

The sermon

Intro

We're in the 2nd week of Advent season. Advent means coming. During Advent season, we celebrate Jesus' coming.

So a great question is, why did Jesus come?

This week we again seek to answer that question. And we'll answer another question, what is so good about the kingdom of God?

READ PASSAGE (4:42-44)

Body

Passage Focus

Jesus came to talk about a kingdom. I'm going to tell you about that kingdom. Then I'll strive to help you see why this kingdom is good news for you.

Why Jesus came: To preach the good news of the kingdom of God

The people of Capernaum are tracking Jesus' movements because the day before he cast out demons and healed every diseased person who came to him (4:40-41). Jesus tries to leave, but the crowd then attempts to physically prevent Jesus from leaving. That's when he says why he came.

"I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns as well; for I was sent for this purpose." – 4:43

I can't stay with you. Other towns need to hear what I have to say too.

God the Son, Jesus Christ, was sent by God the Father to earth. Why? To *"preach the good news of the kingdom of God."* Jesus was sent to speak a message. The message he spoke was good news about the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is good news!

The kingdom of God in the Old Testament

Before he died, Jacob pronounced a blessing upon Judah.

The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples. – **Genesis 49:10**

The word kingdom isn't here, but the concept is. Judah will possess the throne and exercise rule over his subjects. He will be **obeyed** by the peoples = the nations, not just Israel.

And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever." – **2 Samuel 7:16**

God promised David that the kingdom would never be torn from him like it was torn from Saul. David's line would rule **forever and ever**.

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷ Of the increase of his government and

of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this. – Isaiah 9:6-7

Isaiah foretold the birth of a child. This child would be God himself. This child would rule over David's kingdom forever, without end. The child's rule would be characterized justice and righteousness. Universal, **unending peace** will be the result.

And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever, – Daniel 2:44

A 4th kingdom will arise by God's doing. It won't be temporary. And it will bring an end to the earthly kingdoms that came before it.

I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. ¹⁴ And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed. – Daniel 7:13-14

A son of man figure will arise. To this son of man will be given a kingdom that will never come to end. This king will be served by all the nations. That's universal, unending rule.

Summary

It was foretold that the nations will obey the tribe of Judah. This throne will find its fulfillment in the line of David, whose kingdom will never come to an end. David's kingdom will be ruled by a child who is God himself. This child's rule will result in universal peace. This unending kingdom will break in pieces earthly kingdoms. And all the nations will serve its ruler.

The Jew in Jesus' day expected a ruler from the line of David who would break in pieces their earthly foes and grant Israel relief from foreign domination and the fears that came with Roman oppression. They longed for an unending kingdom where the Gentiles would be subjected to the rule of their Messiah.

The kingdom of God in the New Testament

What did Jesus have to say about the kingdom of God?

First, note that the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of God are one and the same. They're used interchangeably in Matthew 19:23-24.

And Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly, I say to you, only with difficulty will a rich person enter the kingdom of heaven. ²⁴ Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God." – Matthew 19:23-24

Second, the kingdom of God is a realm someone enters into.

People were entering the kingdom in Jesus' day.

To the chief priests and the elders (Matt 21:23), Jesus said, "*Truly, I say to you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes go into the kingdom of God before you*" (**Matt 21:31**).

Sinful people continue to enter the kingdom today.

Third, the kingdom of God is a future reality.

People will enter into the kingdom at the end of the age, when Jesus comes a 2nd time.

*"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. ³² Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³ And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. ³⁴ Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. – **Matthew 25:31-34***

People will be admitted into the kingdom after King Jesus returns in glory. This is the kingdom foretold in the Old Testament passages. Jesus is the eternal King who will usher in peace forever and ever.

Fourth, the kingdom of God is a present reality.

The kingdom was present in Jesus' day.

*Being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, he answered them, "The kingdom of God is not coming in ways that can be observed, ²¹ nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There!' for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you." – **Luke 17:20-21***

Today Jesus' kingdom is a spiritual kingdom, not a physical kingdom. No castle. No army. No land. Rather, Jesus ruling in the hearts of redeemed people.

*For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. – **Romans 14:17***

King Jesus produces external righteousness and internal peace and joy in the lives of his subjects through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The kingdom is a realm believers are being transferred into.

*He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. – **Colossians 1:13-14***

"He" = the God the Father. The Father has placed us into a kingdom ruled by his Son. In King Jesus, we possess redemption, which is forgiveness of sins.

As more people are saved, the kingdom is growing.

*He put another parable before them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his field. ³² It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is larger than all the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches." – **Matthew 13:31-32***

Jesus' kingdom will grow from miniscule to gigantic. With every new convert, Jesus' rule expands.

Opposition to King Jesus results in his kingdom suffering violence.

*From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force. – **Matthew 11:12***

But it's worth it! People give up their home and family for this kingdom.

And he said to them, "Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, ³⁰ who will not receive many times more in this time, and in the age to come eternal life."

– **Luke 18:29-30**

As Jewish people turn to King Jesus, as Gentiles turn from their idols and atheism to King Jesus, they experience family rejection. Following Jesus has consequences, but it's worth it. In this life and the next.

Fifth, people forsake all for Jesus' kingdom because of the joy it produces.

"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. – Matthew 13:44

When a person understands what the kingdom is, they give up whatever they have, whatever it takes, to enter that kingdom.

Sixth, the kingdom of God is ruled by a merciful King.

