

Good News of a Glorious Kingdom

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- [0 : 00] Good. Well, let's turn to our reading. And Josh is picking up a series he began a couple of months ago in the book of Luke. And if you don't have a Bible with you, we have Vistar Bibles at the side, at the back. Please do grab a Bible if you don't have one with you.
- And we're in Luke chapter 9. And that's page 866, if you're using a Vistar Bible.
- Well, so Luke chapter 9 and beginning at verse 1. And Jesus called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases.
- And he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal. And he said to them, Now Herod, the Tetrarch, heard about all that was happening.
- And he was perplexed because it was said by some that John had been raised from the dead, by some that Elijah had appeared, and by others that one of the prophets of old had risen. Herod said, John, I beheaded, but who is this about whom I hear such things?
- [1 : 42] And he sought to see him. On their return, the apostles told him all that they had done. And he took them and withdrew apart to a town called Bethsaida.
- When the crowds learned it, they followed him. And he welcomed them and spoke to them of the kingdom of God and cured those who had need of healing. Now the day began to wear away.
- And the twelve came and said to him, Send the crowd away to go into the surrounding villages and countryside to find lodging and get provisions. For we are here in a desolate place.
- But he said to them, You give them something to eat. They said, We have no more than five loaves and two fish unless we go and buy food for all these people.
- For there are about five thousand men. And he said to his disciples, Have them sit down in groups of about fifty each. And they did so.
- [2 : 40] And had them all sit down. And taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing over them. Then he broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd.
- And they all ate. And were satisfied. And what was left over was picked up twelve baskets of broken pieces. Now it happened that as he was praying alone, the disciples were with him.
- And he asked them, Who do the crowds say that I am? And they answered, John the Baptist. But others say, Elijah and others, that one of the prophets of old has arisen.
- Then he said to them, But who do you say that I am? And Peter answered, The Christ of God. And he strictly charged and commanded them to tell this to no one, saying, The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed.
- And on the third day, be raised. And he said to all, If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.

[4 : 00] For whoever would save his life will lose it. But whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself?

For whoever is ashamed of me, and of my words, of him, will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory, and the glory of his Father, and of the holy angels.

But I tell you truly, there are some standing here, who will not taste death, until they see the kingdom of God. Amen.

May God bless his words to us this evening. Well, do open your Bibles, to look at chapter 9, and follow along, as we look at this together.

Is there a solution, that is big enough, to deal with the gamut of problems, that this world experiences? The answers, that are offered by politicians, and people in power in this world, are very often, little more than a tinkering around, with the odd symptom.

[5 : 19] Attempting to fix the odd symptom, of life in this fallen and dark world. There's something that, all political leaders, and parties, and ideologies, have in common, and it's that they cannot, and will not, be able to deal, with all of this world's problems.

The Bible tells us, put not your trust in princes. But, there is a solution, to the woes of this world, but it is a solution, that is from outside of this world, but which has broken into it.

And that is something, of what we see in our passage, this evening. Now, in our previous time, in Luke's gospel, we have seen, Jesus arrival, onto the world stage, and we've seen that, that has showcased, glimmers and glimpses, of the great day of salvation, that he is coming to enact.

He has already, defeated Satan, in the wilderness, and he's been extending, that victory, out from there. And we saw, wonderful, beautiful signs, of salvation, in the lives, of various individuals, in Luke chapter 7, and 8.

You see, Jesus' patience, and compassion, and tenderness. But as Luke is, drawing the first half, of his gospel to a close, that's what he's, doing in chapter 9, 9 verse 51, is the pivot point.

[6 : 42] From there, Jesus sets his face, towards Jerusalem, and from then on, his, Luke's focus changes, to the path, to Jesus' kingdom. But in the first half, of Luke's gospel, that we've been looking at, we've been seeing, the significance, of Jesus' arrival, into the world, his coming into the world, and all that that signals.

And so before, Luke moves on, to the second half, of the gospel, what we have here, in chapter 9, which we'll look at, in two parts, serves as the climax, the crescendo, regarding the significance, of Jesus' coming, into the world.

Verses 1 to 50, there are six main events, we'll take three this evening, and three next week, and they are, in a kind of mirror structure. So verses 1 to 9, at the beginning, and at the end, verses 43 to 50, contain teaching, for the disciples, around ministry, in Jesus' kingdom.

