

Jesus Must Preach the Gospel

We begin this morning with one of those most special occasions when Jesus explicitly tells you why He came to our planet (v. 43). We will look first at this purpose for His coming and then look at vv. 38-41 seeing those acts as signs confirming His purpose for coming to earth.

In v. 43 Jesus says He “must” preach the gospel of the kingdom of God. “Must” is a verb which connotes urgency to do something that is vital and necessary by the subject. Mixed with the crowds attempting to compel Jesus to stay in Capernaum to do more signs and wonders, the urgency of Jesus to go elsewhere to preach is further heightened by the verb that He “must” go to other cities as well. He further adds, “for I was sent for this purpose.”

There are many places where Jesus makes similar statements concerning the purpose He came for you. In Matthew 5:17 He said:

Matthew 5:17 ¹⁷ ¶ "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.

Jesus came not to abolish or set aside but to fulfill or “fill full” all that is written about Him in the Law and the Prophets. In **Matthew 10** Jesus said:

Matthew 10:34-39 ³⁴ ¶ "Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. ³⁵ "For I came to SET A MAN AGAINST HIS FATHER, AND A DAUGHTER AGAINST HER MOTHER, AND A DAUGHTER-IN-LAW AGAINST HER MOTHER-IN-LAW; ³⁶ and A MAN'S ENEMIES WILL BE THE MEMBERS OF HIS HOUSEHOLD. ³⁷ "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. ³⁸ "And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. ³⁹ "He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it.

In **John 10** Jesus said:

John 10:10-11 ¹⁰ "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have *it* abundantly. ¹¹ "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.

A few verses latter in John 10 Jesus adds:

John 10:14-17 ¹⁴ "I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me, ¹⁵ even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. ¹⁶ "I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will hear My voice; and they will become one flock *with* one shepherd. ¹⁷ "For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again.

As Jesus prepares for His death upon the cross He says:

John 12:24 ²⁴ "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. **John 12:27-28** ²⁷ ¶ "Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, 'Father, save Me from this hour '? But for this purpose I came to this hour. ²⁸ "Father, glorify Your name." Then a voice came out of heaven: "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again."

In **Matthew 20** Jesus declared:

Matthew 20:28 the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

In Luke 19 Jesus revealed:

Luke 19:10 ¹⁰ "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

Finally, standing before Pilate, Jesus explained:

John 18:37 ³⁷ Therefore Pilate said to Him, "So You are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say *correctly* that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice."

In each of these declarations, Jesus reveals the mystery of why He came into our world. All of these revelations provide us with various aspects of the gospel or good news of the kingdom of God, which Jesus came to bring. But just what is the kingdom of God and why does Jesus call it "good news"?

Jesus uses the phrase "kingdom of God" just over 30 times in Luke's Gospel alone. It was the central theme of His preaching and what He came to reveal. Further, if we open up our Bibles and read all the way through from Genesis to Revelation we find that it is the central theme which ties the whole Bible together as a unified story. We might say it this way, "The kingdom of God, from Genesis to Revelation, is the architectural structure of Scripture." It is the skeletal frame upon which God's story of redemption is told. A "kingdom" connotes a

geographical region over which a king rules. God's rule or sovereignty extends over the whole creation, the entire cosmos. But the theme of Scripture is that God is manifesting or revealing His reign or rule over the earth, which He made. And the earth, over which His glory is displayed is a microcosm of His glory over the entire universe. By seeing His rule over our earth we can see we can now get a glimpse of His rule over the entire universe which we cannot see.

To understand the good news of the kingdom of God Jesus must preach we must step back for a moment and see this moment in the Gospel within the larger scope of the history of redemption. We must actually turn all the way back to Genesis and look at the initial structure of the earth as God set up the world and then because of time constraints this morning we will turn all the way to the end of Scripture in Revelation to see how at least at the beginning and end this theme is central to the story as a whole. Let's turn to **Genesis 1:26-28**. We will look at two passages in Genesis and then we will look at two passages in Revelation to try and understand further what Jesus is so urgent to preach.

First, in **Genesis 1:26-28** we get a glimpse into why God created the earth. At the apex of His creation, He designs man, male and female, in His own image. It is as if God is looking around Heaven to find someone to copy or image on the earth who will serve as ruler over the earth on His behalf. So He turns and looks at His only begotten Son and says, "That's perfect." "I will make man in your image and I will give him dominion over all that I have made and man will glorify me and enjoy me in duplicating My Son's rule over the whole earth." "Further, I will join the man together into ONE FLESH and give them power to make other images of My Son to fill the earth up with a lot of images of My Son and they together will image My Son's rule over all the created earth the way my Son is ruler over the whole universe."

But we know how the story proceeds. Man didn't simply lose that rule, he tragically gave it up and relinquished his birthright for something far less than a bowl of lentil stew. But in His grace towards man, God did not allow man's decision to thwart God's plan. Even before man was created, God ordained in a covenant of redemption that His Son would bring the entire earth back under the rule of God's image bearers. We get an insight as to how God will do this is the second passage we want to look at in **Genesis 49:8-12**. Here God through Jacob sets aside one of his sons as the future king of the world. He introduces the symbol of a lion as the king of the earth through whom God will once again make His image bearers sovereign over the world. Further, once one from the tribe of Judah is set up as king over the earth, the scepter will never again depart from Him. He will never lose the rule and reign over the earth which Adam sadly despised.

