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Luke 18:15-17

The Certain Gospel: What is the Kingdom of God? Part 2/2

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We're starting this sermon by watching a clip from Monty Python and the Holy Grail.¹ This clip shows how many people feel about the idea of kings and authorities. **Dennis** really didn't like the king, did he? He saw no reason to respect **King Arthur** and King Arthur was not very respectable. He used his authority to **repress** his subjects. If you could have a **good king**, would you want him? Would you want a king to lead you, protect you, and provide for you? From beginning to end the Bible is the story of a **king** and his **love** for his **people**. Today we're **finishing** our **Biblical overview** of the **kingdom of God**. So far we've learned:

Chapter 1. God is king. (Gen 1:1; Psa 93:1-2)

Chapter 2. People are called to rule. (Gen 1:26)

Chapter 3. The first rulers fall short. (Gen 3:15)

Chapter 4. God gathers a kingdom people. (Gen 12:2-3)

This chapter helped us answer the question, "**What is the Kingdom of God?**"

Reign: God reestablishing his presence on earth.

Realm: God restoring all of creation from the fall.

Redemption: God redeeming his fallen subjects.

Chapter 5. God provides a human king. (Deut 17:16-19)

Chapter 6. The human king falls short. (1 Kings 11:6)

Chapter 7. God promises a final king. (2 Sam 7:16; Dan 7:13-14)

And now finally we come to the **arrival** of the king from the **line of David**.

Chapter 8. The king is born.

The eternal king came as a **small baby boy**. Remember how king David **received** this promise from God?

2 Samuel 7:16 Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.'" (NIV®)

The gospel of **Luke** draws our attention to this **promise** by what the angel **Gabriel** says to **Mary**.

Luke 1:30-33 But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. 31 You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, 33 and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end." (NIV®)

There are **two genealogies** in the New Testament that show Jesus is a descendant of David, one in **Matthew 1:1-17** and the other in **Luke 3:21-38**. *The king is born.*

Chapter 9. King Jesus preaches kingdom news.

All throughout his ministry Jesus preaches about the kingdom of God.

Luke 4:43 But he said, “I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent.” (NIV®)

A few verses earlier in Luke we see who Jesus is preaching the Kingdom of God to.

Luke 4:18

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners
and recovery of sight for the blind,
to set the oppressed free, (NIV®)

As you read the **miracles** in Luke, when Jesus **heals** people and drives out **demons** (Luke 4:33-35; 38-39), they are not meant to just be **nice stories** but to show Jesus is doing what he said he would do here. The people of Jesus’ day thought that the **Messiah** would bring the kingdom of God through **violence** and **war**. They thought he would overthrow the **Romans**. The **common people** thought this and so did the **Pharisees**. Even **John the Baptist** struggled to understand Jesus’ kingdom is a different kind of kingdom.²

Luke 7:21-22 At that very time Jesus cured many who had diseases, sicknesses and evil spirits, and gave sight to many who were blind. 22 So he replied to the messengers, “Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor. (NIV®)

What type of kingdom is Jesus preaching? Is it for this world or the next?

1) *The kingdom of God is both spiritual and physical.*

Jesus came to **set free** men and women who are captive **physically** and **spiritually** under the reign of the **prince** of this world, **Satan** (John 12:31; Eph 2:2; 2 Cor 4:4). Jesus **does this** by healing the poor, by **forgiving sin**, and by giving the **blind sight** (Luke 5:20; 7:21-22). He does this not by **violence**, like the **kings of old** and the **kings of today**, but through **preaching** — by **proclaiming** the good news.

When we hear this preaching and ask Jesus to **rule** over our lives instead of **ruling** ourselves, which is really just being ruled by the serpent, it can **radically transform** us. Last week I shared **Valerie’s** story from **Teen Challenge**. This week I want to share **Jordan’s story**.

He was a good kid ... the son of a pastor, grew up in church, and went to a small Christian college. There he excelled in track and football, until an injury changed everything.

Jordan’s broken ankle required two surgeries and prescription pain medication. Jordan began to depend on the meds and, as the prescriptions ran out, he started looking for more, digging through the medicine cabinets and bathroom drawers of every home he entered.

Soon he was shopping for pills on the street and stealing in order to afford them. As his addiction worsened, Jordan began crushing pills in order to inhale them or inject them.

When Jordan was expelled from college after failing his second drug test, his parents immediately entered him into the Adult & Teen Challenge USA program.

During the next twelve months at Adult & Teen Challenge, God changed Jordan's life, bringing him healing and restoration. After Jordan graduated from Adult & Teen Challenge he returned to college, completed his degree, and got a job as an athletic coach at the same school that had once expelled him.³

There is both a **spiritual** and **physical dimension** to the kingdom of God. God is interested in dealing with our **sin problem**, but also in redeeming our **broken lives**. Yes. Jesus preached **gospel words**. But he didn't just preach gospel words. He also did **gospel deeds**. That's why our **vision** as a church is, "A gospel-centered church that changes lives through sharing the message of Jesus Christ in word and deed." As Christians, we can sometimes get caught in the trap of thinking that all Jesus cares about is **saving souls**, but he also wants to **save lives**. *The kingdom of God is both spiritual and physical.* **When** is this kingdom going to happen?