There are also, two miracles, the feeding miracle, that we'll see this evening, and then next week, Jesus healing, dealing with a demon-possessed boy. And then in the middle, of these six events, from verses 18 to 27, and then 28 to 36, the focus is all, on who Jesus is, and on his impending suffering, and glory.

We've seen that Luke, is always very careful, and ordered, in what he says. And in this section, Luke leaves out, many events, that Mark and Matthew includes. Because he has a very clear point, that he wants to get across.

[8 : 21] And it's a vital one, in light of what we've been seeing, in chapters 7 and 8. And it's a vital point, wonderful as it is, that Jesus gives, tastes of his salvation, to all kinds of individuals.

The reality is, that his plan and purpose, is far, far bigger, and more significant, than individuals. His concern is not, for less than individuals, but it is for more.

Jesus' arrival in ministry, his coming into the world, ultimately served to herald, the breaking in, of the world to come, into this world. Jesus coming into the world, is all about his kingdom, being established, and built, here in this world.

So that ultimately, the kingdoms of this world, will become the kingdom, of the Lord, and of his Christ. You can see that this passage, is all about the kingdom of God.

Notice verse 2. It's there again in verse 11. And again in verse 27. The kingdom of God. Jesus coming into the world, is God enacting a plan, that is vast enough, to deal with all, the problems that this world experiences.

[9 : 39] And it's a plan, that sees heaven itself, in all of its glory, breaking into this world, to conquer it. And the first thing Luke shows us then, in our passage this evening, is an exposing proclamation.

Verses 1 to 9. An exposing proclamation, that brings the judgment, of the world to come, into this world. Jesus' followers are given, a ministry that confronts this world, with the reality of the world to come.

Verse 1. Jesus calls the 12 together. The focus throughout our passage, is on the 12. He calls them, and commissions them, to proclaim the kingdom of God.

And verse 6. They go everywhere, to preach the gospel. Literally, the good news. And preaching the gospel, and proclaiming the kingdom of God, are the same thing. What is it that gospel means?

Well, that phrase is picked up from Isaiah. Isaiah, which we've already been seeing, has informed so much, of Luke's gospel. And in Isaiah, the gospel, the good news, is that the victorious Lord, has returned to Israel as king, so that the whole world, might see the salvation of God, through the remaking, of the heavens and earth.

[11 : 01] Now we know that, Luke tells us in his introduction, that he wants to communicate clearly, the things Jesus has fulfilled, from the very beginning. And we've seen all throughout Luke, that he leans, on all manner of Old Testament passages.

And I think there's another, that Luke draws from here. Daniel chapter 7, has a vision of four beasts, that builds up in terror, when we get to the ten horns, and the ferocious little horn.

But the vision in Daniel 7, is then interrupted, by a vision of the heavenly throne room, where the ancient of days, God himself appears, and deals decisively, with this particular beast, which is different to the rest.

And then, in Daniel 7, appears one like a son of man. A title, Jesus uses of himself twice, later on in this passage.

Verse 22, the son of man. Verse 26, the son of man. And in Daniel 7, he appears with clouds, just like Jesus will, at his transfiguration, in verse 34 and 35.

[12 : 12] And the son of man is given glory, just as Jesus will be, verse 26. Indeed, verse 29, which we'll get on to next week, Jesus' clothes will be, as white, as the ancient of days were, in Daniel chapter 7.

And in Daniel 7, the son of man, is given dominion, and authority, over all the kingdoms. And his will be the one, that never passes away.

I think Luke, has already shown us, this authority, being given to Jesus, when he defeated Satan, in the wilderness. From that moment on, Jesus has been, attacking Satan's realm.

He's been plundering him, and defeating him, and casting out his minions. And what's more, the vision in Daniel 7, concludes, with a note, that the son of man's dominion, will also be given to his people.

Look at Luke 9, verse 1. Here is that authority, that dominion, being given to the disciples. Jesus is preparing his disciples, to go out, with the same dominion, that he has, in order to authoritatively, call people to respond, and bow down to the king.

