

The Kingdom of God Is Bigger than You Think

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Date: 17 October 2021

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[0 : 00] So, the scripture reading comes from the book of Matthew chapter 13. Please follow along on your bulletin or your own Bible. Starting in verse 24, we read, He put another parable before them, saying, The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field.

But while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. So, when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also.

And the servants of the master of the house came and said to him, Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have weeds? He said to them, An enemy has done this.

So, the servants said to him, Then do you want us to go and gather them? But he said, No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them.

Let both grow together until the harvest. And at harvest time, I will tell the reapers, Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned. But gather the wheat into my barn.

[1 : 09] 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. 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.

He told them another parable. The kingdom of heaven is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, till it was all leavened. Then he left the crowds and went into the house.

And his disciples came to him, saying, Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field. He answered, The one who sows the good seed is the son of man.

The field is the world, and the good seed is the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil.

The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the end of the age.

[2 : 20] The son of man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all lawbreakers, and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their father. He who has ears, let him hear. 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. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind. When it was full, men drew it ashore, and sat down and sorted the good into containers, but threw away the bad.

So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous, and throw them into a fiery furnace. And in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

[3 : 33] This is the word of God. Great. Thanks, Irene. Sorry we didn't have the scripture up on the slide. I'm not sure what happened, but I hope you were able to follow along in your bulletin.

Well, if you don't know me, my name is Kevin, and we are continuing to work our way through Matthew's gospel. We are in Matthew chapter 13, and Matthew 13 is the chapter that introduces all the parables that Jesus told.

And last week, Chris started off this section, and we looked at the parable of the various soils. And we looked at how God sows the gospel, his seed, and we looked at how the gospel message is

actually unchanging throughout the ages, but its impact on people, I guess, is varied depending on how receptive we are to this gospel message.

And that's one of the constant refrains throughout Matthew's gospel, that this is Jesus, how are you going to respond? These are the claims of Jesus, what is your response?

Throughout Matthew's gospel, Matthew is constantly asking us, this is who Jesus is, what are you going to do about it? And Chris introduced us to a really second, very important theme last week in Matthew 13, which is that the parables actually serve two functions.

[4 : 54] They serve to both reveal and to conceal. For those that have a heart that are seeking God and the truth, they illuminate, they open up who God is, but for those who are too lazy to seek it out, or too proud or self-centered, actually the parables have a way of concealing who Jesus is, and his truth.

In other words, the parables bring to light those who are looking for it, but for those who do not, the darkness intensifies. And that's what Jesus says in verse 12, he says, the one who has, even more will be given, and he will have abundance.

The one who does not have, even the little that he has, will be taken away. So that's what we looked at last week. Now in today's passage, so Chris looked at one parable, today we're going to look at six parables, okay?

We're taking a big leap up, a big jump forward. And let me give you the big idea for today right up front. Have you ever wished that you had perfect perspective on something?

You could see the whole picture. Maybe you're working on a project at work, and it's a long-term project, and you're just thinking, I wonder how this thing's going to end. I wish I could see in three years' time how it's all going to end.

[6 : 05] Sometimes I feel like that with parenting, right? When parenting's tough, I think to myself, are we raising monsters, or I just wish that I could see 15 years down the road and see whether I'm on the right track now, whether this is just a little bit of pain for much gain, or whether I'm completely on the wrong track.

I wish I could see the end while I'm in the middle of it. Maybe you're working away through your PhD, or you've got a loved one in a hospital. You're in the middle of a situation, and you think, I wish I could just zoom out and see how this story ends.

Knowing how the story ends changes everything. And in these six parables that we're going to look at today, Jesus wants to give us some heavenly perspective. He wants us to zoom out and see how the story that began all those years ago is going to end.

He wants us to see the perspective of the kingdom of God from his perspective, so that when we're in the midst of it and it feels like, oh my goodness, I'm raising monsters, we can zoom back and see actually we're on the right track.

Okay, so that's what Matthew wants us to see today. Now, one of the very first things that we should notice when I read and read to us is that all six of these parables start off the same way.

[7 : 23] They all say, the kingdom of heaven is like, the kingdom of heaven is like. Again, I'll tell you, the kingdom of heaven is like. Jesus wants to explain to both the crowds and the disciples what the kingdom of God is like.

