

“Kingdom Peeks!”

1. **Intro:**

- 1.1. **City Event** – On behalf of Dean & myself “Thank you to all the helpers”.
- 1.2. I felt it was **Our Harvest** in the Park. Healthy, safe environment.
Great feed back from those working & walking around.
 - 1.2.1. Gal at Starbucks, “Hey I hear your church is helping out the city, see you when I get off work.” [Many compliments]
- 1.3. **Life’s little Miracles #101** – Nick & Monique, & Jacob(3).
 - 1.3.1. Fell out of 2 story window (explain plastic trash cans cushioned fall)
- 1.4. **A Parable about Parables!** - Imagine Jesus out in our parking lot this morning speaking to a huge crowd saying, “Inside is a stage with things on it” - Then a small group pulled him aside & ask to see it - **He takes them inside & sits in the sound booth where are lighting board is.**
 - 1.4.1. Slowly He turns one of the 12 sliders on at a time - thus revealing the stage & all that was on it!
 - 1.4.2. Each Light sheds new color, & new illumination, revealing a different part of the stage, & its contents. - So, each **new Parable** sheds new light on a different part of **the Kingdom**.
 - 1.4.3. The stage was always set (kept secret), but now the lights are turned on!
- 1.5. **“Kingdom”** - refers to the **kingly rule of God** in the **hearts & lives** of people of faith. **As it begins w/the individual, it will reach a future climax when He returns.**

2. **GOD’S KINGDOM IS LARGE! (18,19)**

- 2.1. Both of these parables teach about the expansion(growth) of the kingdom.
- 2.2. A couple of different ideas on these 1st 2 parables.
 - 2.2.1. Possible **birds & yeast** represent **evil in the church/kingdom**.
 - 2.2.2. Possible it is simply pointing to **the growth of His kingdom** because of the concern of its humble beginnings.
- 2.3. **MUSTARD SEED!** (18,19)
- 2.4. **Is there going to be any success in your work?**
- 2.5. God’s kingdom will **grow large** from humble beginnings.
 - 2.5.1. From **insignificant beginnings, a great movement** develops!
 - 2.5.2. The kingdom’s influence extends to encompass **many**.
- 2.6. **Birds?** – **Do they have to represent evil?**
 - 2.6.1. Ezek.17:23 **“On the mountain height of Israel I will plant it; and it will bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, and be a majestic cedar. Under it will dwell birds of every sort; in the shadow of its branches they(Gentiles is context) will dwell.”**

3. GOD'S KINGDOM PERMEATES ALL PEOPLES/PLACES! (20,21)

- 3.1. **LEAVEN!** (20,21)
- 3.2. Leaven is found 98 x's in scripture & every time it is a symbol/linked w/evil!
- 3.3. But is he here speaking to the kingdoms **corruption**?
 - 3.3.1. Or, His Kingdom **spreading** to all nations, **permeating** all cultures, & **infiltrating** Satan's very kingdom...like yeast to dough!

4. GOD'S KINGDOM IS NARROW & BROAD! (22-30)

- 4.1. **NARROW WAY!** (22-28)
- 4.2. (22-24) Lord, are there **few** who are saved?
 - 4.2.1. What's Jesus' answer to the question? [U can't grab a percentage on this!]
 - 4.2.1.1. Only means that many will look when it's **too late!** (24,25)
 - 4.2.1.2. The "*many*" are those who try **once the door is closed!**
 - 4.2.1.3. **Will not be able** - only because they missed their opportunity.
 - 4.2.2. The real question is not "*are there few who are saved*", but "*will you be among the saved?*"
 - 4.2.3. Instead of **entering** the kingdom, some people only **ask questions** about it. **But...**
 "Salvation is not a **theory** to discuss; it is a **miracle** to experience."¹
 - 4.2.4. In our **soft age** we are more concerned with **statistics** than about **spiritual power**.
- 4.3. (24) **Strive** = to **agonize** as an athlete; or to **fight** or **struggle** in war.
 - 4.3.1. **No**, not that we were saved by our **hard work**; **rather** it warns us to avoid an "*easy, complacent, & theoretical attitude*" toward the eternal destiny of the soul.
 - 4.3.2. We are to **fight**, or be at war with, **Who?** - Not who, but **what**?
 - 4.3.2.1. Be at war with sin(esp. our own sin!)
- 4.4. **Strive** to enter the **narrow gate** – because God's way is **narrow**.
 - 4.4.1. Not every **claim** can fit through the door.
 - 4.4.1.1. (example) Haiti goats with 3 sticks to make up yoke/hindrance.
 - 4.4.1.2. (example) I don't picture **a wall** w/1 door in it. I picture an **open line** where you can cross over anywhere & 1 door on that line.
 - 4.4.1.2.1. The thought... "*why should I go through that narrow door when I can cross the line right here?*"
 - 4.4.2. And so people read diff claims on the floor & say, "*I will enter here!*"
Nope, it's **narrow!** "*Nothing to the cross I bring, Only to the cross I cling!*"
- 4.5. (25) I do not **know** you, or **where** you are from –
 - 4.5.1. Everyone's eternal destiny hangs in the balance of Jesus saying, "*I know you*" or "*I don't know you!*"

