his disciples “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore

go...” How are we to go and make disciples other than in the authority of Christ that is available to each one of us who believe. As kids of the kingdom we have available to us the authority that Christ exercised. It is for this reason that we are told to pray all things in the name of Jesus and consequently in the authority of Jesus.

You say to me Grant this is all very well, but why does the Kingdom of the world seem to have the upper hand and the authority of the Kingdom of God have so little effect. This brings me to the second important element of the Kingdom namely the mystery of the Kingdom. The one side of the coin is the authority of the Kingdom but we must not lose sight of the mystery of the Kingdom.

2. THE MYSTERY OF THE KINGDOM

If one looks at the authority of the kingdom in isolation, then you do not get the full picture. One needs to look at

the mystery of the Kingdom as well. The mystery of the Kingdom is simply this. The Kingdom of God has come, but will still come. There is a present reality that the Kingdom has come but also a future hope that the Kingdom is still to come. The teaching of Scripture incorporates both these pictures. Let's begin by looking at the present reality that the Kingdom has come.

2.1 The Kingdom has come

Jesus stated very clearly in Lk 17:21, "The Kingdom of God is among (or within) you. In Matt 11:12 Jesus noted the following of the Kingdom when he said, "From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it". These are but two of the many Scriptures which confirmed the fact that what John the Baptist pronounced would happen, became a reality when Jesus came to earth.

The Kingdom of God with the authority of the Kingdom has come. All the miracles Jesus did were proof of the presence of the Kingdom. In Matt 12:28 Jesus noted, "if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the Kingdom of God has come upon you".

The reality is that the Kingdom of God has not come fully and is still to come in its completeness. The Scriptures speak much of this future coming of the Kingdom.

At the end of His life Jesus taught much on the end times and his second return ushering in the final coming of the Kingdom of God in its fullness. In Matt 21-25 we read much of this. We are told to be ready for his coming.

When he comes he will sit on the throne and judge all the nations. In Lk 22:29-30 Jesus gives to his disciples a future promise, "And I confer on you a kingdom, just as my father conferred one on me, so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones

judging the twelve tribes of Israel”. Many of the visions of the book of Revelation like the rider of the white horse point to the climax of the coming of the Kingdom. This finds its climax in Rev 11:15 when the angel finally proclaims, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever”.

And so it is important to hold these two truths in tension. The Kingdom has come but will still come. It is because of this that when we look at the authority of the Kingdom in the present we can understand why it is not fully experienced. Louie Giglio touched on this last Sunday evening. We live at present in two realities. The Kingdom of God has come but is in opposition to the Kingdom of this world. As we saw in Matt 11:12 it is advancing but has not yet fully come. Therefore we as believers still suffer the effects of the Kingdom of this world.

It is this reality that explains why,

Some people are healed and others are not.

Why in Christ we are new creatures but still daily struggle with sin and temptation.

Why bad things happen to believers.

We are on the frontline of the war between the Kingdom of God that is breaking through and the Kingdom of the world that is resisting. We can exercise the authority of the Kingdom but not completely.

The best way I can explain this is to take a picture highlighting two events or days from the Second World War.

When the allies made their decisive invasion of France across the English channel and landed and established a foothold on the beaches of France, this day became known as D Day. It was a huge victory and for all intents and purposes the war at this point had been won. The decisive

battle had been won, but the war was not yet over. It took several months for these same troops to defeat the remaining axis forces before the final surrender which became known as V Day.

In the realm of the spiritual Kingdom we are living at present between D Day and V Day. D Day happened when Jesus died on the cross, paid the penalty for sin, and then broke the power of death by rising on the third day. At that point the victory over sin the battle had been won but the war was not yet over. Since then the Kingdom is advancing and will be finally complete on V Day when Christ will return and His Kingdom will be completely established.

CONCLUSION

What does this mean for us as a practical reality?

1. We must acknowledge and embrace the reality that the Kingdom of God has come and we can exercise the authority of the Kingdom.
 2. We must recognise that the Kingdom continues to advance and that we can be a part of this by taking hold of it.
 3. We must recognise however that the battle may have been won but the war is not over and that defeat may still be part of our experience.
- We must embrace both the authority as well as the mystery of the Kingdom