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THE GOSPEL OF JESUS

I AM THE RESURRECTION

JOHN 11:1-27

I. INTRODUCTION

A. The Bible is a tale of two kingdoms

1. In the pages of scripture, we see many nations rise and fall along with their leaders but ultimately the grand narrative throughout God's Word contains the tale of just two kingdoms
2. The Kingdom of God and the kingdom of man
3. In the section of Luke, we have been studying, Jesus's teachings have centered on the Kingdom of God – His parables, His teachings, and His exchanges with the Pharisees – they emphasize the Kingdom of God
 - a) In chapter 17 of Luke the Pharisees asked the question "when is the kingdom of God coming?" Jesus replied "The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed, nor will they say, 'Look, here it is, or there it is,' behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst"

B. What did Jesus mean by this?

1. In the gospel of Matthew – a book with 28 chapters, the Kingdom of God is mentioned over 55 times — that's almost twice per chapter – we read in chapter 4:17 "From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."
 - a) Matt 4:23 And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.
 - b) Not only has this been theme of the parables but the Kingdom of Heaven has been the central theme of all Jesus's teachings
2. And we know that it is good news – Jesus went about all of Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom – and Matthew ties this teaching to many miracles Jesus performed – Jesus healed all kinds of sickness and disease
3. So, what is this kingdom that is at hand, and what is so good about it?
4. Let's go back to the beginning – ***Gen 1:26 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." 27 So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. 28 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."***

- a) Genesis 1–2 portrays God as a loving king who rules over his good creation through a man and woman who bear His image, who share in His rule and reign
- b) A section of scripture David reflects on in ***Psalm 8:3 When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, The moon and the stars, which You have ordained, What is man that You are mindful of him, And the son of man that You visit him? 5 For You have made him a little lower than the angels, And You have crowned him with glory and honor. 6 You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet, 7 All sheep and oxen— Even the beasts of the field, 8 The birds of the air, And the fish of the sea That pass through the paths of the seas. 9 O Lord, our Lord, How excellent is Your name in all the earth!***
- c) Genesis 1 – God creates the heavens and the earth and everything in the earth and it is very good and then He creates a man and woman and He shares His rule and reign over the earth with them
 - (1) Tells the man and women to enjoy it all, be fruitful and multiply, and rule over it all according to my good and perfect will
 - (2) What do they do? They rebel. They commit treason. They reject God’s kingdom and setup a kingdom of their own making. And so begins the tale of two kingdoms – The Kingdom of God – where God rules and reigns – and the kingdom of man – where man rejects the rightful authority of God and claims it for himself

C. God’s Response

- 1. He establishes a new nation through Abraham – a chosen people – to be a blessing to all the other nations. What will set this chosen nation apart? In the midst of man’s rebellion, man’s self-made kingdom – they would be a people who live under the rule and reign of the rightful King – the would be a picture of the Kingdom of God on earth – they would live under God’s laws and they would be exceedingly blessed – this nation was known as the nation of Israel and God would be glorified through them.
- 2. What did that Israel do? They rebelled. They committed treason. They rejected God’s Kingdom and built a kingdom of their own design. They broke the sacred covenant they made with God – when God said I will be your God, and you will be my people.
 - a) The nation of Israel ended up in bondage

D. God Wasn’t Finished with Them Yet

- 1. He sent prophets like the prophet Isaiah to proclaim to the people “Be strong; fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance. He will come and save you. And the ransomed of the LORD shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.”
- 2. “Go on up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good news; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good news; lift it up, fear not; say to the cities of Judah, “Behold your God!” Behold, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; behold, his reward is with him. He will tend his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms;”

3. “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who proclaims peace, who brings good news of happiness, who proclaims salvation, who says to Zion, “Your God reigns.” The voice of your watchmen—they lift up their voice; together they sing for joy; for eye to eye they see the return of the Lord to Zion.”
 - a) Even though Israel had rebelled, even though they had been unfaithful and rejected the rule and reign of the one true God, God promised to return, to free them from their bondage, and set up an everlasting kingdom.
 - (1) A kingdom that Daniel speaks of in ***Daniel 2:44 And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.***

II. THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS AT HAND

- A. Fast forward to the time of Jesus – the Jewish people lived under the rule of the Roman Empire. They were looking forward to the day that God would return in might and power and free them from their oppressors.
 1. And here is this man, Jesus. Performing the miraculous, healing the sick, giving sight to the blind, raising people from the dead and proclaiming that the Kingdom of God is at hand
 2. The Jews knew that God was king. They knew His final Kingdom was one day going to come. What they didn’t realize was that it had already arrived in the person of Jesus Christ – they didn’t recognize it
- B. Through teaching after teaching and parable after parable – Jesus has been explaining what the Kingdom of God is like
 1. It is hard for the natural mind to understand because it is an upside down Kingdom – a Kingdom where the last are first and where the first are last, a Kingdom where you love your enemies and bless those who curse you, a Kingdom where the poor in Spirit are blessed, where the tax collector is pronounced righteous and the religious leader is cast out of God’s presence
 2. It is a Kingdom where Jesus takes His rightful place as King – but before He takes His final place on the throne, He must first be lifted up on a cross
 - a) A cross in which a sign was placed above his head that rightly read, “The King of the Jews”
 - b) Although the sign was placed there to mock Jesus, and it would appear that His Kingdom had been defeated - Jesus is accomplishing victorious Kingly work on that cross – pronouncing forgiveness, defeating death, and establishing God’s kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.
 - c) Dietrich Bonhoeffer once said, “A king who dies on the cross must be the king of a rather strange kingdom.”
 - d) It is a strange kingdom indeed – and that is what Jesus has been preparing His disciples for on His final journey to Jerusalem
 3. And a great teacher does far more than just tell, they demonstrate, they show – many of us have heard the story of Lazarus but over the next two weeks I want to look at through the lens of the Kingdom of God

