

How would you summarize the message and ministry of Jesus into just a few words?

Jesus' Mission

Mark 1:14-15 (NIV)

After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. ¹⁵ "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!"

Acts 1:3 (NIV)

After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.

According to the above passages, what was the focus of Jesus' message?

The Kingdom of God

What is the kingdom of God?

Discuss

What do the following passages teach us about the kingdom of God?

Luke 17:20-21 (NIV)

Once, having been asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, "The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, ²¹ nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is within you."

The Israelites were expecting the kingdom of God to come in the form of a politically restored Israeli nation, but they were forgetting that Israel was created to be, first and foremost, a spiritual nation that represented God's rule in this world.

The kingdom of God speaks of the spiritual rule of God in the lives of his people.

Luke 18:17 (NIV)

I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it."

In order to live in the kingdom you have to "receive" the kingdom. It is not a rule that is forced on you, but one you must choose to embrace. This occurs through accepting it by faith, the type of faith as exhibited by small children.



Luke 11:20 (NIV)

But if I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come to you.

The kingdom of God is powerful. If the king is all powerful, then no enemy will be able to defeat his kingdom. His kingdom will keep pushing forward in strength and might.

What are the three focuses of Jesus' ministry?

Luke 8:1-2 (NIV)

After this, Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The Twelve were with him, ² and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out;

1) PREACHING

Luke 4:42-44 (NIV)

At daybreak Jesus went out to a solitary place. The people were looking for him and when they came to where he was, they tried to keep him from leaving them. ⁴³ But he said, "I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent." ⁴⁴ And he kept on preaching in the synagogues of Judea.

Luke 9:60 (NIV)

Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God."

2) HEALING

Luke 9:10-11 (NIV)

When the apostles returned, they reported to Jesus what they had done. Then he took them with him and they withdrew by themselves to a town called Bethsaida, ¹¹ but the crowds learned about it and followed him. He welcomed them and spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who needed healing.

3) DEMONIC DELIVERANCE

Matthew 12:28 (NIV)

But if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

Underline what Christ's disciples were to do as they went through the towns preparing the way for his ministry.

Sending out the 12

Luke 9:1-2 (NIV)

When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases,² and he sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.

Sending out the 72

Luke 10:1,9 (NIV)

After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go...Heal the sick who are there and tell them, 'The kingdom of God is near you.

Luke 10:17-20 (NIV)

The seventy-two returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name."¹⁸ He replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.¹⁹ I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you.

²⁰ However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

Why does Jesus say he saw "Satan fall like lightening from heaven"?

Satan established his kingdom on earth when he tempted Adam and Eve to sin and they rejected the rule of God in their lives. By default, he became the ruler of this world, over all people who have joined in rebellion against God. But now through Jesus Christ and the message of the kingdom, Satan's rule is being overthrown and he is being pushed back by the very humanity he had enslaved.

As Jesus' disciples go around casting out Satan's army in the name of Jesus, Satan's defeat in heaven is being relived. God's rule through his "image" is being restored on earth.

What does Jesus mean by verse 19?

"Snakes and scorpions" are a figurative way of talking about evil spirits who are at work to keep us from freedom and life with Jesus Christ. The second half of the verse emphasizes this when it talks about the "power of the enemy". Jesus was saying is that those who are a part of his kingdom have nothing to fear from Satan's kingdom. Nothing will harm you because you can exercise authority over the enemy in the name of Jesus.

Why does Jesus tell the disciples to “not” rejoice that the spirits submit to them?

Jesus is warning the disciples not to get too cocky, but to rejoice that they have been rescued. The disciples, apart from Jesus, were a part of the same kingdom and would suffer the same fate as these spirits. They are rescued from that life solely by the love and grace of God in their lives. The primary focus for them should not be in their newfound authority, but in the grace of God who set them free from Satan’s bondage.

Why do you think each of these three foci were so important to Jesus’ ministry?

a) Preaching

People can’t be saved unless they hear the good news that Jesus has come to forgive them and set them free.

Romans 10:14-15 (NIV)

How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? ¹⁵ And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”

It was through preaching that people heard, repented and chose to submit to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Jesus said that we would know the truth and the truth would set us free. Preaching was his way of declaring the truth to a people who desperately needed to hear it.

b) Healing

The first impact of the fall of mankind was the onset of death and illness. Mankind was supposed to subdue the earth and keep it in proper order, but when man abandoned his role as “image”, nature became unruly and unsafe.

Jesus, when he came, represented “image” as we are supposed to live it out. Wherever Jesus went he battled the effects of the fall, subdued creation and restored things to the way they were meant to be. Some examples of this were: calming the storm (healing nature), healing illness, raising the dead, etc.

If the kingdom of God was coming, it was coming to overthrow the effects of the curse and restore life to God’s people. Therefore wherever Jesus’ representatives went, they spoke “image” authority in the earth and brought healing.

c) Deliverance

If Jesus came to restore life and reverse the effects of the fall, this is no more significantly expressed than by overthrowing the enemy who had claimed rule on this earth through the fall. Satan's rule placed people under bondage to sin and death. We could not escape by our own merit or strength and as a result, were hopelessly lost and to be condemned along with the rest of Satan's kingdom.

If people are to experience the privilege of being part of Christ's kingdom, they first have to be set free from Satan's control and kingdom. Jesus did precisely that. Wherever he went he exercised his authority over the demonic realm and they fled in terror from him.

Jesus' ministry was authenticated by the very fact that demons submitted to his name and released their hold on the person. When Jesus appointed his disciples to go out proclaiming the kingdom, casting out evil spirits and defeating the power of the enemy was a necessary aspect of that ministry.

This ministry approach was consistent in Jesus' ministry, when he sent out the twelve and the seventy-two, and among the disciples through the book of Acts. Do you think these focuses should also be part of our present day ministry?

Do you struggle with any one of these emphases?

What are the dangers of neglecting any one aspect of Christ's ministry?

Neglecting Preaching

Without preaching no one would hear about Jesus and what he accomplished on the cross. As a result, no one would be saved, no one's life changed, no forgiveness granted and no escape from condemnation. It is hearing the message of Jesus and his kingdom and believing that sets people free and brings eternal life.

Overemphasizing Preaching to the neglect of the others

It is a message without authority or power. It is a message that does not translate into the practical and forgets the call to exercise "image" rule in this world.

Neglecting Healing

Without healing no one would be healed and the curse would not be repealed. It would show that the curse has greater authority than the power of Jesus.



Overemphasizing Healing

Jesus moved away from communities when the emphasis became solely on him healing. He was ultimately there to declare the kingdom as opposed to being a divine doctor. Jesus is ultimately more interested in spiritual healing than physical healing, but physical healing does have a place because of compassion and a restoration of image rule on the earth.

Neglecting Deliverance

Without deliverance people would stay in spiritual bondage to Satan. If Satan is confusing people's thoughts or keeping them trapped in sin, they will not be able to move forward in their walk with Jesus until this is dealt with.

Overemphasizing Deliverance

Too strong an emphasis on deliverance means we are spending more time focusing on Satan and his kingdom than we are on Jesus Christ. Jesus did not go out seeking evil spirits to cast out, but he dealt with them authoritatively as they crossed his path. It would be easy for ministries and people to get sidetracked by chasing after Satan instead of pursuing God.

What do you think are the implications of these ministry emphases for our church?

Do you think our church should be involved in these sorts of ministry emphases or were they solely for the early church?

What do you think the implications are for you?

Have you had experience in preaching, healing, or spiritual deliverance (whether something you did or something you benefitted from)?

Pray that our church would be effective in all areas of ministry Jesus calls us to.