

Kingdom Stories
Week 9: Life from Death

It is said that on the evening of **June 18, 1815**, a man stood in the tower of **England's Winchester Cathedral** gazing anxiously out to sea. At last, he found what he was looking for - a ship sending a **signal by use of lights**. He strained to see the message. **All of England held its breath with him**, wanting to know the outcome of the war between their military leader, the **Duke of Wellington**, and the French dictator, Napoleon Bonaparte. Bonaparte, who had once ruled all of Europe, bar England, remained a threat, and now the decisive Battle of Waterloo had been fought.

So, as he stood in the tower of Winchester Cathedral, our man waited to relay the news that **would determine England's future**. The signal came just as a **heavy fog** was rolling in. It only just got through, but how he wished it hadn't, for the signal read: "**Wellington defeated.**"

The man signaled to other stations and the news spread across the countryside, bringing **great gloom and sadness**.

But then a great reversal. The fog lifted, and the message was sent again, this time in full: "Wellington defeated the enemy." Joy? Happiness?

Delirium! Wellington had won!

On Good Friday, it seemed the message was "Christ defeated", but, three days later we discover that the message had not been received in full. **The resurrection reverses what we initially thought and declares, "Christ defeated the enemy!"**

Story of Jesus' birth, life, and ministry all build to this point. His birth, his baptism by John, his miracles, the gathering of his disciples, all builds to this point. **The parables he taught are a part of that.** All of the stories we have read bring us to the events of the death and resurrection of Jesus. **Jesus died for your and my sins. He was resurrected as king of all creation.**

Jesus teaches about the kingdom of heaven/God through these parables or kingdom stories. Many of them actually start with "The kingdom of heaven is like..."

- 4 Soils.

- **Weeds and wheat** growing together.
- The **tiny mustard seed** and the **little bit of yeast**.
- Finding **hidden treasure** or the **perfect pearl**.
- A **dragnet** that captures all the fish before, separating the good from the bad.
- A **servant who is forgiven much**, but won't forgive a little is cast out.
- The **workers in the vineyard who get paid** more than they deserved.
- Those invited to the **king's banquet**, but refuse to come, so others are invited.

Jesus teaches what his kingdom is about and how it operates differently from the world around us.

This is the part of what the Bible calls the Gospel, or Good News, that tends to be marginalized, or worse, left out. Using the Bible references to the Gospel, our definition begins like this. "The Gospel is this...The Kingdom of God has been ushered in through Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus is Christ, the king, God, in a human body. This Jesus suffered and died on a cross and on the third day was resurrected according to the Scriptures." (We have this written for you and posted around our two campuses.)

The ministry of Jesus that culminates in the most significant event in human history, his resurrection, begins by talking about this thing called the kingdom of God. The first two years of his ministry he teaches almost exclusively about the kingdom. It was only later that he begin to talk about the cross, death, and resurrection. It all began with this idea of his coming to usher in the kingdom of God.

To get to the resurrection, we need to start here. *Jesus' teachings and miracles announced that God's kingdom is coming.*

The kingdom is like...or the kingdom can be illustrated by...Jesus is telling those stories that at some point always feel upside down. They make sense and then all of a sudden they don't. These stories are teaching them that his kingdom isn't like any other kingdom and it goes against the grain of society and culture, then and now.

He wants them to be able to spot it amongst the more recognizable ways of living. He also wants them to practice this new way of living in fellowship with other of his followers. Get ready, because here it comes. God is doing something.

He also announces, or ushers it in, through his miracles. When someone is healed, their ability to see, or walk, return into the community, receive peace where there was none, something is being restored to what it was intended to be. Those are the signs of the kingdom.

Jesus' teaching on the kingdom can be framed by these two statements... The Kingdom of God is a present reality and a future hope.

The Kingdom is the restoration of God's rule and reign here on earth.

Jesus is taking authority over flaws, deterioration, and brokenness of people's physical bodies. He is restoring them to what they were in the Garden of Eden. He is also taking authority over nature when he walks on the water. This passage describes it best.

The scroll of Isaiah the prophet was handed to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where this was written: ¹⁸ "The Spirit of the LORD is upon me, for he has anointed me to bring **Good News** (Gospel) to the poor. He has sent me to **proclaim that captives will be released**, that the blind will see, that the oppressed will be set free, ¹⁹ and that the time of the LORD's favor has come." ²⁰ He rolled up the scroll, handed it back to the attendant, and sat down. All eyes in the synagogue looked at him intently. ²¹ Then he began to speak to them. **"The Scripture you've just heard has been fulfilled this very day!"** Luke 4:17-21

This is Jesus' drop the mic statement. He has said all he needs to say. **Things are different now that I have come. All that stuff is going to start happening and it's going to be centered around me. I am the one you have been waiting for.**

Along with that teaching on the kingdom, there are many miracles, healings, and transformed people. **These healings, bringing people back from the dead, giving sight to the blind, tax collectors returning the**

money they had stolen from people, these are all signs of the kingdom. They are examples of the restoration of God's rule and reign over all things.

