

THE MESSAGE**Sept 19, 2010****Luke 4:31-44****The Rev. Dr. R. K. Miller*****Thy Kingdom Come: Kingdom Reality***

Story: A young man was getting ready to graduate from college. For months he admired a beautiful sports car in the showroom at a local car dealership, and knowing his father could well afford it, he told his dad that was all he wanted.

As Graduation Day approached, the young man waited to see if his father had purchased the car for him. Finally, on the morning of his graduation his father called him into his private study. His father told him how proud he was to have such a fine son, and told him how much he loved him. He handed his son a beautifully wrapped gift box. Curious, but somewhat disappointed, the young man opened the box and found a beautiful, leather-bound Bible.

In anger, he raised his voice at his father and said, “With all your money, you give me a Bible?” and stormed out of the house, leaving the holy book on his father’s desk.

Many years passed and the young man was very successful in his business. He had a beautiful home and wonderful family, but realized his father was very old, and thought he should probably go see him.

He had not seen his father since that graduation day. But before he could make arrangements, he received a phone call that his father had died, and willed everything to his son. He needed to come home immediately and take care of things.

When he arrived at his father’s house, he was filled with sadness and regret. He began to look through his father’s important papers and saw the still new Bible, just as he had left it years ago there on his father’s desk.

With tears in his eyes, he opened the Bible, and began to read it. As he did, a car key dropped from an envelope taped to the back pages of the Bible. The tag on the key had the name of the dealership – the same dealership that had the sports car he had desired. On the tag was written the date of his graduation, and the words, **PAID IN FULL**.

I don’t know if that story is true or not, but I like it. I really do. It reveals so much, doesn’t it? And that story invites us to consider this, *there’s more inside the pages of the Bible than we realize!!*

Today we begin a new worship series that will point out the truth that there is more inside the pages of the Bible than we realize, especially when it comes to matters of God’s Kingdom. God’s Kingdom matters. Say that with me. “God’s Kingdom matters.”

We are going to look at God's Kingdom and what it means for us to pray in the Lord's Prayer, *Thy kingdom come... thy will be done*. My prayer for you as we open the pages of the Bible is that we might discover a whole new way of seeing and living, a key to life so to speak, living a life of faith with Jesus.

Matthew, Mark, and Luke all follow a common pattern about Jesus. They begin with Jesus' baptism, and then Jesus is driven into the desert by the Holy Spirit for a time of testing and preparation. When that time is finished, Jesus begins his public ministry, and each Gospel begins Jesus' public ministry a little differently.

Luke shows us Jesus teaching in the synagogue. He opens the scroll and reads these words from Isaiah 61: *"The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn..."* (Isaiah 61:1-2).

Isaiah is writing to the people of God who are being held captive in Babylon. He tells them about a time when the Messiah will come, when the King of kings will come to their rescue and right all the wrongs in the world, setting people free. Free from every thing that's not right. Free from enemies, plagues, sickness, and oppression. Free from poverty, blindness, disease, and death itself. Being set free from these things would be signs that the King had come that the Kingdom of God had arrived.

Guess what Luke is telling us in our reading today? He is saying, the Kingdom of God has come into the world in Jesus. Jesus teaches it. Jesus lives it. Jesus is committed to it. Jesus has begun to right all the wrongs in the world. Can I have a "Thank you Jesus!"?

Question: Is there anything wrong in your world that needs to be made right? If so, then the Kingdom of God is calling to you.

After teaching in the synagogue, Jesus encounters a man possessed by an unclean spirit, there in church. Jesus rebukes the demon and sets the man free, righting a wrong.

After church Jesus goes to the home of Simon Peter, Simon's mother-in-law lies sick with a fever -- a 50/50 chance of dying in those days. Jesus casts out the fever, healed her, and she is "raised up," a phrase that points to the resurrection. She then serves Jesus. Word gets out. Jesus heals, Jesus restores, Jesus rights the wrongs in the world. Can I have another, "Thank you Jesus!"?

Luke is doing at least two things here. **First**, he's making the connection between Jesus and God. Jesus is doing things that only God can do. Jesus must be one with God then, right? His words, his deeds reveal his connection to God.

Second, Isaiah is writing about Jesus as the promised Messiah, says Luke. Jesus is the one who brings God's Kingdom to earth. Because of Jesus everything that opposes God's Kingdom is beginning to fall: Satan, sin, sickness, disease, and death.

Luke points out how Jesus is committed to God's Kingdom. He is not just waiting for it to come; he is doing his part to bring that kingdom into reality. And Jesus invites us to do the same. Jesus invites us to do the same.

Notice how the people wanted to keep Jesus for themselves. They wanted to prevent Jesus from going anywhere. He said to them, "*I must proclaim the good news of the Kingdom of God to the other cities also; for I was sent for this purpose.*"

Jesus was and is committed to doing his part in the world. Wrongs are being made right. It's not about keeping him for ourselves but seeing how Jesus is at work throughout the world – working in us and through us. That's the good news we share about Jesus.

What wrongs need to be made right and what are we willing to do about them? I don't know about you but I want to do my part within the coming kingdom of God.

Author and teacher, Brian McLaren offers an interesting view about the kingdom reality in our midst. He says that Jesus offers a liberating yet disturbing message about the coming kingdom of God and calls us to do our part within it. Check out the screen and this 3 minute message from Brian McLaren.

Video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4NtgjNLNpao&feature=related>

I like how Brian McLaren says the kingdom of God is a liberating yet disturbing message for us today. Each and every one of us is invited to help bring the kingdom of God into reality by the way we live our lives. The key is in the Bible. And there is more going on here than we realize. Amen.

Let us pray... Lord, help us to live according to your will. We know that there is so much more going here than we realize. We know that our debt to you is paid in full -- help us to live with thanks and praise to you every day. Help us to invest in your Kingdom work here on earth doing our part to right the wrongs in our midst. Lord we pray... Thy kingdom come, thy will be done... in us and through us. Amen.