

The Kingdom of God

Luke 13:10-35

We are going to keep working through this long teaching passage in Luke's Gospel. The context is always important for the Holy Spirit instructed Luke to follow Jesus' teaching on being ready for Jesus return, being ready for judgment, and the call to repentance and fruitfulness with teaching on the Kingdom of God.

Why would He do this? It is because the Kingdom of God is advancing and as it advances it will be obvious where the Kingdom reigns. Where the Kingdom of God is, lives and destinies change. The order of the King is established because His rule and reign is there. When Jesus referred to *the Kingdom of God*, He meant two things.

1) *The Kingdom of God* is the place where God dwells. He meant Heaven, the place where all of God's people will spend eternity. What better thing to be talking about today than heaven. Heaven is the place where everyone wants to go. All religions want to lead people to Heaven. God has put this desire in every heart. But the only way to go to Heaven is through Jesus Christ.

2) *The Kingdom of God* not only refers to Heaven but it also refers to the rule and reign of God in the hearts and lives of those who have turned from their sin and placed their hope in Jesus Christ while they are alive. When a person trusts Christ, they have been given new life and therefore new loves and a new Lord of their lives. They have new desires, new passions, and a new purpose in life—to glorify God for all that He has done for them in Christ.

In Luke 13:10-35 Jesus talked about the war of the kingdom, the work of the kingdom, the way of the kingdom and the weeping of the King.

I. The War of the Kingdom of God (Luke 13:10-17)

The Reformer, Martin Luther understood that we were in a spiritual war with that old enemy of the God, the Devil. He understood it all too well when he wrote *A Mighty Fortress is Our God*. Listen to verse 3 of that old hymn:

*And though this world, with devils filled,
Should threaten to undo us,
We will not fear, for God hath willed
His truth to triumph through us:
The Prince of Darkness grim,
We tremble not for him;
His rage we can endure,
For lo! his doom is sure,
One little word shall fell him.¹*

In vv. 10-17, we get a glimpse of this war that is going on and how one little word set this woman free from the tyranny of the devil. So, just to be clear about this war, this is not dualism where there are two equal powers at war. Jesus is superior and Satan is defeated.

In vv. 10-13: Jesus healed the woman of her disease. He freed her from her physical disability that she had suffered with for 18 years. Who knows what she had but she must have been in excruciating pain. She had to be overjoyed about being healed by Jesus from this chronic pain.

But not everyone was happy about Jesus healing this woman. Verse 14 says the rulers of the synagogue, who were some of the most religious people of the day, were angry that Jesus healed her on the Sabbath. The Sabbath was a day of rest that was designed to remind God's people to trust Him by resting in Him, by focusing on Him for the whole day. If anything, the Sabbath Day was the perfect day to free the woman from her disability.

This was the setting of the war of the Kingdom of God. Jesus peeled back the curtain and let us see the war that was going on and yet it did not look like a war. It looked like Jesus simply healed the woman of her physical disability but it was more than that. He showed us the spiritual battle that rages underneath the brokenness of this world. It is a battle that still rages today.

Look in vv. 16-17. In these verses we see that Jesus was facing His adversary, Satan. Here is what you need to know about this war.

- Since the Garden of Eden, the human race has been embroiled in this war. Adam's sin condemned us all and we were bound by our sin. Adam's sin has been passed on to us and the curse of his sin manifests itself in all kinds of brokenness, bondage, and sin. Not long after Adam's sin we learn of the relational strife between Cain and Abel that resulted in Cain murdering Abel. Since that time, jealousy, anger, gossip, prejudice, racism, adultery, divorce and on-and-on the sins go even to the point of world wars and the terrorism.

¹ <https://www.hymnal.net/en/hymn/h/886>.

- No one is exempt from the ravages of this war. We all participate and we are all guilty of our own sin. We all need to be set free from the bondage of our sin.
- Satan is the great instigator of the sin we inherited from Adam and he is also the great accuser of the people of God of their sin. He accuses God's people of breaking God's law and demands God give out justice and condemn His people for their sin. He is right to do so but He has forgotten the song of the redeemed.
- In Genesis 3, God promised to send a Redeemer, a Hero, who would come to silence the accuser. He would crush the head of the serpent who lead Adam into sin and enslaved all people in this war. That Redeemer is Jesus.
- Jesus came to fight and win the war as the Second Adam. Jesus didn't fight with an army but by keeping the Law of God perfectly for us He set the captives free by His death and resurrection.

All the Old Testament had pointed to Jesus leaving Heaven and coming to earth to fight and win this war. Everything since the sin of Adam in the Garden of Eden had led up to this point where Jesus would free His people from their sin. The physical healing pointed to the fact that Jesus was the One whom God promised to send.