And that's actually one of the things you have to grapple with, you have to reckon with if you're going to understand Jesus at all. That Jesus Christ unashamedly claims to be heaven and earth's true king.

Jesus says he didn't just come to give us some wise advice, he didn't just come to give us some to make life all comfortable. Jesus unashamedly comes and says, I am heaven and earth's true king.

Either you bow down and you follow me or you reject me completely. But don't just tolerate me.

Jesus says, and the Bible says, that the world as we currently know it is actually in a state of rebellion against heaven's true king.

That's why there's so many problems in the world. That's what's wrong with the world. And Jesus came to establish a means, a way by which rebels can be reconciled to their king.

[8 : 30] Jesus came to open up a way to offer amnesty to rebels that we can be united with him and brought back into his kingdom. And that's really what a Christian is. A Christian is someone who has turned from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light.

Someone who's turned from the kingdom of self to the kingdom of God. Someone who's turned from the kingdom of my way to the kingdom of heaven. Jesus comes and he says, let me tell you

what the kingdom of heaven is like.

And he gives us these six parables. Now, these six parables are actually in three sets of pairs.

Okay, and so we're gonna look at these three pairs, these three sets under these three points.

Okay, you know, we gotta have three points at Watermark, otherwise it's not a proper sermon. And so under these three points, okay, we're gonna look at these six parables. The kingdom that is like its king, the kingdom that is unlike its beginning, and then the way into this kingdom.

Okay, I'm sorry if you can't see, I'll try that, okay. The kingdom that is like its king, the kingdom that is unlike its beginning, and the way into this kingdom. Okay, so let's dive over with the first one.

[9 : 39] The kingdom that is like its king. Actually, let me pray for us. So I was gonna pray earlier and I dived right in. Let's just ask God to come speak to us. Heavenly Father, as we come to your word this morning, we want your perspective on life and eternity and the kingdom of heaven.

God, we want you to open up our eyes. God, won't you, through these parables, reveal the kingdom of God. Don't conceal it. God, we come before you this morning with our hearts wanting to know the truth and light.

God, don't intensify the darkness. Open up our eyes to see you for who you are, to see us for who we are in you, and to see the kingdom of heaven. God, I pray for those of us that are discouraged this morning, that your word will encourage us.

I pray, God, for those of us that have kicked back and taking life easy. Won't you come and challenge us this morning? God, you know where each one of us at. And so, Holy Spirit, we ask you to come and be part of our time.

Come and take the words that are on the pages of scripture and write them on our hearts. Come and help us to see the kingdom of God as you want us to see it. We ask you, God, this in your awesome and your gracious name.

[10 : 51] Amen. Okay, so firstly, the kingdom that is like its king. So, in Matthew's gospel, Matthew goes to great lengths to explain that Jesus Christ is the long-awaited Messiah king.

You remember, in the Old Testament, King David is the greatest king that Israel ever had. And he really established righteousness and justice in the nation of Israel. He wasn't perfect.

He made some bad mistakes. But by and large, during David's reign, Israel was at its best. It flourished. It won its battles. The borders expanded. Life was flourishing.

In the nation of Israel under David's rule. And the Old Testament is constantly saying that as great as David was, there is a true and better David that's coming. One who's going to establish true justice and true righteousness on the earth.

That's why, a few weeks ago, Chris looked at that passage in Matthew 12, where it talks about when the true and better David comes, he will not crush a bruised reed.

[11 : 57] He will not put out a smoldering wick. He will establish righteousness and justice for the Gentiles till the ends of the earth. That's what the Old Testament is constantly saying.

As great as David was, don't put your hope in him. Wait for the heaven and earth's true Messiah King to come. He will establish justice and righteousness in the earth.

And so when Jesus announces, the kingdom of heaven is at hand, people are speculating, is this the Messiah King? Is this the one we've been waiting for? And so at the beginning of Jesus' ministry, speculation and anticipation is sky high.

People see his miracles, they hear his teaching, and they're thinking, this is it, the Messiah is here. But after a little while, Jesus' claims to bring the kingdom seems a little underwhelming.

