



## THE KING'S PEOPLE

The Kingdom of God is Like... | 3.1.26

Haley Terry

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Haley Terry 0:05

Gosh, good morning church. It is a joy to be with you this morning, especially on a Sunday where we are celebrating that every believer is gifted with purpose. Gosh, I don't know about you, worship tends to make me a little weepy, but especially today, what a picture of heaven. All people worshipping Jesus together, where every tribe, every tongue, every nation, will worship our King Jesus. If you're new this morning, welcome we're so grateful that you're here. If you were here last week, welcome back. We're really glad that you're here too. My name is Haley Terry. I have the honor of being one of the pastors on staff here at bintrey, and I'm so excited to be with you this morning. We are starting week two of our sermon series The Kingdom of God is like where we're looking at parables and stories of Jesus teaching about the Kingdom of God. What is it? What does it look like, and what does it mean for our lives today? Now, when we say the kingdom of God, what we're talking about is the king's reign through the king's people over the king's place, and this kingdom King. Language may feel kind of odd to us in our context, but this is actually a theme that's scattered all throughout Scripture. It's what the Old Testament prophets prophesied about. It's what the Israelites longed for and anticipated, and it's actually what Jesus spent the majority of his time teaching and preaching on throughout this sermon series, we're actually joining in on an ancient conversation exploring who is the true king, what is his reign like? Who are the king's people, and where is the king's place. Last week, Pastor Steve had an incredible message where he was walking through Scripture and showing us how Jesus is the true king. And yet, Jesus shattered all expectations of what people expected a king to do and to be like we saw how the Israelites they expected a king that was going to storm in on a war horse, and yet Jesus rode in on a donkey. They expected a king that was going to overthrow the oppressive rulers of their day and announce the kingdom with violence. And yet Jesus announced his kingdom through sacrifice. They expected a king that would come and crush their enemies, and yet Jesus gave life to his enemies. See, the coronation of Jesus as King was not some glamorous event with the crown of jewels, but actually a gruesome death on a cross with a crown of thorns. Our King Jesus reigns not by taking life but by laying his life down for the sake of others. Our King Jesus is unlike any other king, and so it should not surprise us this morning that his kingdom is unlike any other kingdom. So this morning, we're going to start this conversation about, what is the kingdom of God like? Is it this golden city above the clouds? Is it a place we go when we die? Who is the kingdom of God for is it for the people who check all the boxes and do everything right for the religious elite? Where is the kingdom of God? When is the kingdom of God? Is it happening now or later? Is it happening to us, or is it something we participate in? See these questions matter, and they're important because what we believe about the king shapes what we believe about the kingdom and what we believe about the kingdom directly impacts how you and I will live our lives today. See the Israelites, they didn't just have an expectation of the king, they also had an expectation about what the kingdom of God would be like. And this morning we're going to look at a group the Pharisees, and look at their particular vision of the kingdom, and how what they believed about the Kingdom of God shaped who they spent time with, how they treated people, and what they believed their purpose to be. So this morning we're going to look at a story where Jesus is having a conversation with the Pharisees about the Kingdom of God, and we're going to see how he turns the their understanding of the kingdom of God upside down. And my belief is that he might just do the same thing for us. This morning, we're going to be in Luke chapter 14, if you have. Your Bibles. We're going to start in verse one, and it says this, one Sabbath, when he went in to eat at the house of the leading Pharisees, they were watching him closely. Now, who are the Pharisees? The Pharisees were these deeply devoted religious Jewish leaders who prided themselves in interpreting the law, who deeply desire to obey the law of Moses and believed that they could honor God best by obeying God's commands perfectly. Now they took this so seriously that they actually created extra rules that operated like a fence, a perimeter around God's original 613 laws, just to be sure that they would never disobey or break one of God's commandments. But what Jesus does when he comes on the scene and he

