

The Story
Sermon 23

Title: Jesus and the Kingdom

Date: January 26, 2014

Text: Mark 4:1-20

Place: DCOG

Introduction: Their entire world consisted of just one island. They measured wealth in seashells. They never heard an engine, struck a match, experienced a cold day, or been told about gravity. They believed the entire world was only what they saw and experienced...until 1930 when two white men arrived on the island of New Guinea. Michael Leahy and Michael Dwyer, two Australians prospecting for gold, began to explore the island. The natives were not initially hospitable as these two men introduced them to a world beyond their own little island world. The islanders had never seen skin so white or bodies so clothed. Seeing soap bubbles for the first time as the prospectors bathed in the river, the natives thought the bubbles were a skin disease. The natives thought the lanterns the men had were containers with pieces of the moon in them. When Michael Dwyer took out his dentures, the natives ran screaming into the jungle.

Could we also be accused of a similar response? Do we also suffer from “tiny islanditis”? Do we think the whole of reality is what we see and experience? How do we respond when a foreigner visits and points out that we live in just a tiny dot of reality? That’s what Jesus did. Jesus is an invader, a foreigner, an alien, an outsider. He spoke in language we are not used to and lived by principles never known to us and which we find difficult to embrace. Jesus spoke of a “kingdom.” In The Story we discover Jesus declaring, “The time has come. The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news.”

I. The “kingdom of God” was the theme of Jesus’ teaching and ministry.

A. In three of the Gospels—Matthew, Mark and Luke—the kingdom takes center stage, being mentioned over 60 times.

B. Monarchy (or kingdom) is hard for us who live in a democracy to appreciate or align with.

1. Monarchy is not medieval; it is biblical.
2. A king created the universe, commanded a flood, led the Israelites to freedom, awed foreign kings like Nebuchadnezzar.
3. The Old Testament prophets predicted a coming kingdom led by a new kind of king—the Messiah.

Zech. 9:9

*Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion!
Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem!
See, your king comes to you,
righteous and having salvation,
gentle and riding on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.*

4. Jesus Christ is that new, lowly king, a Nazarene carpenter.

II. What on earth is God up to? God is up to a kingdom.

A. Jesus taught about the kingdom.

Mark 4:3-9

"Listen! A farmer went out to sow his seed. [4] As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. [5] Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. [6] But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. [7] Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants, so that they did not

bear grain. [8] Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up, grew and produced a crop, multiplying thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times."

[9] Then Jesus said, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

1. Jesus' kingdom weapons are not armies with swords, but farmers with seeds.
2. Three out of four people will not receive the kingdom.

B. The kingdom means God the king is here within our reach.

* An eight year old boy and his ten year old brother misbehaved and their mother took them to the preacher. The preacher told the mother that he would talk the boys about God being everywhere, so they need to behave always in God's presence. He called in the 10 year old and asked him, "Son, do you know where God is?" The boy sat still and silent. The preacher asked the question again, "Son, do you know where God is?" The boy was silent. The preacher asked a third time. The boy jumped up, ran out of the office, grabbed his 8 year old brother, saying, "Wow! Are we in trouble! Let's get out of here. God is missing and they think we did it!"

God is not missing; he is within our reach.

C. Three principles of the kingdom of God are:

1. The kingdom of God is a great treasure—like a huge, expensive pearl.

Matthew 13:44-46

"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.

[45] "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. [46] When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.

2. The kingdom of God operates with energies we do not understand or control.

Mark 4:26-29

He also said, "This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. [27] Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. [28] All by itself the soil produces grain--first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. [29] As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come."

3. The kingdom of God is a worry-free, anxiety-free realm.

Matthew 6:25-27

"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? [26] Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? [27] Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?"

Matthew 6:33

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

III. Jesus' miracles demonstrate his royal authority and power.

Mark 4:35-39

That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side." [36] Leaving the crowd behind, they

took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. [37] A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. [38] Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"

[39] He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.

Mark 5:1-5

They went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes. [2] When Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an evil spirit came from the tombs to meet him. [3] This man lived in the tombs, and no one could bind him any more, not even with a chain. [4] For he had often been chained hand and foot, but he tore the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet. No one was strong enough to subdue him. [5] Night and day among the tombs and in the hills he would cry out and cut himself with stones.

A. Jesus speaks to the winds and waves and they obey.

Mark 4:39, 41

He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.

[41] They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

B. Jesus speaks to demons and they fear him and obey.

Mark 5:6-10

When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees in front of him. [7] He shouted at the top of his voice, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? Swear to

*God that you won't torture me!" [8] For Jesus had said to him,
"Come out of this man, you evil spirit!"*

[9] Then Jesus asked him, "What is your name?"

"My name is Legion," he replied, "for we are many." [10]

And he begged Jesus again and again not to send them out of the area.

C. Jesus introduces us to God who is King and who is “our Father” (Abba).

Matthew 6:9-10

"This, then, is how you should pray:

*" 'Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
[10] your kingdom come,
your will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.*

Conclusion: Do you have a king? We all do, in some form or another. Some people read *People* magazine to keep up with their king or queen.

We all need a king who is our Father. We all want a king. Jesus has all authority in heaven and earth (Matthew 28:18). In God's kingdom there is room for only one king—we can't be our own king or queen. God has created a kingdom and you're invited in. Soon, our king will return. Now we're in training to live the kingdom life. We live in kingdom tension. We know reality is much bigger than people know. We must express the bigger, saving, loving world of the kingdom of God. Three out of four may not believe us, but that other one may. We're in the minority.

People will try to get us to forsake our king. Will you?