And people start wondering, is this all there is? Remember in Matthew chapter 11, John the Baptist, the guy who originally said, behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

[12 : 59] He sends some disciples to Jesus and says, Jesus, did we get it wrong? Are you really the one that we've been waiting for? Or should we start looking for somebody else? Because your kingdom is a little underwhelming, right?

I wonder if you've ever felt like that. Maybe if you like the gospel, it just feels a little bit impotent.

Why is the kingdom of God not taken over the whole world, established itself as the one true world religion?

Why don't all people accept Jesus and surrender to him as Lord? And maybe, those that do call him Lord, why do their lives not look like they surrender to him as Lord at all?

In other words, why is there so much wickedness, so much sin, so much hypocrisy in the world?

And why is there so much sin and wickedness and hypocrisy in the church?

I mean, it's one thing out there, but in here? And why especially after Jesus lived and died and rose again, now reigns in glory, all authority in heaven and earth, why is the world, why is the church so messy?

[14:04] Sure, Jesus sits enthroned in heaven, but when is he going to bring some of that heavenly justice to earth? These were the questions that anyone in the first century was grappling with.

Remember, the Roman Empire was ruthless. And friends, maybe some of these are the questions that we grapple with ourselves. Jesus wants to answer that in the first and the last parable. Look at the first parable, the parable of the weeds, and the last one, the parable of the net. In both of these parables, the good and the bad, the righteous and the wicked, the true and the counterfeit, live side by side, coexist as it will, until the end of the age, until the day that Jesus brings his judgment.

In the first parable, God's kingdom is pictured as a field. And sown in this field is this great seed, and it's waiting to reap a harvest, 30-fold, 60-fold, 100-fold.

And as the workers are walking in this field, the grain field, they notice weeds are sprouting out next to the wheat. And they go to the master and say, what's going on? How can this be? We know your seed is not bad.

[15:12] We know the gospel is great. How come it's producing this weed? And Jesus says, just wait until the end of the age. Jesus says in verse 38, these are the sons of the evil one, meaning those who belong to the kingdom of darkness.

In verse 41, Jesus says, these weeds will be gathered up out of the kingdom of Christ's kingdom. In other words, these weeds appear to be those who look like sons of the kingdom of God, but they aren't genuinely part of his kingdom.

They are those who profess faith in Christ, but they aren't genuinely saved. They aren't genuinely born again. And we see the same thing in the parable of the net. God's kingdom is pictured as this big net trawling behind, a trawling boat, and it brings in this whole big harvest of fish, and they pull it up on shore, and the fish are separated into two piles, those that are truly the ones that they want and those that are rejected and cast out.

And the point that Jesus is making is that within his kingdom, there always appears to be those that are weeds that look like wheat, those that are good fish, those that are bad fish that look like good fish, those sons of the evil one masquerading as sons of the kingdom.

And Jesus' point is don't let that bother you. Don't get put off by it. Don't get perplexed by it. Don't let the perplexing presence of evil confuse you as the true nature of God's kingdom.

[16:37] Look at what he says in verse 41. He says, Jesus says that when the kingdom of heaven finally comes, he will bring judgment to bear not only on the evil in the world, but all those who even cause evil, even the temptations to evil.

Jesus says that a day is coming when he's going to root out of his kingdom that which is masquerading as truth, but is actually falsehood. He says the same thing in verse 49. The angels will come and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the fiery furnace.

In that place, there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Friends, you see what Jesus is doing here? Jesus is allowing us to zoom back and he's giving us a heavenly perspective.

He's helping us to see the big picture and how the story ends. And Jesus says, even though now it can look perplexing because you look around and you say, Jesus, I thought your kingdom was meant to come.

I thought you meant to destroy the evil one. And yet where I look, it seems like evil coexists within us. Jesus says, don't be put off by it because he's going to bring his judgment to bear on evil and wickedness and hypocrisy.

[17:58] And when that time comes for his people to be brought into his kingdom, his kingdom will finally look like its king. The king of the kingdom of heaven is utterly glorious, utterly pure, utterly blameless.

And in that day, his kingdom will finally look glorious like its king. But that day has not yet come.

Friends, one of the things that we must reckon with if we're going to be followers of Jesus is to take seriously Jesus' words of his judgment.

throughout the whole of chapter 13, Jesus is constantly bringing gospel grace and gospel judgment together. And as modern people, we struggle with this idea of judgment, right?