declares the kingdom of God is here, and yet he hangs out with sinners and outcasts, this challenges the Pharisees. They don't like this at all because the Pharisees, they believed deeply that the kingdom of God was for the pure and the clean, the people who checked all the boxes of obeying God's law perfectly, their vision of the kingdom did not match this lowly carpenter who proclaimed good news to the poor who quietly performed miracles and forgave sins that didn't match their vision at all, and actually, when you see watching him closely, this can also be translated as insidiously inspect. So this banquet invitation that's been extended to Jesus is not the Pharisees extending an olive branch. It is an opportunity for them to try to expose Jesus of heresy. In verse two, Jesus is at this banquet, and there in front of him was a man whose body was swollen with fluid. Now here's this man who would have been considered to have this incurable disease. And think about this for a second. What is this man doing at the banquet? What Jesus knows immediately is that this man is not a guest. The Pharisees would never have associated with this man, because he would have been deemed unworthy and unclean, and so this man is here as a pawn in the Pharisees scheme to trap Jesus. It goes on and it says, In response, Jesus asked the law experts and the Pharisees, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath or not? But they kept silent. See, the Pharisees, they had a lot of really strict rules, especially when it came to the Sabbath, what they could do on the Sabbath and what you could not do on the Sabbath. So they're hoping this man in front of Jesus, that Jesus will heal him, and then they can catch Jesus of breaking one of these Sabbath rules. But what Jesus does is he challenges their understanding of the kingdom of God by challenging the Pharisees understanding of God's authority, of God's presence and God's plan for renewal. See, he took the man, he healed the man, he sent him away. But then he says to them, which one of you whose son or ox falls into a well will not immediately pull him out on the Sabbath day? But they could find no answers. See, Jesus heals this man, but then he goes straight to the heart of what's happening the Pharisees. They loved God's word. They knew God's Word by heart, but they had prided themselves on pleasing God that they had forgotten something very important. See, what Jesus is quoting is actually Deuteronomy, 22 verse four that says this, If you see your brother's donkey or ox fallen down on the road, do not ignore it, but help lift it up. The Pharisees had become so consumed with trying to please God that they had missed God's heart their strict interpretation of the law had actually missed the intent of the law, because mercy had been there from the beginning. Jesus knows that they don't have any problem with God's authority, but they had missed God's heart and missed opportunities of extending God's mercy and compassion. And I think Jesus is actually calling out their ego a little bit. Remember, They prided themselves on the fact that they thought they followed the law perfectly. And I think what Jesus is getting at is he's saying, Are you sure? Have you because mercy is the intent of the law, mercy and justice. And I wonder this morning, if we could ask the same question, have we confused honoring God with legalism and missed opportunities to extend God's heart, His mercy and His compassion? Because we've become consumed with pleasing God that we've made. Missed his heart.

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See the Pharisees tried to use this man's shame as an object for their gain, and yet Jesus sees him and heals him. Their plan to trap Jesus doesn't work, but the dinner party must go on. And so in verse seven, Jesus begins to speak to the people who are invited to this event, he notices that they're trying to choose the best place for themselves, and so he says, when you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, don't sit in the place of honor, because a more distinguished person than you may have been invited by your host, the one who invited both of you, may come and say to you, give your place to this man, and then, in humiliation, you will proceed to take the lowest place. But when you are invited, go and sit in the lowliest place, so that when the one who invites you comes, He will say to you, friend, move up higher. You will then be honored in the presence for all other guests, for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and the one who humbles himself will be exalted. Now I want to show you a picture of what's happening here, because in our context, we might miss this, but the way banquet tables worked in the Middle Eastern culture during biblical times is they were actually shaped like a U and the host would sit right in the dead center, and next to the host would be considered the guest of honor, or the seat of honor. And so whoever the host deemed most honorable would sit next to them. And then from there, every single place would feel most honorable to least honorable according to the host discretion. See, the Pharisees, they expected the kingdom of God to operate like their cultural norm, which in their case was this honor and shame society. And in a lot of ways, their cultural norm was reinforced by their religious values. See, they had the understanding that the Messianic Kingdom would be this loud, big event where God would come in and overthrow the oppressive rulers, restore the kingdom of Israel, and then they'd accumulate in this heavenly banquet where God would host this banquet for the religious elite And the most pure that can't be right. This is a distortion of Isaiah 25 and Isaiah 25 six, what it says is, on this mountain, the Lord of Armies will prepare for all peoples a feast of choice meat, a feast with aged wine, prime cuts of choice meat and the vintage wine. Here you have this beautiful vision of God preparing a beautiful banquet for all people, Jews and Gentiles. But what's happened over time? And actually, as they translated this from Hebrew to Aramaic, the translators added in their own

