

Kings – and the Gospel of the Kingdom

I'm excited about the Gospel of the Kingdom. The "Good News" I used to share was a traditional message of the Gospel of salvation similar to the 4 spiritual laws. That is:

1. We are all sinners (for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God [Rom 3:23](#))
2. We not only have sinned, but we have sinful tendencies and sinful hearts (Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. [1 Tim 1:15 KJV](#))
3. We need to invite Jesus into our lives and surrender our personal ambition (e.g. bring our sinful nature to "death")
I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. [Gal 2:20](#)
4. We can look forward to, and have confidence in going to heaven
5. God has a wonderful plan for our life

The Lemon Juice Gospel - What people hear from that message is that they are basically bad and that God hates sin, and probably doesn't like them very much either. What we communicated is that people are evil; they need to get saved and forsake all their selfish aspirations. Some of the verses we used were:

Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. 25 For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it. [Matt 16:24-25](#)

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. [Gal 2:20](#)

Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. [Rom 6:3-4](#)

God Loves the World! God isn't telling most unsaved people that they are evil and have sinful aspirations. He's telling them that he loves them, created them in his image, and that their heart's desire overlaps with His plan for their life. Some have sin issues, but many more have good desires and they are basically good people. The sin emphasis in our message is true, but it's not the biggest problem most people face in meeting Jesus. That's the "good news" for them. The background theology is in Harold's book "[Precious in His Sight](#)." I recommend it.

Kingdom Incentive - The Kingdom starts now – abundant life.

"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; **take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you** since the creation of the world. [Matt 25:34](#)

"Do not fear, little flock, for **it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom**. [Luke 12:32 NKJV](#)

Therefore, since **we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken**, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe [Heb 12:28](#)

Being Born Again - lets us get our first glimpse of the Kingdom we'll inherit.

In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the **kingdom of God** unless he is born again." John 3:3

Baptism - As we're baptized and receive the Holy Spirit, we can enter the Kingdom we'll inherit. Being born again, baptized, and receiving the Holy Spirit are the keys that let us in the door of the Kingdom - not the goal.

Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the **kingdom of God** unless he is born of water and the Spirit. John 3:5

The Church has the Keys - Note Mt 16:18-19 Jesus gave the keys (salvation, baptism, etc.) of the Kingdom to the church. The role of the church is to equip the saints for the work of the ministry (Eph 4:11-12). But the "ministry" of saints called to be Kings is out in the Kingdom, not inside the walls of the church. When we're "equipped," we have the power to unlock Heaven's blessing and expand the Kingdom of God on earth.

And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. **19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.**" Matt 16:18-19

The Gospel of the Kingdom - After Jesus' death, there was a huge emphasis on the Kingdom, or the "Gospel of the Kingdom." That was the primary message of Good News... not just the death and burial (that we identify with in salvation and baptism) but the resurrection life where we live out our Christian life.

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.** Acts 1:3

But when they believed Philip as he **preached the good news of the kingdom of God** and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Acts 8:12-13

"We must go through many hardships to **enter the kingdom of God,**" Acts 14:22

Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the **kingdom of God.** Acts 19:8

They arranged to meet Paul on a certain day, and came in even larger numbers to the place where he was staying. From morning till evening he explained and **declared to them the kingdom of God** and tried to convince them about Jesus from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets. Acts 28:23

Boldly and without hindrance **he preached the kingdom of God** and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ. Acts 28:31

What's the Message of the Kingdom?

1. You have God's Heart – dreams come true! – God has imprinted us with his own heart so that our heart's desires match His. It's His goal to give us the desires of our heart. That's how the Kingdom is built: our dreams and initiative and God's will.

Delight yourself in the LORD and **he will give you the desires of your heart.**
Ps 37:4

This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. **I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts.** I will be their God, and they will be my people. Heb 8:10

2. You have an inheritance! - There's an inheritance for us in "This Life." We do have to be saved, etc. but the glass is "half full" – actually it's a cup running over. The Kingdom is much more than a life of duty and sacrifice and then eternal life after we die.

"I tell you the truth," Jesus replied, "no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel will fail to **receive a hundred times as much in this present age** (homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields-and with them, persecutions) and in the age to come, eternal life.
Mark 10:29-30

3. You have power! - Once we're saved, God equips us for the "work of the ministry" through our local church. We start co-laboring with Christ and doing the "works" outside the church in the Kingdom.