We like Jesus, his and his affirming love, Jesus and his sovereign grace, Jesus and his great mercy, but we struggle with this idea of Jesus' judgment. And yet, Douglas O'Donnell calls these his words of gospel judgment.

O'Donnell says that Jesus' words of judgment are as much part of the good news as the gospel as his words of sovereign grace. Think about it this way. In most countries of the world, we have judges, right?

[19 : 17] And we call them justices, whether they are magistrates or up to the high court judge. And the role and the position of a justice is to judge wisely, to judge accurately, and to establish justice in society.

When the justices rule in accordance with justice, justice flourishes in society. And when they don't, things go horribly wrong.

Well, the Bible depicts Jesus as the ultimate justice. Our laws are imperfect, his laws are perfect. Our justices are imperfect, Jesus is perfect.

Jesus is the perfectly just justice. And Douglas O'Donnell helped me to see this when he says, it is good news that one day Jesus will come and judge the living and the dead.

As good as when Jesus cried out on the cross, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? You see what O'Donnell's saying there? He's saying that when Jesus died on the cross, he took our sins, he covered up our shame, he allowed that we who are in God's kingdom will no longer receive his judgment because it's been poured out on Jesus.

[20 : 26] Jesus felt the heat and the wrath of God in his place so that those who are in his kingdom will not. Jesus died so that we may die to death itself.

Jesus covered over our shame that we may receive glory and mercy. Jesus our Savior King, glory. Good news, right? Is that good news? I hope it's good news.

Okay, great. Thank you, Chris. Good news, Jesus died on the cross for sinners like us. But you know what's also good news? That one day Jesus is going to come and make all things new.

One day Jesus is going to come and wipe away every tear. One day Jesus is going to come and he's going to root out every source of wickedness and evil and brokenness in our world. Friends, Jesus as judge is also the gospel because when you wake up in the morning and you look at your phone and you see breaking news, five people raped in some country, terrorism attacked, abuse, murder, the gospel of Jesus as judge is good news because what it says is that one day there is a day coming when those things are going to be done away with.

There is a world coming. Jesus' kingdom is coming and one day there will be, none of those things will be present anymore and Jesus will root those things out and his kingdom will be utterly glorious.

[21 : 48] Friends, don't you long for a day like that? Just this week in my devotions I was reading Revelation 20 and it talks about how there's coming a day when heaven and earth will be united like in marriage.

The two will become one. We'll be fully united. God and heaven and earth, God and man together. And it says that in that place there'll be no more tears, no more agony, no more mourning, no more abuse, no more disapproving parents, no more judgment, no more COVID, no more tears, no more evil, no more hypocrisy, no more people stabbing you in the back, no more people saying one thing to your face and acting another way behind your back.

Friends, don't you long for that day? I long for that day. This week I wrote in my journal, God, I can't wait for heaven to come. For that day when nothing wrong with our world will exist.

When the kingdom of heaven will be utterly glorious and beautiful like you. Friends, Jesus says that day is coming when all that is evil and wrong with our world will face his perfect justice.

But in order to establish a just and glorious world, Jesus, the true justice, will first judge all that is wrong with our world. First in righteousness the world and then the church.

[23 : 15] the weeds will be rooted out. The bad soil will be rooted out. The bad apples will be removed. Friends, where will you be on that day? Where will you be?

Will you be gathered up with the sons of the kingdom? Will you be discarded with the sons of the evil one? Will you experience the good news of this just judgment? Or will you be rooted out and shown for who you really are?

Jesus is wanting us to zoom out and to see the kingdom of heaven is in this temporary stage where evil and righteousness coexist. But it won't exist like this forever. There's coming a day where the kingdom of heaven will look glorious and beautiful and majestic like its king.

That day is coming. That's good news. Jesus is coming again. But maybe, changing track, maybe that's not your objection.

Maybe you hear the good news, you struggle with the kingdom of God but maybe it's not because there's so much wickedness and evil in the world. You know your own heart. You see what you're capable of and you think, that's me.

[24 : 22] Maybe your problem is that the kingdom of God just seems so small, so insignificant. It feels like Jesus came and said, the kingdom of God is coming, repent, turn, it's coming.

