

Mark 4.26-34 St Peter dB 13.6.21

The Kingdom of God is...

May the words of my mouth & the meditation of all our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O Lord my rock and my redeemer. Ps19.14

Daily devotions this week Acts 5 - amazing story church
The leaders, apostles were teaching about Jesus
and having a massive impact, people kept joining them
and putting their trust in Jesus

Jerusalem religious authorities were jealous +
imprisoned them Acts 5.19; 'during the night the angel
of the Lord opened the doors of the jail and brought
them out saying go back to the temple courts; tell
people about this new life'

In the morning the rulers came to the jail everything
was locked, the guards were in place but no one was in
the jail cells allotted to the apostles... rumour soon
reached them that the apostles were back speaking in
temple courts...

-the captain of the guard was sent to round them up
and bring them to the Jewish leaders...who were
furious

Gamaliel a pharisee asked to address the Sanhedrin
explaining 'if this teaching is of human origin it will
blow over like so many others, but if it is from God -
any attempt to stop them would be futile -you'll be
fighting with God'

In our gospel reading this morning we heard the words
'The kingdom of God is like...' it's one of Jesus most
popular sayings...' What is the Kingdom of God like?
It's present when God miraculously opens prison doors

>It's present when the apostles who had been timid and bumbling find the confidence to preach in public knowing they will face arrest, and to go back to talking to Jesus when the authorities are already onto them...

There was a baby born into our wider family some years ago, with bilateral talipes, once known as clubfoot -just weeks old fitted with boots during the day and a hobble bar at night, she would kick the cot wanting to get free... the day of the operation there was a heavy snowfall which prevented it happening Her parents took her away a few days later on the church weekend and there an older lady on hearing the night-time: clunk clunk clunk & asked what was happening, the parents broke down in tears and told their secret

>The church prayed for that little girl and when the new surgery date arrived the Dr declared a miracle - the xray showed different feet to last time

The Kingdom of God is present when God heals people and sets them free, the kingdom of God is present when older Christians pray with and for young families And today that young girl is a pediatric physiotherapist - and leads prayer ministry in her church

-the kingdom of God is seen in redeemed lives

The Kingdom of God is found wherever God is King!

Wherever his rule and reign are recognized

I worship in a church where the kingdom of God is breaking into people's lives and their decisions; last year our giving rose by 20k because new church members are recognizing God's sovereignty and wanting to help build his kingdom

The same church is involved in a foodbank where the

numbers have exploded from some 50-60 families a week to 300 and more, money was running out, food was running out, volunteers were short - God has mended the situation and by prayer the foodbank has continued to supply food and to be staffed, it is quite literally like the feeding of the 5000, God has multiplied provision >The Kingdom of God is where the justice and mercy of the King of Kings over-rides earthly empires and people are lifted up ... and where the Christians, those 'in Christ' those whom 'Christ is in' take risks, for God, faithfully trusting in Jesus and seeking his Kingdom

In Marks's passage Jesus says 'The Kingdom of God is like' two times... firstly it is like seed that is sown, whether the farmer is asleep or watching it, it grows, and secondly it is like a mustard seed, a tiny weeny seed that grows into a big bush

The Kingdom of God is growing amongst us and often starts small, imperceptibly small, > like a woman knocking on the bedroom door saying 'is everything alright, I heard this noise...' > like a group of church friends saying we've got to do something for the hungry of Tower Hamlets...

> Like the apostles saying to each other, we cannot keep this life of Jesus to ourselves, even if it is dangerous we need to tell others...

Zechariah one of the last prophets of the OT era in 4.10 says do not despise the day of small things...

400 years later, Mary, Joseph Elizabeth & Zechariah chose not to despise the mad ideas and visitations they received, things overlooked by the world.... And between them they ushered into the world two small boys, Jesus and John the Baptist who himself declared,

turn from what you are doing turn from what you are thinking, turn from all the things you put first in your life, 'repent' for the kingdom of heaven is near...

His cousin Jesus then begins to teach and tells them the true kingdom of God is not an army opposing the Roman empire but a kingdom of the Spirit that will turn the world upside down, it will be typified by the humble being lifted up and the wealthy sharing what they have with the poor

The Kingdom says Jesus to a crowd standing around listening to him one day, ***has already come among you***, in fact he says that to every crowd that come around him and listen to his word... and put their trust in him...

Its why Jesus says in Matthew 6.33 'seek first the kingdom of God' and everything else will make sense, God will meet you where you are he knows your every need

Sometimes I set my alarm at 6.33... to wake me up and to remind me to start each day seeking God's kingdom

- Where the hungry are fed
- The broken are healed
- The prisoners are set free
- The wealthy give to the mission of the church not to keep the roof on but to see God's kingdom of spirit and truth turn the world upside down

- And people come to put their faith in JC whose kingdom will outlast all other kingdoms of the world

Ultimately it is **we who are either subjects of King Jesus or not**, it is *amongst us his Kingdom is found* if we make

him King of our lives, our hearts, our minds and our money!

I've heard it described like this

> The Kingdom of God is about making earth more like heaven by making people more like Jesus

This is why the whole NT labours the point about God's Spirit 'dwelling' within us, a permanent source of life and inspiration from within... like a seed growing unseen but with the potential to make huge flourishing changes to the world.