I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. **He will do even greater things than these**, because I am going to the Father. 13 And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. 14 You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it. John 14:12-14

For the kingdom of God is **not a matter of talk but of power.** 1 Cor 4:20

4. We're winners! - The real emphasis of the "Gospel" seen in its Biblical entirety is not just death, burial, repentance, surrender, trials, and persecution (we don't deny any of those things); it's also being victorious overcomers, healing the sick, raising the dead, casting out demons.

As you go, preach this message: 'The kingdom of heaven is near.' 8 Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give. Matt 10:7-8

5. We Bless Others! - The Gospel of the Kingdom also means learning to receive and use wealth for ministry. We're called to bless all nations.

18 But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today. Deut 8:17-18

2 "I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."
Gen 12:2-3

Will bad things happen? - of course, but it's not your commitment, self-discipline or strength of character that will see you through them. It's the "joy set before you" - not just Heaven, but all of your inheritance in the Kingdom in this life. Yes, you have a cross to bear - but it's pretty light compared to every good thing God has put in front of you.

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who **for the joy set before him endured the cross**, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. Heb 12:2-3

Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. James 1:2-3

The apostles left the Sanhedrin, **rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name**. 42 Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ. Acts 5:41-42

And the good news is... Instead of just warning people how hard it is to be a Christian and how bad they are, tell them how good Jesus is and how blessed they will be by their inheritance in the Kingdom. That's when your presentation of the Gospel will really be balanced.

"Sin" isn't the biggest problem most people face right now. The biggest issue that weighs on their hearts is "Why am I here?" My neighbors aren't drug dealing, wife swappers destined for skid row and prison. They are hard working, married, have kids that get good grades... and lost with respect to finding the adventure, passion, romance, joy, and meaning that God designed their hearts to experience. You see, sin is just a 3rd-rate substitute for the eternal pleasures of knowing Jesus that begin when we get saved and continue when we pursue our dreams in the Kingdom.

You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand. Ps 16:11

Purpose - A relationship with Jesus is the answer to: "Why am I here?" A picture of everything God is doing in the Kingdom with his people is liberating, exciting, romantic... an adventure filled with the tempest of warfare, the thrill of heroism, the camaraderie of friends, and the generosity of abundance. Each of us has a unique and specific inheritance that we can choose to possess right now. Choose life... in fact, choose abundant life. Let the Lord overflow your cup so much that others get blessed, too.

Will the Real Gospel Please Stand Up? (Theological Perspective)

The Traditional Gospel of Salvation

The Gospel of the Kingdom

<p><u>The Nature of Man</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You're a sinner, you need to repent Your heart is desperately wicked (Jer 17:9). You must take up your cross daily and forsake your own corrupt desires and ambitions. Your ways are not His ways. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some are in bondage and need deliverance, but most are "good" people that just need a salvation experience / relationship with Jesus God created us in His own image with desires and motivations that match up with our calling and His will. He wants to grant our heart's desire because it overlaps His will for our life (Ps 37:4)
<p><u>The State of the World</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Society is evil, corrupt and carnal. We should avoid participation in government and social institutions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The world is full of many good people who will respond to what God is doing (Katrina is a good example). Some are like Cyrus: they cooperate with God before they are saved. Evil seems to prevail in some areas, but God is going to fill the earth with His glory. Marketplace ministry is a one of His tools to reach into the world
<p><u>The nature of God</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> He is Lord and we must learn to obey and serve him and give up our own ambitions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jesus has a plan to fill the earth with the glory of God. We're part of that plan. He will lead us through life's trials to great blessing and fruitfulness. He calls us "friends" instead of servants. Our desires are His desires!
<p><u>The Nature of Leadership (Christ-like)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaders are Christ-like (Lords) and we must submit to them and deny our self-will. Leaders are prone to control; mini-lords. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaders are Christ-like (friends). They equip us and release us into our calling to do the same for others.
<p><u>The Future</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evil is going to dominate this world, culminating in a time of the Great Tribulation in which Christians will be persecuted into hiding until the rapture occurs at the Lord's return. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good and evil will grow together like wheat and tares until Jesus' return. The Kingdom of God will seem small at first like a mustard seed, but God will use his people (Kings) like a mighty army to fill the earth with his glory and take the Gospel to every nation, tribe and tongue. Though not everyone will go to Heaven, we make disciples of "all men" who respond.
<p><u>Consequences of this message</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> People outside the traditional church ignore it, finding it pessimistic and irrelevant. Even Christians are prone to withdraw from church attendance... a lifetime of pews and tithing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unsaved people resonate with the good news of the Gospel and respond to it because it's what the Holy Spirit is already telling them.