And it feels like 2,000 years later, what do we have to show for it? Well, look at the second set of parables. The kingdom that is unlike its beginning. Now, as we look at verse 31 and 33, I want you to imagine yourself as a Christian in the first century.

Okay? It's around 80 or 90 AD and it's about 40, 50 years after Jesus has come and lived and died and risen again and gone to heaven. You've become a follower of Jesus.

Maybe some of your family members have as well. And you've been given this new sense of hope and meaning and purpose in life where suddenly you've encountered the living God, the Holy Spirit is inside of you.

You live with this renewed hope in the midst of a broken world and you begin to hear about these churches all over the Roman Empire that are forming. Your own church in your small town has become like family to you.

[25 : 29] And yet, you marvel because for all the wonders of your newfound faith, you can't help but also wonder as you look at the world around you.

Because compared to the Roman Empire, the church still seems so small, so insignificant.

Everywhere it looks, it seems that from outward appearances, Caesar's Lord, not Jesus.

Everywhere you go in the streets and everyone's home, Caesar is revered and honored as the great king. And Jesus, well, he's just disregarded. Everywhere you go, Caesar's reign appears and he appears all-powerful.

And as a humble Christian, you begin to wonder, is Jesus really going to win in the end? It sure seems like Rome is winning. Are we, I know we're growing, but how are we ever going to outgrow the kingdom, the empire of Rome?

And so, a little discouraged and a little disheartened, you mosey off to the gathering of believers in your town, maybe the 20 of you or the 30 of you, and you go to the assembly of God's people on the Lord's day and you pray and you sing some songs and you're reminded of God's love for you and you're reminded of God's suffering on the cross for you and you hear from the Bible, somebody reads a portion from the Old Testament, maybe one of Paul's letters are circulated to your gathering that week and you read a portion of that and then somebody reads from the Gospels and there are four Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John but your little church only has a copy of Matthew's Gospel and so, the pastor stands up and he says, he reads from Matthew 13 and he says, listen to the words of our Lord and Master and he reads this, the kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in a field.

[27 : 18] It's the smallest of all seeds, we know that but when it's grown, it grows larger than all the garden plants and it becomes a tree and so birds of the air come and make their nests in it. again, the kingdom of heaven is like a little bit of leaven, a little bit of yeast that a woman took and hid in some measures of flour until it was all leavened and he rolls up the scroll and he puts it away and he gives you a simple encouragement and he says, brothers and sisters, remember the words of our Lord and Savior that he spoke.

The kingdom of God, it seems so small, it seems so insignificant here in our Roman colony in the backwaters of Rome, it appears like nothing substantial is happening. Everywhere we look, Caesar seems to be Lord, drowned out by the powerful and the voices and the prestige around us but friends, this kingdom is going to grow.

Jesus promised us that though it looks small and insignificant now, it will reach to the furthest corners of the world. The furthest east we hear about the good news of Jesus. The furthest west we hear about the gospel and it will take root there and it will grow.

It will become a mighty and a significant force in the world and such that people from every tribe and nation and language and tongue will come in here and find refuge in who Jesus is.

And if he knew about it, maybe he'd say, one day there'll be a city called Hong Kong and there'll be people there from China and Korea and Singapore and Africa and South America and they will come and find refuge in this gospel message.

[28 : 49] And as he's talking, you're thinking to yourself, hey, our church has recently preached through the book of Daniel. And you remember how in chapter 2, Nebuchadnezzar has this dream about this mighty statue and it's the kingdoms of the world.

But there's this little stone that's not cut by any human hand and it brings down the kingdoms of the world. And Daniel says that the stone grows and it grows and it grows and eventually it becomes a mighty mountain that fills the whole earth.

And as you're daydreaming about this mighty mountain, your pastor looks you in the eye and he says, don't be discouraged. Don't be disheartened. There'll be setbacks, yes.

There'll be rejection. There'll be persecution. Some in our midst will change their mind and no longer follow Jesus. That's okay. But friends, the kingdom is advancing. Jesus promised it will. It looks small. It looks insignificant. Caesar seems like he's Lord, but don't be discouraged. The kingdom will come. Christ's words in his way, they look like yeast. They look unnoticeable.