understanding of this and what once was this beautiful inclusive banquet now has become this exclusive event for the religious elite and the pure. And so the Pharisees, in this context, you can imagine they would want to be at the seat of honor. They would want to be the guest of honor, because in their minds, they've earned it. They've worked really, really hard at following all of God's laws, and they should be in that seat. And in fact, they would want people to know they are the most honorable. But what they're missing is that in the kingdom of God, righteousness is not earned. Righteousness is given to anyone who places their faith and trust in Jesus. See, the kingdom of God is not like their honor and shame society. It's not like their distorted view of Isaiah 25 the kingdom of God is something different entirely, and Jesus is flipping this upside down, saying that it's actually the humble that will be exalted in the kingdom of God. Then Jesus turns to the host of this event, and he says, when you give a lunch or a dinner, don't invite your friends, your brothers or your sisters, your relatives or your rich neighbors, because they might invite you back. On the contrary, when you host a banquet, invite those who are poor, maimed, lame and blind, and you will be blessed because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous. See, the Pharisees were used to spending time with people who were just like them, and they actually thought it was honoring to God to disassociate with the people that they deemed unworthy and unclean. But here again, Jesus flips this upside down. He not only tells them to associate with the people that they've outcast, but to invite them to their tables and. Yeah. Now I don't know about you, but this is a part of Scripture that often feels challenging. At times I can feel the Holy Spirit stirring in my life, because sometimes I find myself getting a little comfortable inside of like a holy huddle, which I think can happen so unintentionally, because our lives become oriented by our rhythms. We drive the same places to work, where we eat, where we shop. These things just become our rhythms and our activities. But I think there's an invitation this morning, the invitation that Jesus is extending to the Pharisees is to widen their view, widen their invitation. And so I wonder for us, if we think of our group chats, of our friend groups, of our Bible studies, of our play dates, do these spaces reflect people who only look like you and think like you and vote like you and live like you? Because if so, I think there may be an opportunity to widen our invitation. Jesus goes on, and one of the guys who hears all what Jesus is saying that the humble will be exalted, that in fact, this kingdom of God thing is going to be different than what they're expecting. Someone at the banquet table says in verse 15, Blessed is the one who will eat bread in the kingdom of God. What he's basically saying is, whoa, okay, Jesus, that sounds like a lot, and I'm really grateful that I have a table. I have a seat at God's table, and so I don't need to worry about what you're saying. That doesn't really apply to me, because I am over here at God's table. See The Pharisees were still seeing the kingdom of God, like this exclusive event with a VIP section, but in the kingdom of God, there is no VIP section. There is no VIP section. See the Pharisees. They viewed God's presence as being attainable by obeying God's law perfectly. But God was in their midst. Jesus was at their table, but Jesus was only a guest. He did. He was not seen as their king. The story goes on, and he responds to this Jesus by telling the great banquet parable, which is directly contrasting their idea of this Messianic banquet and the banquet that Jesus is at. In verse 16, he says a man was giving a large banquet and invited many at the time of the banquet, he sent his servant to tell those who were invited come, because now everything is ready, see, in this culture, two invitations were normal to be sent out when an event was happening. The servant would go out into the village square and declare the date of the event, and then on that day, they'd go out and declare the time. And so everyone would say yes to the original invitation, and the expectation is, then you would say yes when the time arrived as well. But in verse 18, without exception, they all began to make excuses. The first one said to him, I've bought a field and I must go out and see it. I ask you to excuse me. Another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I'm going to try them out. I ask you to excuse me. And another said, I just got married, and therefore I'm unable to come. One commentator, Kenneth Bailey points out something that I think you and I may miss, that these excuses, they were considered ridiculous and utterly insulting to the host. See, in this culture, you would never buy a field without looking at it, and you would never buy this uneven amount of oxen that need two to pull something and test their power after the fact. See, the guests are trying to intentionally bring shame upon the host and actually cancel the banquet, because this conversation is happening out in public. Their intention is to bring shame and cancel it. What Jesus is doing is he's painting a picture for the Pharisees, who thought that because they were Israelites and because they obeyed God's law perfectly, in their mind, that they had the seat of honor in the kingdom of God, and yet what Jesus is saying is, you've got it backwards. See, the phrase make excuses elsewhere in Scripture is translated as refuse and reject. Jesus is painting a picture saying you have rejected and refuse the real invitation you have rejected and refused Jesus. And so the servant comes back and reports this information to the master, and in anger, the master of the house told his servant, go out quickly into the streets and the alleys of the city and bring here the poor, the maimed. The blind