- [13 : 32] To herald the victory, of Jesus' kingdom, over the powers of darkness, in this world. In the disciples ministry, we see heaven, breaking through, into this world, in glimpses, as they cure diseases, and cast out demons.

And so their ministry, is confronting people, with the reality, of the world to come. Either, as a source of joy, or judgment.

Look at verses 3 to 5. Jesus says, take new provisions. Later on, in Luke chapter 22, Jesus says, his disciples will need, to take provisions with them. But why not here?

It's because, the expectation here, is that the glorious king, is to be welcomed. That his heralds, will be received, and kept, welcomed.

They can expect, reception, because after all, here was a king, coming to his own people. And receiving his messengers, was the same, as receiving him. That's the point, Luke is making here.

- [14 : 40] The enduring message, from this passage, isn't a kind of, model of ministry, to enmity hits. The enduring message here, is that how the message, and messengers, of the gospel are received, matters.

Because, it is receiving, or rejecting Jesus. Rejecting God's messengers, who proclaim the gospel, is to trample, underfoot, the son of God.

Gospel preaching, is confronting people, with the joy, of the world to come, and, verse five, the judgment, of the world to come. Do you notice that?

Where it is rejected, refused, then that ultimately, serves, as a testimony, against those, who do reject it. The dust, will eventually, be shaken off.

Notice, that Jesus messengers, don't bring the kingdom, to people by force. If they aren't heeded, they don't bash, skulls together. They don't compel, people at the point, of a sword.

- [15 : 45] No, the proclamation, of the gospel, leads to either joy, or judgment, and it is God, who promises both. But of course, Jesus desires, that people repent, and embrace his kingdom.

After all, he has sent his disciples, out to preach, and to heal. Sending them everywhere, verse six, to that end. The gospel, only serves, as judgment, upon those, who harden their hearts, to it.

And that brings us, to Herod, verse seven. Word reaches Herod, causing perplexity. Herod, had been faced, with the kingdom of God, before. He'd been called, to repent, by John the Baptist.

And the only provision, provided for John, was detention, and then decapitation. But here is a warning, for those, who had wished, to hold the gospel, at arm's length, who want, to refuse it.

Herod was faced, with the prospect, of the gospel messenger, he'd killed, coming back. Or, was it Elijah, verse eight, another prophet, reaching into this world, from the world to come?

- [16 : 54] Perplexing, indeed. For Herod, thought he could, do away, with the nagging voice, that brought the reality, of the world, to come before him. That he could, wipe out, anyone who stood, in his way.

But even death, cannot do away, with the reality, of the world to come. Attempting to silence, the gospel, attempting to silence, its proclamation, doesn't stop, the onward march, of God's kingdom.

Herod, would learn, that there was, a final reckoning, before one, whose power, exceeds anything, in this world. Listen to, Ralph Davis. Rightly seen, there is something, tremendously comforting, in Herod's words, John, I have decapitated.

In this context, Herod's words, vicious and horrid, as they are, are actually, a confession, of failure. It's the perennial, problem, the rulers, of this age have. They snuff out, the servants of God, but the kingdom, of God, just keeps on coming.

He says, it must gall, and alarm them, if ever they think, about it. Verse nine, John, I beheaded, but who is this, about whom I hear, such things?

[18 : 11] A day, was coming, when Herod would, get to see Jesus, having sought him. Turn over to chapter 23, Herod sought Jesus, but having rejected, the messenger of God, again and again, we read, in Luke chapter 23, verses eight and nine, having long desired, to see Jesus.

23 verse nine, Herod questions him, but Jesus made, no answer. Jesus shook the dust, off his feet, regarding Herod.

Friends, the gospel, that we proclaim today, the ministry, of the church, is a ministry, that confronts, this world, with the reality, of the world to come.

It calls for people, to come to Jesus, and bow down to him. It says with Mary, that Jesus brings down, the mighty from their thrones, and exalts those, of humble estate.

Gospel proclamation, says with Simeon, that Jesus is appointed, for the fall, and rising of many. bringing our loved ones, our friends, our neighbors, our colleagues, to hear the gospel, isn't an attempt, at trying to convince them, of an argument.

[19 : 33] It isn't a means, of persuasion. It's confronting them, with the reality, of the world to come. It's confronting them then, with either joy, or judgment.