[29 : 50] Soon they'll pervade and permeate the whole world. The whole earth will be filled with the glory and his glorious good news. Take heart. Hold on. Don't be discouraged. And he ends up, rolls up his scroll, says the benediction and goes home.

Friends, how do you think that that little discouraged Christian in first century Rome is gonna feel? He's gonna be encouraged. He's gonna be built up. He's gonna be edified.

He's gonna think, yes, Jesus' kingdom is coming. It looks small. It looks insignificant, but it's coming. Friends, God's word is meant to do the same for you and I today. Yes, we walk in the streets and we think we see these mighty towers and skyscrapers and we think, is God's kingdom ever gonna come?

There's so much injustice in the world. Everything's going wrong. Where's the kingdom of heaven?

Friends, it's like yeast that is sown and it looks small and insignificant. It's like a tiny mustard seed.

It looks like, what's gonna happen? What's gonna come of this thing? God's kingdom is growing.

Friends, I'll ask you, has Jesus not been remarkably accurate? Is it not true that the kingdom of heaven, though seemingly small and insignificant in the first century, has spread to every corner of the world?

[31 : 03] The 50th story of a Hong Kong skyscraper or under some tree in the African savannah? The kingdom of God is going forward. It's changing lives. It's giving you meaning and hope and purpose. Those that are seeking where God is are finding Him.

God's kingdom is growing and is spreading. Friends, the Roman Empire no longer exists. It hasn't existed for 1,500 years. The Babylonian Empire came crashing down.

The Egyptian Empire is gone. The kingdom of God is going and it's growing strong. It's getting better every day. That tiny mustard seed that Jesus planted by the shores of Galilee 2,000 years ago is growing and bearing fruit.

And millions and billions of people are finding refuge in the shade. But there's also a warning for us here. There's a warning because as Christians, sometimes we can think, yes, we'll take the kingdom.

We'll go. We'll advance to the end of the world. All we need is money. We need power. We need the politicians on our side. If we can become powerful and influential, we'll take the gospel to the ends of the world.

[32 : 07] Friends, Jesus shows us that often the way the kingdom advances is not through politicians, not through tons of money, not through power and positions and prestige. It happens through simple folk.

It happens slowly. It permeates the city from the inside out. You know, Jesus here says that the kingdom of God is like leaven.

You know what leaven is? Leaven is yeast. You know, when you're baking some bread, I don't know, do you throw yeast in sourdough? Where's Karen? Yes. Okay. You know, you're baking some sourdough like we all did during COVID and you throw a little bit of yeast in there and it makes the bread rise, right?

It's just a pinch, just a tiny little pinch makes the bread rise. Jesus, you know, in the Bible, yeast is always used negatively. Remember how Jesus says, beware of the yeast of the Pharisees.

He says, their teaching, their man-centered, self-centered teaching, if you get a pinch of that in your heart, it can ruin you. It can mess you up, right? Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees.

[33 : 14] Paul says in Corinthians, beware of the yeast of sin in the community. There's a bunch of Christians and some of them say, oh, my sin is personal. It's private. It doesn't affect you. Just let me sin on my own.

And Paul says, that is like yeast. It's just a little pinch. You think it's personal and private? It's going to permeate the whole community. Remember the Jews before Passover, they've got to remove any traces of yeast out of the house.

Yeast in the Bible is always used negatively. But Jesus here deliberately says, the kingdom of God is like yeast. Why is he doing that?

Do you know what he's saying? He's saying, the kingdom of God is not made up of the most powerful and the most prestigious. It's often made up by those that are abandoned and sidelined and marginalized by society.

It's those that the elites look down upon. It's shepherds and scruffy soldiers. It's prostitutes and tax collectors. The kingdom of God is made up that those that society thinks are there's no use for them.

[34 : 20] Those the kingdom of God is going to use. But the kingdom is going to be like yeast. It's going to spread. My kingdom is going to change the world. Friends, that's the story of the church. That's the story of this church.

It's the story of anyone who encounters the grace of God. It's not the bold. It's not the impressive. It's not those that have it all together. It's those who recognize their need for him. It's those who recognize their need for amnesty.

It's those who are rebels that come and say, God, I've got nothing. I need your mercy and grace. Friends, Jesus is heaven and earth's true king. And yet for those who have rebelled against him, Jesus says, don't bring your resume.

