



THE GOOD NEWS OF THE KINGDOM

It never ceases to amaze me that there are always some so-called Bible teachers who think that they can scare people into preparedness for the Second Coming. Their tactic is to disseminate some bad news (which are often not verifiable by third parties) among the religious types in order to motivate them to prepare for the last days. A few weeks ago, they were at it again. They talked about some shadow group of elite national and world leaders who met secretly about forming a world super-alliance.

According to the rumor-mongers, the goal of this group fits what religious conspiracy theorists believe will one day be the antichrist world government. This bit of misinformation was being circulated in the internet, causing the misinformed to fear that the end-time tribulation was soon to come. As I had expected, honest people who investigated the source of the rumor verified that it was another untrue bad news.

Our Lord gave specific instructions regarding the time of the end (read **Matt. 24**). He wanted to make certain that his followers would not be victimized by end-time sign watchers and predictors who frighten people with unbiblical teachings. Jesus said that the end will come only after His followers have preached to throughout the world the Good News of the Kingdom (**Matt. 24:14**). As Christ's followers, our job is not to speculate about the signs of His return, but to preach the gospel and make disciples of all nations so that He will return (**Matt. 28:19**).

At Gospel Life, we take Christ's gospel commission seriously. Preaching the gospel is the primary rationale for our existence as a Christian community. Our church began when a few families made a commitment as a group in 1997 that we would live and breathe and share the gospel of grace. We said to each other then that we were committing our lives to doing this, whatever it takes.

So, we devoted many evenings to small Bible study groups where we shared the lessons of our Basic 10 gospel studies. Most of the families that joined our church family learned about the gospel and accepted Christ as their Savior through Basic 10.

This week, we begin a new message series that will introduce to our church family our new Basic 10 studies. For the first time, I will be presenting the gospel in a format that is shaped and undergirded by the "Kingdom" concept. Why is this necessary? There's a tendency among many Christians today

to limit the gospel of grace to its salvation aspect. They say, "Only believe and you will be saved from going to hell." While hell is a real place that people should avoid, we must never treat the gospel as some glorified fire insurance. Throughout the short existence of Gospel Life, we have come to know and believe that the gospel is much more than that.

There is a good reason why Jesus always referred to His message as the "Good News of the Kingdom" (**Luke 4:43; 8:1; 16:16**). He told His followers to "seek the Kingdom of God above all else" (**Luke 12:31**). If we keep our focus on the Kingdom, we will not lack in the other things that we need and desire. Sharing the Good News of the Kingdom is truly our most important assignment.

For many months now, I have been convicted by the Spirit that we need to teach the gospel now in a way where we don't leave the wrong impression that it is only about the forgiveness of our sins and our salvation from eternal punishment, though they are, indeed, powerful good news. The salvation of sinners is not an end to itself. Sinners are saved for a grander divine purpose. Saints are in-dwelt by the Holy Spirit for a royal role. Believers are transformed to Christlikeness for their God-designed and glorious destiny.

What is that destiny? It is connected to the Kingdom that God established on earth when He created humankind. Man was created to be God's "surrogate ruler" on earth, a colony of the Kingdom of Heaven. Man was given "dominion" over earth and he was to exercise this authority in connection and communion with God's Spirit. Unbelief caused man to surrender his earth dominion authority to Satan and earth became a rebel planet that Satan continues to rule by keeping man ignorant of the true God and His royal destiny for man.

What is the Good News of the Kingdom? What Adam lost for humanity, God recovers and restores through Christ – who is both God and man – our Mediator and Savior (**Rom. 5:18-19**). The truth is the earth dominion authority of man did not really pass on to Satan when Adam surrendered to his rule. It was held by Jesus Christ all along, because He was "*the Lamb that was slain before the creation of the world*" (**Rev. 13:7**). So when Jesus began His earthly ministry, He proclaimed this Good News: "*The kingdom of heaven has arrived*" (**Matt. 14:7**). What Adam lost has been restored by Christ. And it is our privilege and joy to put our faith in Jesus Christ and move into our royal destiny.