And we knew, don't we, that to some, this message, even though it is radical, even though it challenges, any sense of autonomy, and power, that we think we have, in this world. Nonetheless, to some, it is the aroma of life.

Some hear the call, to come to Jesus, to bow down to him, to repent before him, and they swear, they smell the sweet aroma, of life. And they long, to be lifted up.

But, to those who want, to refuse this message, message of the gospel, to those who won't be humbled, those who, won't have Jesus as king, then the gospel, becomes the fragrance of death.

Luke, urges us, to not, go that way. Do not, go the way of Herod, and find Jesus, shaking the dust, off his feet, against you.

[20 : 47] Don't go the way, of verse 26, finding that at the last day, the son of man, will be ashamed. How we respond, to the gospel matters, because the day is coming, when Jesus will return, to claim the kingdoms, of this world, as the kingdom of the Lord, and of his Christ.

And Luke, goes on to show us, something, of the character, of that kingdom. He shows us in verses 10 to 17, an exhaustive provision, an exhaustive provision, that pictures, the supreme joy, of the all satisfying, world to come.

This miracle, is a taste, a preview, of Jesus' kingdom. The disciples, are once again, in focus here, there in verse 10, verse 12, verse 14, verse 16.

And Jesus, withdraws with them, but the crowds, follow. Jesus, welcomes the crowds, and he speaks, once again, about the kingdom of God, verse 11.

And it's just worth, reflecting here. When we use the language, of kingdoms, and victory, and defeat, and submission, it can carry with it, a dark hue. The news, of one kingdom's victory, over another, and so the drawing in, of people, to belong to another king, it can sound a bit forceful, rather unpleasant, dark even.

[22 : 15] The gospel does, demand submission, to a king. It is a summons, to bow down, to King Jesus. It is a declaration, that the world to come, insists upon ruling, this world.

But, but, what kind of king, and kingdom, is it a summons to? Look at the character, of Jesus' kingdom. Both Jesus, and the disciples, declare, the kingdom of God, and with it, they heal.

They both display, authority, over the demonic, to quash, evil. The character, of Jesus' kingdom, is to bring healing, and wholeness, life, and liberty, light, and goodness.

His kingdom, is not like, the political regimes, of this world, that are all vying, for power, in order to dominate, and oppress, and preserve themselves, at all costs. The kind of kingdoms, and powers, that differ very little, from one another, all seep through, with unrighteousness.

Just some, have better PR, than others. It is truly, good news, that Jesus' kingdom, is victorious. It is only bad news, for evil, and sin.

[23 : 26] Only bad news, for those, who will continually, choose, that which is evil, and harmful, and opposed, to the good, and loving creator, of the world. And the miracle, we see in these verses, pictures so vividly, the goodness, of Jesus' kingdom.

Verse 12, the disciples, that suggests, that the crowds, be dispersed, to find food, and lodgings. But verse 13, Jesus instead, asks the disciples, to provide food, for the crowds.

Why? Because the disciples, had to learn, that they, cannot accomplish, Jesus' kingdom purposes. They're still, thinking about things, through the lens, of this world, not the world to come.

They can only think, about where the local, Greggs might be, and how much, it's going to cost. But before we, stick the boot in, on the disciples, too firmly, isn't it the case, that we can at times, look for solutions, by this world's methods, when actually, the answer is, from the world to come.

Perhaps, plumping for a kind of, pragmatism in ministry, or evangelism, happy to do anything, as long as it will grow a church, happy to ignore the things, that might put people off, if only they might say, they'd be a Christian.

[24 : 46] Avoiding the truths, that are particularly, uncomfortable in our world, to our friends. It can be tempting, to approach evangelism, with ideas that are similar, to the disciples. How can we, do this?

How can we attract, and convince people, to Jesus, or try to market, his kingdom to people? When the truth is, as we've been seeing, the explicit proclamation, of the gospel, is the power of God, for salvation.

It is confronting, this world, with the world to come. Or perhaps, in the midst of, whatever new trial, we face, or an ongoing deprivation, that we carry, we doubt, whether Jesus' kingdom, will be enough, to bear us up.

Maybe we wrestle, with the truth, that our obedience, to Jesus, will never leave us short. Struggling to accept, that his kingdom, will make every wrong right, and fill up every lack.