Now, there are only two places in all of Scripture that the “lion from the tribe of Judah” is ever mentioned. Here and in **Revelation 5:5**, which will be the first of two passages in Revelation that we will look at this morning. Revelation 5 begins with a devastating scene which causes tears to flow in Heaven in the presence of God Almighty. The angel bellows throughout Heaven, “Who is worthy to break open the seven sealed book of God’s purpose and plan for the ages?” And tragically he looks throughout all of Heaven and upon the whole earth and no one was found worthy to open God’s plan for the creation. John began to wail before the throne of God because none of God’s creatures could fulfill God’s purpose for the creation. Then suddenly one of the elders in Heaven hushes John’s unnecessary weeping. Though none of God’s creatures are worthy to open the book and break its seals, God’s Son is worthy, the very One whom God the Father duplicated His image on the earth. The elder declares, “Behold, the lion from the tribe of Judah” (v. 5). This is the only other place in all of Scripture where this terminology of the “lion from the tribe of Judah” is used. What God promised Jacob’s son back in Genesis 49 is here filled up to the fullest in Jesus. He is the lion from the tribe of Judah who will restore man’s reign over the whole earth. But how will He go about it? How will He accomplish this staggering task? John turns around and the answer is standing before him. He sees God’s Lamb as if He has been slain but is yet standing in victory with seven horns, as Almighty God, and with seven eyes, full of the Holy Spirit. And in a scene prophesied in Daniel 7, the Lamb of God went up to the throne of God and took the book to open it. And when He did the whole of Heaven fell on its knees and broke out in worship of the Lamb of God, worship that is only given to God is given to the Lamb because He is God who is worthy of the worship of every living creature (v. 13). And what does the Lamb do in the world? See v. 10. The last Adam, who is also the prototypical Adam, undoes what the first Adam willingly gave up. He redeems man and restores him to the kingly reign over all the earth which God gave him in the beginning.

Before we turn to the second text in Revelation, look at 5:5 where Jesus is called “the root of David.” To get fully what is being said, you must think of a plant in the ground. Where is the root of the plant? The root is the beginning of the plant before it sprouts. It is the support and origin of the plant which gives life to the plant and nourishes it so that it will grow big and strong. While this title picks up on the theme of **Isaiah 11:1** where the promised stem or descendent of David will be the Messiah of God, Isaiah declares in v. 10 that the branch of David will also be the root of David’s plant. In other words, the Messiah will be both a descendent of King David, but He will also be the source or root of the kingdom of David. Now, let’s turn to **Revelation 22:16**, which is the second text in Revelation we want to look at this morning. Now that Jesus, as the God-man, has completed the work of restoring the kingdom of the world to man He declares Himself to be both the root and the descendent of

David, which is beautifully echoed in **v. 13** where Jesus declares Himself to the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. Here we see the completion of Jesus' work once the seven sealed book of God's purpose and plan of the ages has been completed.

So now we are beginning to understand the urgency of Jesus when He declares in **Luke 4:43**, "I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns as well, for I was sent for this purpose." Beloved you don't want to hold on to Jesus and keep Him from fulfilling His purpose of restoring you back to the place where you once imaged God over the creation. This is why Jesus rebuked Peter when Peter attempted to keep Jesus from going to Jerusalem to die or when he rebuked Mary for hanging on to Him trying to prevent Him from returning to His Father in Heaven.

Now, before we leave our passage this morning we must go back and look at **vv. 38-41** where we see Jesus healing many and casting out demons. What is going on here? I hope that by looking at the greater priority of Jesus in preaching the good news of the kingdom will throw light on the healings of Jesus. I want to first look at the intimacy of the healing of Peter's mother-in-law in **vv. 38-39**. Very simply Peter's mother-in-law had a debilitating, high fever and they asked Jesus to heal her. Jesus goes over to her and rebukes the fever and immediately the fever left her. Like the demon before, the fever fully and immediately submits to Jesus' power and authority. Then Luke tells us that she immediately arose and began to serve Jesus and the others. What is this about? Well think for a moment how you feel when you have a high fever and even after it breaks you are usually a bit lethargic for several days to follow. It takes time to fully recover when you have fallen ill. But Jesus' power is so potent that when He heals her she is fully restored – made like new – which is a foretaste of the ultimate resurrection which Jesus will give to those who believe in Him when He wipes every tear from our eyes and removes all pain and death. Peter's mother-in-law receives just a foretaste of the ultimate healing that Jesus has come to bring when the kingdom is restored.

In **vv. 40-41**, Luke reports even more healings and casting out demons with the demons trying to expose Jesus as Messiah, the Son of God, before Jesus' time to die. Jesus must rebuke the demons as well because only He will determine when it is His time to be revealed.

What is going on here? Clearly Jesus places a higher priority on preaching the good news of the kingdom of God than on healings. What then is the purpose of these acts? They are signs not only of the authority of Jesus in His preaching but also that the kingdom of God is already being restored on earth. God's reign and rule is being manifested through the appearing of the God-man. In **Luke 11:20** Jesus said:

Luke 11:20 ²⁰ "But if I cast out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

Further in **Luke 17** Jesus said:

Luke 17:20-21 "The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed; ²¹ nor will they say, 'Look, here *it is!*' or, 'There *it is!*' For behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst."

What Jesus is saying is that the kingdom of God was not coming in His earthly ministry the way the Jews were hoping by throwing off their Roman oppressors and restoring the kingdom to Israel. That kind of reign must wait until Jesus returns when all the elect of Israel and the Gentile nations are brought into the kingdom of God then Jesus will rule and make us rule with Him. Until then the God-man must reign by fulfilling the righteousness of the Law and being lifted up on the cross thereby completing His priestly work so that He will then be exalted as King of kings and Lord of lords with a name that is above every other name, so that at the name of Jesus ever knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is LORD, YHWH, to the glory of God the Father (**Phil. 2:9-11**).

Amen!

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