The Message to Me (Personal Perspective)

The Servant

The Friend / King

<p><u>Personal Motivation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I'm a servant awaiting orders, avoiding initiative and presumption 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have God's heart in my Heart (Heb 8:10) • My dream is important to God • It's the means to accomplish His will
<p><u>Spiritual Guidance</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If God doesn't speak, I start looking for the sin in my life that must be blocking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If God doesn't speak, I still feel permission to put my foot on some land, make decisions... knowing He'll back me.
<p><u>My Inheritance – Abundant Life</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Others have abundance; my experience is poverty in finances, ministry, and health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel invited to God's perspective <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Wealth to make a difference ○ Authority over sickness, oppression ○ An open door to ministry (I choose) ○ My cup overflows
<p><u>When Bad Things Happen</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I check for God's judgment, review my life for sin • I put the brakes on 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I focus on the joy set before me Heb 12:2-3 • I consider it pure joy whenever I face trials James 1:2-3 • Because... a resurrection is pending, opportunities surface in turmoil • Persecution and warfare are not surprising or a setback (I'm more than a conqueror)
<p><u>Level of Enthusiasm</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My life as a servant is drudgery. Doing for others what I don't enjoy. • The more I work, the more my dream fades and the older I feel. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is nothing more fun than pursuing my and God's dream... fruitful, fun, and fulfilling (I've found my life's purpose) • My youth is continually renewed who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's. Ps 103:5 NIV
<p><u>Evangelism</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I try to discipline myself to share the gospel with sinners and do the work of an evangelist. I honestly don't share very often and I've never led anyone to the Lord. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People are attracted... they notice my delight in pursuing my dream, they see the prosperity in my soul and finances. They want to be part of what I'm doing. Divine appointments are a way of life and they happen routinely.

Eschatology - 3 Views on the Kingdom

Camp #1 - The future is bleak, the rapture is our hope.

- Views itself as a holy but persecuted remnant in terms of the present.
- The enemy is in possession of many secular institutions, and the antichrist is behind the scenes manipulating events for evil. The newspapers are usually full of material to support this view. Camp #1 hearts are projected all the way up to Heaven, and they are not available to build the Kingdom now, because everything in the present will be destroyed by future wars, famines, earthquakes, or by the Lord himself. In this camp my heart is positioned for hope in the rapture, and I keep it in neutral - "waiting" for the savior. This camp tends to avoid entanglement with the marketplace. Here's a verse I might use to distance myself from all the present carnality.

Their mind is on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ... Phil 3:19-20

Camp #2 - It's bad now, but revival is coming. This has largely been a position of the prophetic movement. Revivals, historically, and more recently in places like Toronto and Brownsville, remind us of God's ability to break out in power. So, we build our expectations around God's miraculous intervention, and position our hearts to anticipate a revival in the future. Here's a verse I might use to point to God's future revival.

Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days **will he revive us:** in the third day **he will raise us up,** and we shall live in his sight. Hos 6:1-2

Camp #3 - The Kingdom is upon you. In this camp we see the kingdom of God already established, and we see our job to expand it to fill the earth. It's not easy, because the enemy does hold some territory, but it's our job to take it back. We also have lots of very clear promises that we'll succeed. So we have this "we're winning" mentality and our hearts are positioned in the present to make a difference.

Please hear this: We don't have to discount a coming revival or rapture; those are just not the primary focus of our hearts - we're no longer "waiting." We're no longer prophetic "doomsayers."

The Kingdom of God is present on earth now. Those who can see it can expand it. My heart is positioned in the present to make a difference today. I'm back from the future; excited, empowered, and optimistic about the present. These are some of the verses I might use to point to the Kingdom of God.

But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you. Matt 12:28 KJV

The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John; since that time the gospel of the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is forcing his way into it. Luke 16:16 NASU

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. Rom 8:37 NIV