Maybe thinking that, yes, church and Jesus, are great for many things, but, my particular problem, my grief, my deprivation, well, Jesus and his church, don't really speak on to that.

[25 : 53] It isn't too far from us, to feel to appreciate, that Jesus, is all sufficient, for his grand purposes. It isn't too far from us, to not quite grasp, that he can remake this world, and redeem his people.

And Jesus demonstrates, very vividly, that he, is sufficient, for these things. Jesus, takes what little food, there was, the five loaves, and two fish, and proceeds to feed, the crowd of 5,000 men, likely additional women, and children as well.

And this miracle, is pregnant, with Old Testament themes. It is a key miracle, the only one present, in all four gospels. And in it, there are various nods, to the Exodus.

They sit in groups, of 50, verse 14. There's miraculous, provision of food, in a desolate place, a wilderness, verses 12, and 16.

And then in verse 17, there's 12 baskets, of leftovers, one for each tribe. But also, we've been seeing, that Luke, in his gospel, leans heavily, on Isaiah.

[27 : 06] And indeed, Isaiah uses, the image of the Exodus, to picture, the great day of salvation. And so, Luke has in mind, the great promise, of the day of salvation, that Isaiah speaks of.

And here is one image, that Isaiah uses, for that great day. He says, it will be a day, when death will be swallowed up, forever. When tears will be wiped, from all faces.

And, the Lord of hosts, will make for all peoples, a feast, of rich food. A feast, of well-edged wine. The great, day of salvation, will be a day, of fullness, of feasting, of abundance.

Now, in our church, at various ministries, we serve, food with them. It's Tron Youth, at Release the Words. There's, there's food served. And often, there'll be a call, for seconds.

Sometimes, it even gets to, thirds and fourths. And there's always, some young man, or young men, who seem to be, bottomless pits. The Jamie Dixons, of this world. Well, the abundance, pictured here, was greater than, even the best nights, of RTW food.

[28 : 19] Abundance. Look at verse 17. Everyone was filled, satisfied. And not filled, like after a blue lagoon chippy, that just sits, stodgily in your stomach, and you regret.

No, it's a picture of, being satisfied, pleasantly full. Because actually, Jesus kingdom, satisfies any, and every longing, that truly consumes, the human heart. The 12 baskets, of leftovers, I think, is Luke's, way of making this point.

There was abundance, for all of God's people. For all, who belong, to the 12 tribes. For all, who walk, in the gospel, of the 12 apostles. And it's important, for us to grasp, that it is Jesus, who is all sufficient, for this.

He, empowered his disciples, for their ministry. Jesus, feeds the crowd, in a miracle, on a grand scale. And notice verse 16. Notice the language, around Jesus, and the bread.

He took it. He blessed it. He broke it. And he gave it. Language, that's picked up, at the last supper.

[29 : 32] A little hint here, that Jesus, in and of himself, would provide, everything that's needed, to usher in his kingdom, and the great day, of salvation. Indeed, the same language, of take, thank, break, and give, appears in Luke chapter 24, as well, on the road to Emmaus, when the believers there, finally see, who Jesus is, and how, the scriptures, all speak of him.

Jesus has, all that is required, to satisfy, all who will be part, of his kingdom. Every longing, every hurt, every scar, every affliction, every loss, every frustration, every hunger, of the human heart, filled, satisfied, accounted for.

Not just full, and satisfied stomachs, but full, and satisfied hearts, that have found, rest, and wholeness, every longing, fulfilled, everything that sin, robs us of, made whole.

And you know, just like the disciples, I think we often need to learn, more and more, that Jesus is, all sufficient. That his provision, for his people, is abundant.

And despite, the present pains, we bear, his kingdom, will leave us full, pleasantly full. Well, finally, Luke sets before us, an exacting path, verses 18 to 27, an exacting path, that produces jubilation, for both Jesus, and his followers.

[31 : 15] Now, we must be clear, that the feeding miracle, was a forties, a glimpse, of Jesus' glorious kingdom, a picture, of what was to come. And it was vital, to grasp this, to grasp, the destination, the goal, so to speak, in order to properly, understand the path.