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and the lame. See, it would have been totally culturally normal for the master to respond in anger that led to vengeance. In fact, this happened all the time that the host, if brought shame upon like these guests intended, they would try to do the

same thing and hurt them back and cancel their banquets in the future. But there's something remarkably different about the host and Jesus's story. See the host here, their anger doesn't turn to vengeance. Their anger is turned to grace. And if we think of the master of the story, like God, I think God's anger is this idea that can be a stumbling block for a lot of us, because for a lot of us, we view God's anger from a human lens, where we know, if we're honest, Anger can overcome us and can make us act out and thrash out in ways that maybe we wouldn't want to we can lose control. But God's anger is not like ours. God's anger doesn't make him lose control. It's not a perturbed emotion. God's anger is actually a holy response to sin and evil. Because of God's holiness, there is distance between sin and evil, and here this anger is turned to grace with an expansive invitation. See, rejection of God's invitation breaks God's heart because he knows there's no life outside of him. But what we see when it says streets and alleys, this is directly talking about the exact people that the Jewish leaders would have outcasted, the exact people that they would have deemed unworthy and unclean and unfit to be in the kingdom of God. We see Jesus says, No, go and invite them. This isn't Jesus saying that these people are secondary in God's mind, but what he's saying is to the Pharisees you thought you could decide who has a seat at God's table. And you're wrong. You're wrong because in God's kingdom, everyone is worthy, and everyone has an equal opportunity to receive the invitation of knowing him. And verse 22 it says master, the servant said, what you have ordered has been done and there is still room. Then the master told the servant, go out into the highways and the lanes and make them come in so that my house may be filled. See, this verse is looked at by a lot of scholars as the expansion of the gospel to the Gentiles so many Jews already in Jesus's ministry had rejected Him as the Messiah, and throughout the book of Acts, we see so much more of the story unfolding of the gospel going out to the Gentiles. What's happening is the Pharisees, they had a scarcity mindset around who could be in the kingdom of God, and who had a seat at God's table. And what Jesus is saying is God's grace is abundant, and it is often us who try to limit God's grace, not God. See in the kingdom of God, God's plan for renewal and restoration is available to all, regardless of social status, regardless of age or stage or story, this invitation is available to all see in the Pharisees Kingdom hierarchy, exclusivity and striving reign, because ego and legalism is key. But in the kingdom of God, Grace, humility and restoration, reign, because Jesus is King, there's this picture that I love, that I think is from the chosen, and it depicts a completely different image of the table than the one that we saw see at Jesus's table, the guest of honor actually is a child that's sitting there at Jesus' table. All these different people of all these different backgrounds and ages and stories are all sitting around, communing together through the parables in Luke 14, Jesus has challenged the Pharisees belief about the Kingdom of God, and thus challenge their understanding of who they should spend time with, how they should treat people, and what they believed their purpose to be. But Jesus is inviting them to imagine something so much bigger and better, not a table where everyone is ordered from most honorable to least honorable, but where Jesus says, No, I'm the host, and you all have an equal seat at my banquet. See, God's great banquet, this kingdom party is his joyous welcome of all kinds of people into God's family. God. God is an extending an invitation to be in