The story turns again, this time heading toward the cross. Jesus starts revealing more and more about his death and even resurrection.

His followers weren't really ready to process something like that from a man who was able to command the waves to stop and bring sight to the blind.

But he teaches them anyway, planting those thoughts so that when things start happening, they can recall what he said. He even tells them that they will all desert him in his time of need. But, how could that be, after all that they had seen him do and how the crowds were following him around.

But only a week after entering Jerusalem to a cheering throng, he is crucified and put in a grave, sealed by the Romans, and guarded. The message seen through the fog seems to be, "Jesus defeated."

But, then we arrive at Matthew 28, which we have just read. What looked like a complete defeat of the most epic proportion, becomes the greatest event in the history of the earth? Jesus who was dead, completely dead, was alive and walked out of his tomb. Now instead of Roman shoulders, an angel guards it. And who are the first to witness this event? Women.

If Jesus' teaching, miracles, and changed lives were to announce the kingdom of God then... **The resurrection was Jesus' inauguration as king and the beginning of his reign.** Which as the prophet proclaimed, "has no end."

Like with our presidents, there is this difficult time of campaigning, followed by the people, or a few of the people, vote. Because of the wonder of the internet, we usually know late the same night who is president. Someone even gives their consolation speech, trying to make nice after accusing the other guy of everything from kicking puppies to slapping grandmas.

Then there is this time before the president is inaugurated or officially put into office. That's when they slide the files across his desk and he understands why the other guy couldn't do stuff that he promised to do when he got into office. **And then the lobbyists** who helped him win, come for their pound of flesh. **All of the celebrating is over and the hard work begins** and, in many cases, they aren't able to do what they had promised to do. **He's president, but other countries have leaders also, and it gets complicated.**

But Jesus' inauguration was much more a demonstration of power and the promise of what his rule will mean.

Remember, Jesus taught them to pray, **"your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."** **God's will was that his son pays the price** for our sin, purchasing our salvation, and **then top that off by bringing life back into Jesus' dead body.** Talk about restoration of his reign. **In heaven, there is no death, now death has been defeated.** In heaven, there is only one king. Now it is the same on earth.

It starts with an **announcement of his kingdom** and then **the resurrection is the inauguration.** Then...**The resurrection authenticates everything Jesus said about the kingdom...**or frankly about anything.

All of those head scratching stories that seemed to be upside down now have come from a guy who was killed and is alive again. **That changes everything.** Now everything he said and did is seen in a **new light.**

"Authenticate" means to prove or show (especially a claim or artistic work) to be true or genuine. You can actually get a **certificate of authentication** from an expert in whatever you want to prove is real or genuine.

Being dead and then being alive is something that will prove that what you said about life, death, and God are all real and true. You are an authority if you say, **"when you have seen me, you have seen the father,"** or **"the scripture you have heard has been fulfilled this very day,"** and you walk out of a town alive that you entered into dead. **When you say, the**

kingdom of God is like...Then those are now definitive statements about God's kingdom.

⁵ Then the angel spoke to the women. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I know you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. ⁶ He isn't here! **He is risen from the dead, just as he said would happen.** Come, see where his body was lying. Matthew 28:5-6

He said it, and then he did it. There is a lot of bluster and throwing around words with no regard for truth or the facts. In sports, politics, or rap music it's called "talking trash." A lot of people tell others what they are going to do and even what they are going to do to them, but not all back it up. Jesus said the most ridiculous over the top thing about defeating death by entering its domain and laying waste to it. Now all that he said before is clearly the voice of God!

The question is, are you going to listen to him in that light?

¹⁸ Jesus came and told his disciples, "**I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth.** ¹⁹ Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. ²⁰ Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Matthew 28:18-19

Are you going to listen to him like he has authority?

The need to get the last word is not a great thing for helping build lasting relationships, particularly with someone who has authority over you. You might make your point with that coach, professor, your parents or boss, but in the end you lose, because that person knows you think you should be in charge, not them. Kings, in particular, don't care for that at all.

Because of the resurrection, Jesus gets the last word and here it is. ²¹ "The master was full of praise. 'Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let's celebrate together! Matthew 25:21

Jesus' teaching and miracles announce the kingdom of God, his resurrection inaugurates him as king and begins his reign, his resurrection authenticates everything he said and did...now to our part: His resurrection empowers the king's loyal subjects to advance his kingdom.