1) *The kingdom of God is already but not yet.*

This salvation is a **present event (already)**. It happens during Jesus' ministry (c.f., Luke 11:20).

Luke 17:20-21 Once, on being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, "The coming of the kingdom of God is not something that can be observed, 21 nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is in your midst." (NIV®)

When Jesus says "the kingdom of God is in your midst" he's talking about **himself**. Jesus is the king and he ushers in the kingdom of God by **forgiving** sins, performing **miracles**, and **preaching** the gospel. The kingdom is the **power** and **presence** of the **king**. But it's also a **future event (not yet)**.

Luke 19:11-12 While they were listening to this, he went on to tell them a parable, because he was near Jerusalem and the people thought that the kingdom of God was going to appear at once. 12 He said: "A man of noble birth went to a distant country to have himself appointed king and then to return. (NIV®)

Jesus is going to **leave** his disciples and all believers to go to heaven ("A man of noble birth went to a distant country..."). When Jesus **returns** then the kingdom will come **fully**.⁴ So the kingdom of God is already but not yet (i.e., some call it "the now but not yet"). It is a **present AND future reality**.

The kingdom of God is a **present reality** when believers forgive each other when they're hurt. The kingdom of God is present when Jesus **reconciles** enemies into friends. The kingdom of God is present when God **miraculously heals** people of their sickness and disease, and also when he uses **doctors** and people to care for the sick. The kingdom of God is present when **black** and **white** live together in harmony. When can already taste and see the kingdom of God in our world, but it's not here fully. It's also a **future reality** because one day God will wipe away all sin. There will no longer be **war** or **famine** or **racism**. All who know Christ Jesus will experience perfect and eternal **peace**. That day is the **consummation** of the kingdom, and it's not here **yet**. So when you and I **love those** who hate us, **forgive those** who hurt us, and **sacrifice** and **suffer** for Jesus and for others, that's the **in-breaking** of the kingdom of God into this world. When you and I share the gospel in **word and in deed**, we're helping **usher in** this kingdom.

There's this video game called **Fortnite** that **125 million** people have played (that's 1.6% of our 7.6 billion world population). In this game there are "**portals/rifts**" that are opening up and are **transporting** items from the "**game world**" into the "**real world**." For example, **Fortnite Llamas** have been spotted in **England - London, Spain - Barcelona, Germany - Cologne, Poland - Warsaw, and France - Cannes**.⁵ And the **Durr Burger** popped up in the desert in **California**.⁶ This is a **marketing ploy** meant to get people out in the real world and **excited** about the video game.

The **metaphor** breaks down because our world will never become fortnight. But as we speak our world **is** becoming the kingdom of God. When the **youth** pack **care packages** for **Syria** that is the kingdom. When we have a “**Free Books & Prayer**” table at the **Westford Farmer’s Market** that is the kingdom. When we reach out to our community through our **Trunk or Treat** that is the kingdom. When we pick up **trash** at **Forge Pond Beach** that is the kingdom. When **Kathy** went to **Mexico**, **Andy** went to **Haiti**, and **Mackenna** went to **France** that is the kingdom. When the **worship team** sings and we **preach** God’s word that is the kingdom. When we **play games** with our neighbors that is the kingdom. When we reach out to those on our **frontlines** (the place you serve God everyday) that is the kingdom. Jesus brought the kingdom and so do we. The kingdom of God is **real** and it is here, but it’s only a **taste** of the **future perfect kingdom** that is coming soon. 1) *The kingdom of God is both spiritual and physical.* 2) *The kingdom of God is already but not yet.*
Chapter 9. King Jesus preaches kingdom news.

Chapter 10. The king dies to save his subjects.

Luke continues the theme of the kingdom of God all the way to the **cross**.

Luke 23:36-43 The soldiers also came up and mocked him. They offered him wine vinegar 37 and said, “If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself.” 38 There was a written notice above him, which read: this is the king of the jews. 39 One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: “Aren’t you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!” 40 But the other criminal rebuked him. “Don’t you fear God,” he said, “since you are under the same sentence? 41 We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.” 42 Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” 43 Jesus answered him, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.” (NIV®)

Many people mocked Jesus as he died. They thought they had **squelched** another **Jewish rebellion** lead by a **false Messiah**. But it was at this moment of **suffering** and **death** that Jesus achieves his **greatest victory**. It’s by his **death** that Jesus saves his **bride**, the **church** (Eph 5:25). It’s by his **sacrifice** that he defeats the **prince** of this **world** (John 12:31). It’s by his **suffering** that you and I can be **adopted** into the family of God as **sons** and **daughters** (Gal 4:5-7). It’s by his **crimson blood** that you and I regain the **innocence of Eden** and are as **white as snow** (Isa 1:18). It’s by his **wounds** that we are **healed** (Isa 53:5). Remember the three r-s? The king has finally **redeemed** his fallen subjects. *The king dies to save his subjects.*

Chapter 11. The king rose and reigns.