Don't bring your credentials. Don't bring the things that you think qualify you. Come empty handed. Come with your nothingness. Come with your need for grace. And you can come to my kingdom.

One last application of this. Friends, for some of us, you may look at your family members and you're longing for your family members to come to faith, to experience the grace of the gospel.

[35 : 16] You've been praying for weeks, for months, for years. You've been praying for your mom and your brother and your sister, thinking when are they ever going to come to faith? And it seems like everyone around you, your home, money is Lord, career is Lord, self-fulfillment is Lord.

Friends, keep on praying. Keep on sowing those mustard seeds. It seems like the kingdom of God is insignificant and poor and nothing is happening, but that kingdom is going to grow. You keep on praying.

You keep on witnessing. You keep on telling them about the wonder of Jesus. Okay. The kingdom of God, though it looks like a mess, it looks perplexing, one day it's going to look glorious and beautiful like it's king.

Everything wrong is going to be done and taken out from it. The kingdom of God looks nothing like it's beginning. Small and insignificant, but it's growing, going to take over the whole world. Thirdly and finally, the way into this kingdom.

What does all this mean? Remember, Matthew asks us, this is Jesus, how are you going to respond? This is who Jesus claims to be, how are you going to respond? What are you going to do?

[36 : 21] Well, look at the final pair of parables in Matthew 13. Jesus says this, the kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up.

In his joy, he goes and sells all that he has and he buys that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of pearls, find pearls, who, when finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

We're going to look at this more next week, so we'll just look at it very briefly here. What does Jesus say here? Jesus says that because he is heaven and earth's true king, because he will one day come to judge the living and the dead, because his kingdom is an eternal kingdom that is growing and will never end, therefore, joyfully embrace whatever cost it requires and take hold of it.

Jesus says that to enter the kingdom is going to be costly. In fact, Jesus says, because he is the king, it's going to cost you everything you have.

Jesus is saying that if you come to him and say, Jesus, I think I've got some change. Here, let me, you can take this, you can have, Jesus, I've got some leftovers, you can have this.

[37 : 40] Jesus says, then you don't recognize that he is the king and this is a kingdom. When we come to Jesus with our leftovers, it means that we still remain the king of our lives.

Jesus says that the way into the kingdom is to recognize that he's the king and that he demands everything. Everything. Friends, some of you may have stumbled across Jesus Christ by accident. You weren't looking for him and suddenly he barged into your life like this man looking in a field and suddenly he discovers the wonder of Jesus. Some of you may have been searching for it all your life. You've tried pleasure, you've tried money, you've tried religion, you've tried everything and suddenly you find Jesus.

Either way, however you discover him, Jesus is saying that he won't allow you to merely tolerate him. He won't allow you to merely accommodate him. Either you hand over your entire life to him and you make him king or you hold on to your kingdom and you lose him completely.

Jesus shows that the kingdom of heaven is filled with those who recognize him for who he is and to take hold of it despite the cost, giving everything they have because of the all-surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus.

[38 : 53] Friends, to follow Jesus may mean persecution, it may mean poverty, it may mean misunderstanding, it may mean being maligned, but it'll be worth it because to follow Jesus' king means entrance into his kingdom and it means intimacy and knowing heaven and earth's true king.

Friends, what about you? How are you responding to Jesus as king? Jesus comes to each one of us and he looks us in the eye and says, this is who I am. How are you going to respond? I'm heaven and earth's true king.

Are you going to be part of my kingdom? Are you going to hold on to your kingdom? Are you willing to give it all up for me or are you going to hold on to your own way? Friends, Jesus comes and he says, I am heaven and earth's true king.

Come and follow me. Come and enjoy my kingdom. Let's pray together. Lord Jesus, you don't hold any punches when you speak to us.

You look us in the eye and you say, either you have all of me or you take none of me. Lord Jesus, won't you help us? Won't you open our eyes to see you for who you are and to come and surrender to you.

[40 : 10] Father, for those of us that are discouraged because we look around the world, we look around the church, we see all the brokenness and we wonder, what's happening with the kingdom of God?