In Matthew 18, Jesus tells the parable of a king with servants who had outstanding debts (Matt 18:23-35). The king has a servant who owes him 20 years' wages. So the king orders that this man, his wife, his children, and everything he owns be sold to cover the debt. When the servant begs for patience to pay his debt, the king takes pity on man, releases him, and cancels his debt.

This is a picture of the Father. He forgives debts that can't be repaid. He takes pity on us in our sinful condition. He extends extravagant mercy. He welcomes prostitutes into his kingdom.

Seventh, kingdom of God is entered through faith and repentance.

When Jesus announced the kingdom, he urged people to repent and believe.

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, ¹⁵ and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel." – Mark 1:14-15

To repent means to turn in the opposite direction. To change your mind about God (his ways are good, the Bible is God's word), sin (it's really bad, it ruins my life), and yourself (I'm a sinner not a good person, I deserve God's punishment).

To believe means to believe there's a kingdom today. There's a kingdom in the future. To believe means to believe that some enter into the kingdom and some do not.

Jesus furnished proof of these claims by casting out demons, healing the sick, raising the dead, and raising his own dead body!

In the Bible we learn that we become right with King Jesus through faith. We trust in Jesus, his words, the merits of his death, his obedience, not ourselves.

Jesus willingly went to the cross to die as a substitute in the place of sinners, so that whoever believes would be saved. If you fail to trust in Jesus, your sin remains. You will be excluded. You will be located to a place of torment called hell. If you trust in Jesus, you belong to his kingdom today. And you'll be admitted into his future kingdom.

If you would say, I'm excluded, tell Jesus he's King. Confess your sins to God. Thank God that Jesus went to the cross. And beg for God's mercy on the basis of Jesus' death. And trust that God welcomes all who come to him through King Jesus.

Summary

The kingdom of God is already-not yet. People enter the kingdom today. And there's a kingdom to come. The King is Jesus. Today people enter the kingdom through faith and repentance. Today Jesus exercises spiritual rule over the hearts of his redeemed people through the indwelling Holy Spirit. Jesus' kingdom continues to grow as people are transferred from darkness into Jesus' kingdom.

The good news of Jesus' rule

So what's so good about Jesus' kingdom?

1. The identity of the King: Jesus Christ.

The best thing about the kingdom is the nature of the King: his attributes. His character, his wisdom, his power.

Jesus is self-giving. He has our best interests in mind. He isn't a politician or monarch who uses people to get what he wants. Jesus won't be sending soldiers into a foreign land to get their resources. He doesn't take from others so he can have more for himself. Everything belongs to Jesus. He gives what's his to us. Forever and ever!

Jesus won't make any wrong decisions. You won't have to worry about bad economic decisions that drive all the jobs out of the state. You won't have to worry about a government that can't balance its budget so they need to take more of your money.

Jesus will possess all-authority. So he won't be limited by political division and gridlock. He won't have a good policy he wants to introduce while finding himself powerless to bring it to pass because he can't get enough votes.

And with every person in the kingdom submitted to Jesus' rule, there will be no division. All will joyfully embrace his decisions. No political parties unwilling to work together. Everyone in the kingdom shares the same values. Jesus' values.

2. Satan isn't present.

When the kingdom comes, Satan has been relocated to eternal conscious torment in the lake of fire. Satan will deceive no more. Satan will no longer entice people into sexual immorality and materialism. Satan will no longer afflict people with grievous health conditions and take the lives of a man's children like he did with Job. Satan will no longer sow discord within the church. Satan will no longer stir up the murder of Christians.

3. Sin is no more.

With sin out of the way, everyone submits to Jesus' rule!

As a result, you'll never be sinned against ever again. What's the worst thing a person ever did to you? What caused you the most pain? That will never happen again!

What sin is being done to you today? That will never happen again?

With sin out of the way, you won't wrestle with grief over your own sin? What's the worst sin you ever committed? What sin you committed caused you the most grief? You'll never do that ever again!

What character flaws in your life sadden you? Where do you most find yourself troubled by your own heart? You will be set free from that flaw!

Where do you find yourself most tempted to do evil? That temptation will be gone forever and ever!

Children, you'll never be spanked again! You'll never be verbally corrected again!

4. Death is no more.

Whose death has most saddened you? You won't have that feeling ever again!

Whose death are you most afraid of today? You'll never have that fear again!

With death came bodily decay. So our bodies break down over time. We lose abilities we once had. We feel pain where we never did before.

If you're of the age where decay has set in, what's the worst physical suffering or loss of ability that you've experienced? What are you afraid of today? That will never happen again!

If you're suffering through the decay of a loved one, what's the worse you've seen them have to endure? That will never happen again!

Another one relevant to our location. You won't have to worry about healthcare shortages. You won't have to wait months for an appointment after you've been told you might possibly have cancer.

5. Scarcity is nowhere to be found.

Ezekiel 34:26-27 speaks of "*showers of blessing*" when "*the trees of the field shall yield their fruit, and the earth shall yield its increase.*" Ezekiel envisions a place without fears like hunger, dangerous beasts, and foreign invaders (34:28-29). In the kingdom, there will be plenty. No more fears about droughts, inflation, the rising cost of groceries, medical bills, car repairs, losing your job.

In the kingdom, Jesus will provide. There will be plenty to go around.

The "*good news of the kingdom of God*" is the good news that Jesus rules.

Practical questions

1. Is this kingdom good news to you?
2. Would you give up everything for this kingdom?