And Luke makes the path, so very plain, in these verses, for Jesus, and for all, who would follow him. Verse 18, Jesus asks the disciples, who do the crowds, say that I am?

And, who do you, say that I am? Notice verse 19, John the Baptist, and Elijah reappear. And that's important, because when the disciples, answer Jesus' question, verse 20, who do you, say I am?

When they answer that, we know that they're, fully aware, of the rumors, that another prophet, has appeared. So Peter's response, is all the more striking, you are the Christ of God.

You're not just a prophet, sent by God. You are God himself, stepping into this world, to usher in the great day, of salvation. You're the one, of whom every true prophet, spoke.

[32 : 36] And then notice, the shock, in verses 21 and 22, Jesus rebukes them. He strictly charges them, to tell no one of this.

That might seem, strange to us, but verse 22, reveals why. The king who brings, the great day of salvation, the son of man, who has given, dominion and authority, over all the kingdoms, of the earth.

He's given them, through rejection, death, and resurrection. The path, to that glorious day, the day when, verse 26, he'll come in his glory, and the glory of his father, and his holy angels.

That path, is marked, by suffering. And that didn't match, many people's expectations, for the Christ. Despite, what we see, in the old testament.

The glorious king, would also be, the suffering servant. Jesus didn't want, to be foisted, into being, a political revolutionary, by the many, who didn't understand, what kind of a king he is.

[33 : 46] No, his focus, was now going to be, on the path, to Jerusalem, the path to the cross. And so he had, to first help his followers, understand his path, and thus, their path.

And Jesus' path, was rejection. Notice verse 22, rejection by, the religious establishment, by the professing, church of the day. Isn't that striking?

Isn't that supering? But when we look around, we can see, the religious establishment, in our country, trampling underfoot, the son of God still. Sidelining his rule, reinventing his word, and ultimately, making it difficult, for the true people of God.

We mustn't be naive, about the implications, of the gospel, about Jesus' demands, to rule this world. The gospel, will not sit comfortably, with the seats of power, in this world.

Because it's a direct, challenge to them. Herod knew that, fought against it. And we must not be, unprepared, for the ongoing, and determined resistance, of governments, and authorities, against the rule of Christ.

[35 : 00] And notice, that resistance, will also come from those, with religious titles, and religious frocks. Don't be surprised, if a day comes, when you are bearing a cost, for being faithful to Jesus, at work, when you're contending, for the truth, and some of those, seeking to do you harm, call themselves Christians, and belong to, St. Judas's church, which flies, all the right flags, of polite society today.

Jesus, is to be rejected, by the religious leaders, and he'll be killed. But he doesn't stop there. That is his path, and, it is also the path, of anyone, who would belong, to his kingdom.

It is what belonging, to him looks like. Verse 23, he said, to all, if anyone, would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, daily, and follow me.

Now I think, familiarity means, these words, can sometimes lose, their impact upon us. We've made, cross bearing, an idiom. It's almost become trite.

Even, the tiniest, little inconvenience, is called, carrying your cross. But notice, something here. Jesus, hasn't explicitly, mentioned the cross, about himself.

[36 : 32] Yes, he mentions death, he says he's going to die, but he doesn't specify how. And in fact, verse 23, and its equivalents, in the other gospels, is the first use, of the cross, in the New Testament.

And, whilst the Old Testament, anticipated, Jesus' suffering, and death, I'm not sure, that faithful believers, at the time of Jesus' arrival, would have had a clear picture, in their minds, that the Christ would die, specifically, by means of the cross.

Our familiarity, with the cross, can inhibit us, grasping the full weight, of what Jesus says here. The first mention, of the cross, is in this verse, verse 23, and who is it about?

Verse 23, it's to the disciples. Jesus has just dropped, a bombshell on them. He is saying, my people, are going to have to, deny themselves, notice denial, comes even before the cross.

Deny themselves, and take up a cross, daily. Jesus was laying out, to his followers, that belonging to him, means shaping, the whole trajectory of life, not around ourselves, and it means being prepared, every day, for the possibility, of both shame, and suffering, possibly even unto death.

[38 : 03] Jesus' kingdom, doesn't conquer by sword, but sacrifice. The cross, was an instrument, of both death, and shame.