III. LAZARUS, MARY, AND MARTHA

John 11:1 Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. 2 It was that Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. 3 Therefore the sisters sent to Him, saying, "Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick." 4 When Jesus heard that, He said, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it." 5 Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. 6 So, when He heard that he was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was. 7 Then after this He said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again." 8 The disciples said to Him, "Rabbi, lately the Jews sought to stone You, and are You going there again?" 9 Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. 10 But if one walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him." 11 These things He said, and after that He said to them, "Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up." 12 Then His disciples said, "Lord, if he sleeps he will get well." 13 However, Jesus spoke of his death, but they thought that He was speaking about taking rest in sleep. 14 Then Jesus said to them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. 15 And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that you may believe. Nevertheless let us go to him." 16 Then Thomas, who is called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him."

- A. From the outside looking in, Jesus's behavior seems a little erratic
1. Try to see things through the eyes of Jesus's friends – Mary, Martha, and His disciples
 2. Jesus is making His way towards to Jerusalem for the feast of Passover. Mary and Martha send word to Him that His dear friend, the one whom He loves is sick.
 - a) His response – one that would be familiar to the disciples because it is the same response He gave them when they asked who sinned that a certain man was born blind. "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it."
 3. Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So when He heard he was sick, he stayed.
 - a) Then after those two days He told His disciples "You know that place where they tried to kill me? Let's go back there."
 - b) "Why in the world would we go back there??" "If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. But if one walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him." After the blank stares – "I'm going to wake up Lazarus."
 - (1) "But if he's sleeping he needs his rest. Let him sleep so he will get well."
 - (2) Then Jesus said plainly "Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there that you may believe."
 - (3) Thomas "Alright, let's go die with Him"
- B. This entire event has been orchestrated by God for those who are in a loving relationship with His Son Jesus Christ
1. There is a Kingdom lesson to be learned through the death of Lazarus. "The result of this sickness will not be death – it will magnify the nature and the will of God. It will bring Him and His Kingdom into focus

2. The natural mind has a difficult time with these lessons. They seem upside down. "You're glad you weren't there? His sickness isn't unto death but now he is dead?"
 - a) Have you felt that way? God if you are trying to teach me something in this, I'm just not getting it. It doesn't make sense.

17 So when Jesus came, He found that he had already been in the tomb four days. 18 Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles away. 19 And many of the Jews had joined the women around Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. (Because of their close proximity to Jerusalem) 20 Now Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met Him, but Mary was sitting in the house. 21 Now Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. 22 But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You." 23 Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." 24 Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." 25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. 26 And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?" 27 She said to Him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world."

IV. MARTHA AND THE KING

A. Faith and Unbelief

1. We begin to see Martha's faith in Jesus coupled with an unbelief of His power
2. This is how Martha is processing what she knows - the Lord loves us, and He is powerful, but not all powerful
 - a) "If you would have been here I know he would not have died"
 - b) A confession the limits Jesus's power by His proximity

B. As always Jesus is very purposeful and deliberate in His words to Martha

1. Doesn't spell out exactly what He will do, He leaves room for Martha's faith to grow
 - a) We often equate faith with belief. But they are two separate words in the Greek. A better way to understand faith is faithfulness.
 - b) Faith in God is demonstrated in faithfulness to God
 - c) **James 1:2 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. 4 But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.**
 - (1) Again, upside down thinking. Count it all joy when the world is hit by a pandemic, and when we are surrounded by political and civil unrest?
 - (2) That trial, that suffering, in all of its various forms will bring the nature and will of Jesus into greater focus as we keep our eyes fixed on Him
 - (3) The secret is not to bail on our trials early, to give in, to take control. But instead, to remain faithful to Jesus in the midst of it all.

C. Here's the lesson for Martha – the gospel of the Kingdom - "Your brother will rise again."

1. "I know Jesus, I learned that in Sunday school. I know about the resurrection when the Kingdom of God returns in the last days."

2. "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"
 - a) The Kingdom of God is at hand and it is an eternal Kingdom. Those who are a part the Kingdom of God need not fear death.
 - b) As Paul so eloquently puts it in **1 Cor 15:54** *When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory." "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?"* **56** *The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. 57* **But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.**
3. Jesus wasn't lying when He said Lazarus's sickness wouldn't lead to death because death has no place in the Kingdom of God and it has no place in the lives of its citizens
 - a) Martha had set her sights too low. Yes, one day the Kingdom of God would come. Yes, one day the dead would be raised.
 - b) Jesus is teaching her that time has come. The time to step into eternal life is now. The one who holds the power of death and life in His hands is here. The true King has come and to prove that He will do the miraculous.