God, won't you open our eyes to see? Won't you give us your heavenly perspective? Father, for those of us that feel like the kingdoms of this world are winning, won't you help us to remember the story of Babylon, the story of the Roman Empire, that God, your kingdom, though small and insignificant, though hidden and perplexing, your kingdom is ultimately, the kingdoms of this world are ultimately going to become the kingdoms of our God.

God, won't you give us hope for those that are discouraged? Lord Jesus, come and help us, we pray. Friends, we're going to come to communion now, but before we do that, I want to just offer anyone a chance, if you are here this morning and you're not a Christian, maybe your whole life you've been searching for truth, you've been looking all over the place, you've been looking for meaning and purpose and career and wealth and various religions, you've tried Buddhism, you've tried Taoism, friends, Jesus Christ stands before you this morning and says, I am the eternal king, I'm heaven and earth true king, come and follow me, come and bow down before me.

Friends, how are you going to respond? Maybe here this morning you're not a Christian, Jesus is inviting you to enter his kingdom, to bow down, to surrender, to hand over your life, to no longer be in the kingdom of self, but to transfer your life into the kingdom of heaven.

the way to do that is to recognize that you've lived for yourself. The Bible calls that sin. The Bible says that the sin that we do is the manifestation of a heart condition which is orientated on ourselves.

[42 : 23] Friends, have you been living for yourself your entire life? Have you been living for your own way and your own glory? You may do all the Christian things, go to church, go to CG, but you may not be a follower of Jesus.

Friends, I want to urge you to hand over your life to King Jesus. Don't go another day. Don't go another week. The kingdom of heaven is coming and in that day Jesus is going to root out all rebels and he's giving us a chance of amnesty.

He's giving us a chance to hand over our lives. Today, hand over your life to King Jesus. The way to do that is to pray a really simple prayer.

In your own words, just to say, Lord Jesus, I recognize that I've lived for myself. I recognize that I've been the king of my own life.

I've sat on the throne. But I recognize that you are the true king, heaven and earth true king. I'm sorry for my sin. Come and have your way in my life.

[43 : 34] Friends, can you say that? Why don't you pray that right now? Jesus, I'm sorry. I've lived for myself. God, I want to live for you. I want you to be my lord and king.

I want you to forgive me of my sin. I want you to come and have your way in my life. Friends, Jesus promises that if you do that, he says it'll be like being born again.

You'll experience a whole new life. For the first time in your life, you'll be the person that God intended you to be. You'll be the person that you were made to be. You'll be saved. You'll be changed.

You'll be his son or his daughter. For the rest of us, we're going to come to communion. Maybe the communion stewards can come and serve and get ready to serve us.

Communion is a time when we remember the gospel. Remember the good news of the gospel that Jesus is a savior. But we also remember the good news of the gospel that Jesus is judge.

[44 : 43] As we come to the communion table, I want us to take a few minutes to examine our lives and to examine our hearts. The communion table really is for Christians, for those that are followers of Jesus.

If you're not yet a follower of Jesus, I want to urge you just to pass this by. Don't come and participate. This is for those who have recognized I was a rebel but I've handed over my life to Jesus.

It's a weekly reminder that though we are not perfect, though we still live in this world, we so need Jesus. It's a reminder that our only hope for salvation is Jesus' death on the cross.

It's a time to examine our lives where we've lived for ourselves. And so I want to ask us to do that. Let's look back on the last week. Friends, where have you lived for yourself?

Where have you tried to climb back on the throne of your own heart again? Let's bring those moments before God as a time of confession, repentance. Let's genuinely ask Him to forgive us.

[45 : 53] Let's take a few minutes to do that. Let's take a few minutes to do that. Lord Jesus Christ, we come before you as sinners that are saved by grace.

We come before you not as those who have it all together, but those who desperately need your grace to work in our lives. Father, thank you for your assurance that anyone who confesses and owns up and brings our sin into light rather than hiding it and covering it will receive your mercy and grace.

You say, Lord Jesus, that when we take responsibility for our sin, you remove it as far as the east is from the west. Lord, thank you for your great assurance of forgiveness of sins.

Jesus, thank you for dying on the cross for us so that our sin is covered, our shame is removed.

Friends, if you're a follower of Jesus, I want to invite you to come and take the elements from the front and the back.

Let's come back to our seats and I'll lead us in taking communion together. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[47 : 53] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. chakra Amen. Amen.