¹ Warren Wiersbe; With the Word; pg.678

- 4.5.2. It's a **personal relationship** issue. [some say the bible doesn't say you have to have a *personal relationship* w/Jesus!]
- 4.5.3. Him **knowing us** is having familiarity with Him.
- 4.5.3.1. Paul once spoke of **knowing God** then changed it to **being known by God**. (See Gal.4:9)
- 4.5.3.2. "But now after you have **known God**, or rather are **known by God**"
- 4.5.3.3. Thus, man's salvation is based on **personal relationship** not **familiarity**.
- 4.6. (25,27) **Q: What determines** whether a person is saved or not?
- 4.6.1. Intimately knowing Him, or not.
- 4.7. (26) **Q: What inadequate grounds** of confidence are here exposed?
- 4.7.1. Communion & attending Jesus' Bible studies.
- 4.7.1.1. (i.e.) **Ate & drank in his presence & heard Him teach**.
- 4.7.2. It is **origin**, **not association**, that counts!
- 4.7.3. Spend all the time in church you want. Association w/believers won't make you a Christian. You must have the life that comes from God!²
- 4.7.4. It's more than just **being in His presence**, you must **know Him**.
- 4.7.4.1. But don't only **know Him**; seek to **be in His presence** once you do!
- 4.8. **NARROW ENTRANCE BUT BROAD INVITATION!** (29,30)
- 4.9. (29) **All nations** are invited, & some from each accept the invitation.
- 4.10. (30) **Anyone** who places their trust in their *physical birth* **will not** be allowed into heaven. **Anyone** who depends on their *spiritual birth* **will be** allowed into heaven.
- 4.11. **The picture:** The owner shuts the door once all his family is in. Its night time & strangers come & knock. Yelling thru the door He responds, "I'm not sure who you are, or where you're from." [*We're Jews from Jerusalem, open up!*]
- 4.11.1. Walking away they peek into the front window. A light is on, & lounging around the Owner's table is Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, all the prophets, & wait...a bunch of Gentiles, eating & drinking.
- 4.11.2. **And they find themselves outside, in the darkness, forever, & they weep & gnash their teeth.**
- 4.12. **Those who think they're 1st** (like the Pharisees, because of their phys birth & religiosity) **will be last**; & **those who think they are last**(like the tax collector who said, "*God be merciful to me a sinner*") **will be 1st**.

² Warren Wiersbe; NT Outlines.

5. HEADING TO & WEEPING OVER JERUSALEM! (31-35)

- 5.1. **HEADING TO JERUSALEM!** (31-33)
- 5.2. The game seems to be, “*find the weakness!*”
 - 5.2.1. Let’s see if He’s *afraid to die!*
 - 5.2.2. As if they cared if he lived or died!
- 5.3. (32,33) **Today, tomorrow & the day following** – an **idiomatic** expression for a short period.
- 5.4. **Herod wants to kill you** – “Oh, **I will perish/die**, but not by Herod, & not outside **Jerusalem.**” - I will not die a **victim** but a **victor**. (Acts 4:27,28)
 - 5.4.1. “**No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself.**” Jn.10:18
 - 5.4.2. Even hell could not interfere with this divinely ordained pathway or program of high heaven.
- 5.5. **Q:** How does Jesus deal with the **opposition & unbelief** of man?
 - 5.5.1. Never flees, but stays His course.
 - 5.5.2. **Q:** How should we, when faced with opposition & unbelief? (same)
- 5.6. “**I must Journey**” – I love that phrase!
 - 5.6.1. Note He saw himself “**on journey**” in vs.22 also.
 - 5.6.2. **Q:** Are you **on journey**?
Q: Do you see your life as **an adventure** with God?
 - 5.6.3. Journey = *an expedition from one place to another.*
 - 5.6.3.1. {Journey, trip, expedition, excursion, trek, march, mission}
 - 5.6.4. Oh that we would say, “**I must journey!**”
 - 5.6.5. Jesus’ journey led him to **Jerusalem**, yours also is to **your cross!**
 - 5.6.5.1. It’s a road to travel down to...**come & die!**
- 5.7. **WEEPING OVER JERUSALEM!** (34,35)
- 5.8. Here we tread with **holy trepidation**...tentative to even **read**, let alone try to **interpret...the heart-break of God.** {It’s like me trying to explain the feelings you experienced in the death of a loved one}
- 5.9. No wonder why **Jesus wept** when he saw sinners passing by their opportunities to be saved!
 - 5.9.1. The Mother hens wing is still extended for you today.
 - 5.9.1.1. This is the great Mother heart of God!
- 5.10. (35) At the beginning of His public ministry he said, “**My Father’s House**”, now he says “**your house**”.
 - 5.10.1. If the Temple of God is left to us **without the God of the Temple**, it is **desolate indeed!**

- 5.11. **Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord** – They wouldn't see Him again until he comes as Messiah.
- 5.11.1. The crowd quotes this at the *Triumphal Entry*, but religious leaders disapproved.
- 5.11.2. Ultimately He is talking about when He comes again as the mill. ruler.
- 5.12. (34) **But you were not willing** - The saddest **refusal** of all!
- 5.12.1. Often our total focus of what we call "sin" is **committing something shameful**; instead of **refusing something high & heavenly**.
- 5.12.2. **It is like:** The **priest & Levite** that passed by the Good Samaritan. **They didn't commit** some **great evil** against him. **They didn't hurt** or **kick** him when they passed by.
- 5.12.2.1. They **selfishly refused** to go higher; to help one hurt who was "*the least of these*". Thus **refusing Christ Himself!**
- 5.12.3. **They're like rosebuds** that fall away **without blooming**, & leave only a **sharp thorn!**
- 5.12.4. It's refusal of **Christ**; refusal of **forgiveness**; refusal of **the narrow way**;...which **wounds God's heart!**
- 5.12.4.1. We must be responsible to His **call**, His **invitation!**
- 5.13. **End:** **The Way I See It #128** (**Read cup**)
- 5.13.1. Flying by myself in a tiny aircraft over lonely woods: I have no one to blame if I make a bad judgment, & the law of physics won't listen to my excuses. **What would my life be like if I always had to take full responsibility?**
Mark Olson *Plant biologist & National Geographic Emerging Explorer.*

Chinese proverb: You don't drown by **falling in** the water, you drown by **staying there**.