relationship with Him and to participate in his kingdom life in James, chapter two, verse five, it says, Listen, my dear brothers and sisters, didn't God choose the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom that he has promised to those who love him, see, this isn't about money. This is about a heart surrendered to God or not. It is about recognizing your need for Jesus. And I want to speak just for a moment to people who may be here or listening, who feel like they've wrestled with this invitation to know Jesus, or maybe haven't accepted that yet, and I don't know what could be holding you back. Maybe you feel like you're drowning in shame, or people wouldn't believe the story that's happened to you, and you'd never be good enough. Maybe you've been told that your whole life, or you've experienced church hurt. I don't know what it is. Can I just say to you? Jesus loves you. He sees you. He desires to know you, to heal you and make you whole and friend, I promise you, there is nothing greater, nothing better than saying yes to relationship with Jesus, the healing and the transformation that He has for you and the purpose for your life. And the only requirement is humility and repentance, recognizing that everything that you're trying to fill the void for will fail you every single time. It is Jesus alone that we access the kingdom of God. It is Jesus alone that makes us clean. It is Jesus alone that deems us righteous and holy and calls a saint and so friend, whatever is standing your way, I promise you can trust Jesus. He loves you and He desires to be in relationship with you. And in fact, depending on God is not weakness. It is entirely how we are created, as creatures who have a creator, and so recognizing our dependence for God is exactly living into our humanity. God is good. He loves you, and his desire is to heal you and make you whole. God is extending this invitation to know Him and be in relationship with him, but also to participate in his kingdom life. See, the kingdom is not simply a place you go someday, but the active rule of God, His authority, His presence and His plan for renewal, breaking into a world through the people who belong to Him. And so what that means for us as believers is we have a responsibility to live as Kingdom people, citizens of heaven. And my prayer this morning is that we do not dull or limit God's invitation. See, in verse 24 the master tells the servant to make them come into the party, to compel them to come into the party. This isn't about force. This is about urgency and intentionality rooted in the master's generosity. This is about tasting and seeing that the Lord is good. And if that is true for you, how could you not go out and

tell everyone about this invitation to know Jesus? I don't know about you, but I want to live like that. See last week, Steve said, the question is not, do you believe in the kingdom, but Have you bowed to the King? And this morning, I want to build on that. The question is not, who is invited to the kingdom, but what are you doing with your invitation? What are you doing with your invitation? Is Jesus a guest at your table, or his authority, His presence, His plan for renewal, reigning through your life? Is this invitation something you accepted a long time ago and tucked away in your back pocket, thinking it's really just for yourself, or are you living with Kingdom hospitality, seeing the world around you, wherever you are, as opportunities to extend this mission, this vision, this invitation of the kingdom of God. I think it's really easy to lose our understanding of kingdom values. I don't know about you, but I feel like I'm bombarded day and night with earthly things and earthly values. And I think of the Pharisees, they often get a really bad rap, but I don't think they were bad people. See, in fact, the Pharisees were seen as good people who had good values, who loved God and desired to honor Him who knew God's Word by heart, who prayed, and yet their religious values and their cultural norms and their pride got in the way