The good news is that king Jesus doesn’t stay dead. He rises from the grave conquering sin and death and that’s where most end the story. But the end of Luke and beginning of Acts record that Jesus **ascended** into heaven. Do you ever what happened next? He sat down on a **throne** and is **reigning** over all (another r!).

Hebrews 12:2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. (NIV®)

Right now king Jesus is sitting on the throne **reigning** over all. He is **orchestrating** the **invasion** of his kingdom into this world. Like the **British** have a sovereign, Jesus is every Christian’s **sovereign**. If you believe that Jesus is both your **Savior** from sin but also the **Lord** of all, you too will be **saved**. Like our passage today says, receive the kingdom of God like a **child** (Luke 18:15-17). You’re don’t have to understand it perfectly. **Repent** and **believe** in king Jesus! *The king rose and reigns.*

Chapter 12. The king is coming back again.

One day king Jesus is coming back again.

Revelation 19:11, 16 I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and wages war... 16 On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

You and I and all who know Christ Jesus the King will once more **reclaim** our **rule** with Jesus. We will join in **judging angels** (1 Cor 6:3) and ruling over the **new heavens** and **new earth** (Rev 21:1-4). King Jesus **redeems** his people, **reigns** supreme, and will one day restore his **realm** when he **renews** all of **creation** from its fallen state (Rev 22:1-5).

Now I want us to think back to **Fortnite** and those pictures of kingdom moments and to ask ourselves this question, “**Where can I create a kingdom of God moment?**” Where **this week** can I do something to **make visible** the **invisible** kingdom of Christ? **Who** can I tell about his **rule** and **reign**? **How** can I help others find **redemption**? **Where** can he use me to bring healing to the **realm** of this world? How can I help usher in the **consummation** of the kingdom of God? *Where can I create a kingdom of God moment?*

The Christian musician **Matthew West** asked his fans for stories to provide inspiration for his songs. **Jordan** from **Teen Challenge** wrote to him. The first line of his letter was, “Hello, my name is Jordan and I am a **drug addict**.” That’s how he **identified** himself until he experienced the work of the king in his life. Now he introduces himself by saying, “Hello, my name is Jordan and I am a **child of the one true king!**”⁷ Jordan’s story so inspired Matthew West that he wrote the song, “Hello, My Name Is.” Today, I’m going to pray, and then we’ll listen to this song in closing. You don’t have to get up or sing, but you can if you want to. The ushers are still going to take the **offering**. As you listen worship the king and ask, “*Where can I create a kingdom of God moment?*”

*Pastor Jonathan Romig preached this message at Cornerstone Congregational Church.
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¹ This illustration originally appeared in The Gospel Coalition's booklet, *The Kingdom of God* by Pastor Stephen Um. <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/publication/the-kingdom-of-god/> Accessed 7/10/2018.

² Sprinkle, Preston. *Fight: A Christian Case for Non-Violence* (Kindle Locations 1767-1772). David C. Cook. Kindle Edition.

³ Jordan's Story. <https://www.teenchallengeusa.com/about/success-stories> Accessed 7/16/2018.

⁴ "Is the kingdom of God a future reality to be hoped for or a present reality to experience now? That's today's question. The answer is that it is partly present and partly future. Many of its blessings are here to be enjoyed now; but many of them are not yet here. Some of its power is available now but not all of it. Some of the curse and misery of this old age can be overcome now by the presence of the kingdom. But some of it cannot be. The decisive battle against sin and Satan and sickness and death has been fought and won by the King in his death and resurrection, but the war is not over. Sin must be fought, Satan must be resisted, sickness must be prayed over and groaned under (Romans 8:23), and death must be endured until the second coming of the King and the consummation of the kingdom." *Is the Kingdom Present or Future?* <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/is-the-kingdom-present-or-future> Accessed 7/16/2018.

⁵ *Fortnite Llamas Spotted All Over Europe*. Fortnite Insider. Published 7/9/2018. <https://fortniteinsider.com/fortnite-llamas-spotted-in-london-germany/> Accessed 7/16/2018.

⁶ Geeter, Darren. 'Fortnite' Season 5 is being played in real life. CNBC. Published 7/13/2018. <https://www.cnbc.com/2018/07/12/fortnite-epic-games-microsoft-halo-arg-gaming-fans.html> Accessed 7/16/2018.

⁷ Songfacts. Hello, My Name Is by Matthew West. <http://www.songfacts.com/detail.php?id=31017> Accessed 7/17/2018.