- But Jesus didn't heal all physical disabilities and diseases when He walked the earth. These acts of power actually pointed to something greater—the spiritual war He came to win and the spiritual freedom He came to give.

You see our greatest need is not physical healing, as wonderful as that is. Our greatest need is to be set free from our bondage to sin and to enter the Kingdom of God when we die.

- The decisive battle in this war was fought when the Hero stepped out of Heaven and lived the perfect life we should have lived but could not live. He fulfilled the Law's demands for righteousness and then Jesus died our death on the cross as our substitute in order to pay our penalty for sin.
- Jesus silenced the Accuser of God's people. That the reason the Apostle Paul said in Romans 10:33-34 says, *"Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us."*
- When you look at Jesus' healing of the woman, I want you to notice who was condemning and accusing Jesus of breaking the Law? It was the rulers of the synagogue. These were the very people who should have been rejoicing but they accused Him of breaking the Sabbath Law.

What they missed was that Jesus actually fulfilled the Sabbath Law for the Sabbath was for the rest and restoration of man. Jesus brought the Sabbath to bear on this woman in a real physical way. Jesus was and is Lord of the Sabbath. He freed this woman on the perfect days—the Sabbath. This was the perfect day to free the woman.

Friends, when it comes to being set free make sure it is the Lord Jesus you love and not the Law. The Law has never freed anyone. We cannot keep the Law and the Law enslaves. Jesus is the only One who has ever kept the Law perfectly and He did it in our place and for our sin. However, do not fall into the idea that you do not have to obey God. Jesus frees us and gives us feet and hands by His word and His Spirit to obey Him. He gives us the desire to be obedient to His word. Look to Christ as you obey the word of God.

- The warfare of the Kingdom of God is the warfare with the gospel. The gospel is the weapon that when applied to our hearts continues to set us freer and freer and when that happens there is hope and joy in Him as we go through life in this broken world.
- Also, when it comes to the war of the Kingdom of God, there are real winners and losers in this war. Here is what I mean—Heaven is real and Hell is real. If you die in bondage to your sin because you have never called on Christ to rescue you from the penalty of your sin you will spend eternity in Hell. God has a real enemy and that is Satan and he wants people to die in their sin and take them to Hell. Hell is a real place where people go if they die in their sin.

This means you do not need to leave here in bondage to your sin. It also means that as Christians we need to be sharing the lifesaving gospel with those who are still trapped in the bondage of their sin. Jesus is still setting the captives free by the power of His word—the gospel. They simply need to hear it.

I want you to put yourself in the place of the woman that Jesus healed. She had this physical disability for 18 years that most likely manifested itself in horrible chronic pain. The chronic pain was real but the pain of her sin was also real and she needed to be set free of both. Imagine you were her. How would you be living your life? Keep in mind you are a woman. You had limited resources if any at all. You are at the bottom of the social ladder in Jewish society. You have nothing, you're in chronic pain and no one will help you. Even the religious people of the day will not help you. This is a hopeless situation.

I was listening to a song by Meredith Andrews this week called *You're Not Alone*. When I heard the lyrics to her song, I thought, this probably was the woman's experience in life and as she moved from bondage to freedom in Christ. Listen to some of the lyrics . . .

*You cry yourself to sleep
 'Cause the hurt is real and the pain cuts deep
 All hope seems lost with heartache your closest friend
 And everyone else long gone
 You've had to face the music on your own
 But there is a sweeter song that calls you home, saying
 You're not alone for I am here
 Let me wipe away your every tear
 My love, I've never left your side
 I have seen you through the darkest night
 And I'm the One who's loved you all your life
 All your life
 Faithful and true forever
 My love will carry you²*

- Brothers and sisters, the gospel is good news that Jesus will free us and carry. The ultimate victory of the *Kingdom of God*. Revelation 21:4, “He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”
- This is the war of the Kingdom. It is not about real estate or territories or cities nor is it about the nation of Israel—it is about our hearts set free in Christ.

II. The Work of the Kingdom of God (Luke 13:18-21)

Jesus went from the war of the Kingdom of God to the word of the Kingdom of God. He wanted to help the people understand how the Kingdom of God worked in the lives of those who were in the Kingdom. He told them two parables in vv. 18-21 to help them comprehend what happens when the Kingdom of God rules in the hearts of His people:

First: in v. 19, Jesus compared the Kingdom of God to a *mustard seed*. It is planted deep in the soil of the heart like a mustard seed is planted in the dirt. Then it is cultivated and watered and it grows *outward* and *upward*. It grows into a majestic tree so large that the birds of the air can find rest and refuge in it.

Then in v. 21, He compared the Kingdom of God to *leaven being worked through dough*. The woman puts the leaven inside the dough and works it through as she kneads it with her hands. Likewise, the Kingdom of God is the gospel that is like leaven worked in the dough of our hearts and it goes deep in our hearts and it begins to change us and works itself outward and through our lives until everything in our lives is changed by it. Wherever the Kingdom of God comes, it breaks the power of Satan. Lives are changed on this side of Heaven and fit for Heaven.