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that they missed God's heart and they missed out on opportunities to extend the kingdom. Kingdom of God in their midst. See the invitation for us this morning is to examine our values, to examine our hearts, and ask ourselves, what may be standing in the way of extending Kingdom belonging and kingdom hospitality. Now these lists aren't exhaustive, but I think they give us a good thing to start to try to process through as you examine your life, what do you see? Do you see apathy? Do you see self centeredness? Do you see disunity or division or tribalism or legalism or a VIP mentality? Or do you see compassion, Grace, mercy, forgiveness, multiplication, humility, oneness, invitation. See The good news is we as believers have the Holy Spirit dwelling inside of us who desires to increase our capacity for love and my invitation for us this morning is, what if we just prayed, Jesus, grow your hospitality in me. And what if we viewed every place that our feet is, whether that's at the grocery store or target or school or work or the family dinner, whatever it is, wherever your feet are. Would you ask yourself the question, Jesus, grow hospitality in my heart, Lord, and what does your kingdom, belonging, your kingdom, hospitality, look like here? What if we saw every opportunity as an invitation to know Jesus? See, God is in the business of creating life where there once was death, and so every time we extend mercy and compassion and forgiveness and patience and love, especially to the people that we don't want to or to the people that we've deemed on the outskirts, every time this happens, we actually participate in the continued ministry of Jesus, creating more spaces where heaven and earth overlap, where the kingdom of God expands here and now. And like I said, I don't know about you, but I want to participate in that. See, when I think of the kingdom of God, this is the mental image I get. It's this long banquet table that came from an experience I had at camp. It's kind of small, but you get the idea. I can't bet I met Jesus at at the end of the at the end of the week, they would line up these really long banquet tables, and everyone at the camp would fill the table. When I imagine God's table, this is what comes to mind, a never ending banquet table. And I love picturing God, our Father, just delighting and setting this table, and so eager for his children to just burst into the door and find their seat. I love this vision of this kingdom table, where all people are seated equally, and where we're all communing together, every age, every story, every background, basking in our king's glory. That is the picture of God's Kingdom table. And so if you're listening this morning and you're wondering if this invitation could be real and true for you, My prayer is that the words of Jesus in Luke 14 shows you one thing. God loves you. He sees you. He desires to be in relation to relationship with you. And there is nothing, nothing at all, not your shame, not your back story. There is nothing that can separate you from the love of Jesus, and he has a seat at his table for you. And if you love Jesus, and you've been following him for some time, and you want to participate in his kingdom, life and his mission here and now then. Here is my prayer. It is three simple words, love your neighbor. Love your neighbor, the easy to love and the hard to love, because friends, our world is dark and desperate for good news, and Jesus has proclaimed it, the good news, the kingdom of God is at hand, and we have an opportunity of receiving this gift, of being a part of God's family and then illuminating the darkness around us of beams of light extending out the invitation to know God to expand Kingdom hospitality here and now and so my prayer is that our lives, which are made new by Jesus. US alone, empowered by the Holy Spirit that our lives, when we leave this place this morning, would be a model of God's goodness as he reigns as king, and the goodness of his kingdom here and now, we pray with me, Jesus, I am so grateful, Lord, for the gift of knowing you. Thank you, Jesus, that you did not count our shame and our sin against us. God, thank you for covering us in your blood and making us clean. God, I pray specifically for people in this room and online in years to come who may listen to this message, who don't know you, Lord, would they experience your goodness? Would they believe they can trust that you are who you say, that you are, that you love them, and that life is found in you alone, and God, I pray for the believers in this room and online, Lord, would something new stir in us today? Would this not be a story that we've heard 5 million times, God, but would this be something new, a marker in our life, where we live differently beyond these walls and we look for opportunities to expand your kingdom through your kingdom belonging and your kingdom, hospitality.

Jesus, we love you. Thank you for being so hospitable to us. God, may we walk out these doors and live that out too. I pray all this in your powerful and precious Name. Amen. You.