As criminals, carried their cross beams, on their way to crucifixion, all who saw them, would know, there are the criminals. And that is the exacting path, that Jesus puts, before his disciples.

That is the path, of his kingdom, because it's the path, of the king. Belonging to Jesus, in this world, is not going to be, a bed of roses. It's not going to be, mixing and mingling, with the movers, and shakers in this world.

It's not going to be, being celebrated members, of the polite middle class. Not for long anyway. There has been an anomaly, in church history, where this has been possible, in generally Christian countries, for a time.

But that's an anomaly. The general expectation, for the Christian life, is that we do not, fit in with the designs, of this world. Flourishing, as this world defines it, isn't for us, because, we belong, to the world to come.

[39 : 17] There's no ducking, from that reality. Jesus is playing about it. And if his people, don't reckon with that, if we think we can, belong to Jesus, and love him, and want to honor him, and find our delight in him, whilst not letting, our Christianity, get in the way.

Get in the way, of prospering in this world. Then we need to read, what Jesus says, once again. If anyone, would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, daily, and follow me.

Follow Jesus, on Jesus' path. Paul says, likewise doesn't he? All who desire, to live a godly life, in Christ Jesus, will be persecuted.

What Jesus is saying to us, is that following him, may require, on any given day, to embrace, to embrace, public shame, for him. Or possibly, even death.

Jesus is oh so plain, about that. But, remember, Jesus first, gives his disciples, a preview, of the world to come, with the feeding.

[40 : 29] And notice that, Jesus' words, also comes to us, with the promise, of Jesus' glorious return. Do you see that? Jesus is saying, follow me, but his path, doesn't end with death, does it?

Verse 22, he will be killed, and raised. Verse 26, Jesus is equally playing, about his return, in glory, of his father's glory, and the holy angels.

And verse 27, another encouragement, to follow Jesus, he promises, that some, will taste, of his very kingdom, before tasting death.

And three of his disciples, do that very thing, the transfiguration, which we'll look at next week. Three of his disciples, get a glimpse, of what the glorious, returning king, looks like, as he's transfigured, on the mountain.

They see his glory. And so Jesus' instruction, to those, who would follow him, is plain. But it also comes, packed full of promise.

[41 : 36] It is when we delight, in the glory of Jesus' return, when we delight, in the glory, of his all satisfying kingdom, and the glory of, resurrection life, in the world to come, it's when we delight, in these things, that we will welcome, the suffering, and shame of the cross.

Welcome it, because it confirms to us, that we belong, to the suffering servant, who is the glorious king. It's only when we realize, just, what Jesus' gospel promises, what it will one day mean, that we'll be ready to, and able to follow Jesus, on his path.

Look at verse 26, Jesus says, whoever is ashamed of me, in my words, of him will the son of man, be ashamed at the last day. There will be all manner, of temptations, for us to be ashamed of Jesus.

We face real pressure, we do don't we, we face real pressure, to bow to the kingdoms, of this world, to just nod along, the latest policies, at work, at school, things that eat away, at God's design, for man and woman, for family and marriage, for parenting, and for all kinds of other things.

Just nod along, search of a quiet life, not rocking the boat, not jeopardizing our standing, or our salary. Those are real temptations. But look at Jesus' words.

[43 : 05] As we steel ourselves, to follow him, the reality, of the last day matters. And so every instance, of us embracing the shame, of belonging to Jesus, will serve, as a testimony, for us, when the son of man, comes in his glory.

Because on that day, he won't, be ashamed of us. Instead, he'll embrace us, unashamed, to number us, among his people.

And it will be on that day, that we will experience, in full technicolor, what those 5,000 men, tasted in small, utter satisfaction, every longing satisfied.

And so look, it's clear. Ours is a super path, but ours is also, splendid promise.

Jesus broke the loaves, and gave them to his disciples, to set before the crowd. And they all ate, and were satisfied.

[44 : 19] Let's pray. Lord God, when the world, the flesh, and the devil, all rage against us, seeking to obscure, our view of, and our longing, for the world to come, would you grant us, the grace and help, we need to shape, our lives indelibly, by the unseen realities, of heaven and hell.

And in the power, of your spirit, would you teach us, and train us, to walk, in the footsteps, of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray.

Amen.