The ultimate work of the Kingdom of God is seen in how it goes inward in our lives and works itself outward and it leaves nothing untouched by its power. There is transformation where there was once stagnation. There is power and strength where there was once weakness and decay. The healing of the woman’s physical disabilities points to how the gospel transforms the lives of believers. The gospel of the Kingdom of God changes everything when it invades our hearts and lives.

III. The Way of the Kingdom of God (Luke 13:22-30)

On the heels of Jesus teaching about the kingdom of God, the natural question by the people was about who would be saved? Who were the people that would go to Heaven?

Jesus answered that question in vv. 22-24. Not all doors lead to Heaven. Perhaps you have heard it said that all roads lead to Heaven. I am here to tell you that Jesus said they don’t. There is only One Door that leads to Heaven and that is Jesus Christ. Jesus said in John 14:6 that He was *the Way, the Truth and the Life* and no one comes to the Father in Heaven except through Him.

So, in vv. 25-28, Jesus tells us who will not be saved. The Pharisees and the Jews thought they would be saved because they were Jewish and kept the Laws of God. It is true that they were the most religious people on the planet at the time but religion will not save you.

Jesus told them that although they knew somethings about Him, they had heard Him teach in their villages, that they knew the Law of God, and they had descended from Abraham that these things would not save them.

² Songwriters: Meredith Andrews/Meredith Frances Andrews, *You're Not Alone* lyrics © Warner/Chappell Music, Inc.

Do you know why? It was because they had rejected Him as the Messiah. They thought He was a great example, a good teacher and perhaps a prophet but they did not accept Him as the Son of God, the Promised Messiah. They had refused to submit their lives to Jesus.

In vv. 29-30, He tells us who will be saved. The context helps us here. Luke 13:5 says that *unless you repent you will all likewise perish*.

So, who will be saved? It is those who repent of their sin and look to Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

It is not ethnicity or religiosity that saves you—it is the person and word of Christ. That was why He said it will be people the four corners of the globe who would recline at the table with Him. They are the ones who by faith have believed the gospel. Revelation 5:9: *“And they sang a new song, saying, ‘Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.’”* This is the Way of the Kingdom. Have you entered the Door of Jesus?

IV. The Weeping of the King (Luke 13:31-35)

Finally, in this last passage on the Kingdom of God, we see the weeping of the King. In vv. 31-33, the Pharisees wanted to shut Jesus down by throwing out the threat that King Herod was looking for Him and wanted to kill Him.

Jesus is not deterred by their threat nor was He afraid of death. When He said He must finish His course He meant He was going to Jerusalem to die on the cross. Jesus knew His death was coming soon and He was not afraid of death. He boldly faced His death.

However, I want you to notice something about Jesus disposition toward His people, the Jews. He may have boldly confronted them for their sin but He was still broken that they had rejected Him as the promised Messiah. It grieved Him.

Jesus knew the long history of His people. They had killed many prophets, stoned many preachers who had been sent to speak the truth of God to them. They had done many, many other wicked things over the years. They had worshiped idols like Molech that required child sacrifices. Only a couple of years earlier, King Herod had beheaded, His cousin, John the Baptist for speaking out against his infidelity and how that broke God’s Laws. Although the Jews had done many of these wicked things, He was still grieved that they had rejected the great salvation He brought them.

Look at what He said in v. 34. Even after all they had done, after all their rebellion, after all of their sin Jesus would have forgiven them if they would have simply come to Him as their Messiah.

Verse 34, reminds us that it does not matter what we have done or how rebellious we have been or how wicked we think we are, Jesus will tenderly bring us cover us and protect us and save us if we will but come to Him. His sacrifice covers our sin.

But we must not miss the chilling words of v. 35. He was telling them that their time was up. They would have no more opportunities to trust Him.

On Palm Sunday, they would proclaim, *“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”* and only a week later scream, *“Crucify Him!”* They embraced Jesus as long as He was some marginalized, peasant, Jewish teacher who healed but they rejected Him as King.

Jesus laments those who would be lost. He would rather wipe away your every tear instead of shed tears for you. Won’t you come to Him today and let Him heal you of your spiritual infirmities and set you free from the bondage of your sin? As Meredith Andrews song, *You’re Not Alone* says:

*But there is a sweeter song that calls you home, saying
You're not alone for I am here
Let me wipe away your every tear
My love, I've never left your side
I have seen you through the darkest night
And I'm the One who's loved you all your life³*

³ Songwriters: Meredith Andrews/Meredith Frances Andrews, *You're Not Alone* lyrics © Warner/Chappell Music, Inc.