Resurrection power = The Holy Spirit

It is the resurrection that led to the Holy Spirit coming, which fills Jesus' disciples, giving them access to resurrection power.

The resurrection and the following commissioning scene in Matthew exude ultimate power. Jesus, who was seen as 'unable to save himself,' is now the recipient of a power that raised him from the dead. His resurrection is accompanied by an earthquake, an angel, and a huge stone removed from the tomb entrance. But those **flexings of divine muscle** pale next to the resurrection itself. And the might of the Roman army as a represented in the guards quakes and falls when confronted with these events. Pg. 967

¹⁸ I pray that your **hearts will be flooded with light** so that you can understand the confident hope he has given to those he called—his holy people who are his rich and glorious inheritance. ¹⁹ I also pray that you will **understand the incredible greatness of God's power** for us who believe him. **This is the same mighty power** ²⁰ that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God's right hand in the heavenly realms. ²¹ Now he is **far above any ruler or authority or power or leader or anything else—not only in this world but also in the world to come.**
Ephesians 1:18-21

The resurrection empowers us to live for Jesus, minister in his name, be the fullness of God in all things, love others like Jesus, and expand the kingdom by making disciples. (Read it 2 times)

Here are some examples of resurrection power...

- Baptism of people being transformed
- Freedom from bondage
- Sheila Bishop
- **That persistent sin** issue that you realize you haven't thought about in a long time

- The power over worry
- Unexpected provision
- Cultivate, Beaverton, Josie preaching at Hope and mentoring leaders in Italy house church.

The resurrection of Jesus that we **celebrate today is the inauguration of Jesus as king** and his reign...**It authenticates** everything Jesus said about the kingdom, empowers his subject and...**The resurrection brings an end to the tyranny of death.**

He has all authority...In other words he is king of the only kingdom to **conquer the unconquerable, death. You are, by default, the king, if you conquer everyone's number one enemy.**

There's a famous saying, "to be the king, you have to kill the king." Death was undefeated until then. Even **Jesus' friend**, whom he called out of a tomb, was going to one day be back in one to stay. This time the one coming out of a tomb was never going back.

Do you remember what Narnia was like before Aslan was killed and then returned to life? It was always winter, but never Christmas. That is what Jesus conquered by walking out of the tomb.

³ Or have you forgotten that when we were joined with Christ Jesus in baptism, we joined him in his death? ⁴ For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives. Romans 6:3-4
If you are here next week, you get to see **this verse come to life.**

The power of the resurrection proves that God can and does forgive our sin and give us new life. This is what baptism means. By the way, next week is our baptismal service here at the Midland campus. **It's not too late** to tell the story of this verse and what resurrection power can do.

¹⁹ And if our hope in Christ is only for this life, we are more to be pitied than anyone in the world. If the kingdom is only a present reality and not a future hope.

²⁰ But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead. He is **the first of a great harvest** of all who have died. ²¹ So you see, just as death came into the world through a man, now the resurrection from the dead has begun through another man. 1 Corinthians 15:19-21

Death came through the sin of one man that created a **separation** between God and his people that was passed down from generation to generation.

We will follow Jesus out of death into life that is full. Then we will follow Jesus from physical death and a grave into eternal life in the new heaven and earth. We will receive resurrection bodies that **do not decay because there is no sin and separation from God** that would cause death and decay. This is what resurrection power means for our future into eternity.

Return to Wellington...All of what the kingdom of God is in its present reality and in its future promise, are **not simply because Jesus died for our sins**, but because after dying, he rose to be much more powerful than before. **Are you living like you only saw half of the message, Jesus died, instead of the whole message, "Jesus died and has risen victorious over death."**

Responding the Risen King

1. Join him

He has **taught you, demonstrated his authority** by death and resurrection, he can **empower you** to be all you were created to be and defeated your only real enemy, death. So you should probably join him. **This whole series, culminating in Jesus' resurrection, is an invitation to those who see what he is doing and hear what he is saying, to join him.**

Here's the rest of the Gospel or Good News..."Through Jesus' sacrificial death and God's grace, the separation between people and their creator was bridged. Therefore, anyone who repents of their sin, believes the good news, and demonstrates this belief by following Jesus, God rescues. It is only through the Holy Spirit that we are able to live this new life as Jesus' disciples. When King Jesus returns as He promised on the Day of Judgment, everyone who is following him will enter God's eternal Kingdom."

2. Speak truth to one another.

Have people stand for this part and face the other half of the room. Read through this once so they understand what they are saying to one another. He is risen...he is risen in dead...you are one in whom Christ dwells...and you live in his unshakable kingdom.