**Matthew Sermon IX**

**The Kingdom Has Come**

Matt 8:5-13 A Centurion’s faith.

v. 8 “only say the word.”

v. 13 Jesus says to you: “Let it be done just as you believed it would.” This applies to us.

Matthew 9:38-10:42 Jesus gives us our marching order. Jesus sends out workers into the harvest field.

Jesus has given us a ministry of teaching, preaching and healing, but it is always a ministry of compassion to harassed and helpless people.

They may not appreciate what we say. It might even get rough. Even friends and family may turn against you. But we look for those open to the message of Jesus.

This week: The Kingdom Has Come

Matthew 11:1-18 John the Baptist

Matthew 11:1-3 Jesus is teaching, preaching and healing, as he sent the twelve to do in Matthew 10 (and he sends us to do)

Background: Matthew 3:1-12 John preaches: Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is near. The axe is already at the root of the tree. Repent. John baptizes Jesus. “One who is more powerful than I.”

Matthew 4:12 John thrown into prison.

Matthew 11:2-3 John is doubting. This entire section Matt 11:2 – Matthew 16:13, when Peter confesses Christ is about various reactions to Jesus’ ministry, from doubt to skepticism to outright opposition.

Q: How do you react to Jesus?

Why is John unsure? The stress of being in prison? Jesus is not acting as the Messiah was expected to act.

He is not fasting and wearing the strange clothes of a prophet.

He is hanging out with unclean people, including lepers, Gentiles and women.

He is not apparently establishing a renewed Jewish kingdom.

If we have unresolved doubts that we shove under the rug, they tend to come out to bite us when we are under great spiritual, emotional or situational stress

v. 3 “Are you the one?” (the Messiah)

Matthew 11:4-6 Jesus: Look at my ministry. The blind, the lame, the deaf, the lepers are healed, the dead are raised and the Kingdom of Heaven is preached.

Basically, I am not fulfilling your false expectation, but I am filling the biblical expectation. It is like Isaiah 61:1-2.

“The Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives, and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor, to comfort all who mourn.”

Then Jesus explains who John the Baptist is.

Matt 11:7-15 He is the one to fulfill Malachi 3:1

If we look in Mal 3:1 this is God speaking. “I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me.” Here, Jesus claims to be God.

Matt 11:14 He also fulfills Malachi 4:5 “See, I will send the prophet Elijah to you before the great and dreadful day of the Lord comes.” He is the Elijah who is to come.

Remember: In Matthew Jesus is the Messiah who fulfills OT prophecy.

Luke 1:16-17 Of JTB, “He will bring back many people of Israel to the Lord their God. And he will go on before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the parents to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”

John was like Elijah in many ways. Preaching by the Jordan, wearing strange clothes, prophesying.

Who cares?

1. He is the Elijah. Therefore I am the Messiah.

2. Anyone in the kingdom is greater than JTB. The kingdom of God has arrived!!!

Matthew 11:11 Anyone in the kingdom of God is greater than JTB.

You are greater than JTB. You are part of the fulfillment of the messianic kingdom. You have been saved. You have received the Holy Spirit. You have the completed gospel to preach. You are awesome!!!!

Remember that this week!

Matthew 11:16-19 Again, the theme of people’s response to the ministry of Jesus.

We played the pipe for you (Jesus)

We sang a dirge (John)

As you share your faith, some people will never be satisfied. Do not take their excuses seriously!

v. 19 Wisdom is proved right by her deeds. The blind see, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the dead are raised and the kingdom of God is preached.

In Merced: lives are changed. Marriages are saved. Children are restored to their parents. Addictions are overcome. Empty lives find fulfillment in the Kingdom.

The proof is in the pudding!

You are greater than JTB, so just keep sharing!

Matthew 14:1-12 The fate of JTB John calls out Herod for marrying his brother’s wife.

Calling out sin of powerful people might just get your head cut off or your job or…

Matthew 11:20-24 The theme of responses to Jesus. Woe to Chorazin and Bethsaida (towns near Capernaum) and to Capernaum! They did not repent. The Gentiles (Tyre and Sidon) would have repented!!!

Sodom and Gomorah will be better off than them!

So do not be intimidated by those who refuse to listen to you about Jesus.

They are playing in the orchestra on the Titanic, fiddling while Rome burns.

Matt 11:25-27 Jesus not discouraged that the wise and learned are not open.

Don’t be intimidated by the religion professor who does not profess Christ. The philosopher, the influential.

Don’t be intimidated by the person who seems to have it all together, but is not together with Christ. They are spiritually ignorant.

v. 27 But you are chosen! Which is better: a CMA award or chosen by Jesus?

Matthew 11:28-30 Who is Jesus calling? The awesome people? The ones who have it all together? No! Jesus is calling the sick.

People say: You Christians are weak. You need a crutch to get through life.

Come to me all you who are weary and burdened. (Q: Are you weary and burdened outside of Christ?) I will give you rest. (the peace that passes understanding). Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble of heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

Q: Is that your experience? Has Jesus’ yoke been easy?

It is only easy if we take it upon ourselves. If we fight against the yoke of Jesus, the yoke will not be easy, and the burden will not be light. Have you been fighting?

Solution: Take the yoke. Go where Jesus wants you to go. Let him lead you.

This is what we are looking for: people willing to take on Jesus’ yoke.

Matthew 12:1-8 More responses to Jesus.

Their response: Jesus is not following our traditions. (note: I used to think this was all this scripture was about, but I was wrong..)

The Sabbath was very important to the Jews, and not without reason. It was part of what made them a special people. It symbolized the final rest that we will have with God.

v. 1-2 Working was unlawful, and this included, obviously, harvesting grain, but they were not “working.” The Pharisees are not making the “burden” of following God easy or light. They are imposing unhelpful rules.

Jesus’ argument:

1. v. 3-4 David had the authority, as king, to supersede the temple regulation. He ate consecrated bread from the tabernacle which was to be discarded. 1 Sam 21:6 One greater than David is here. I am Lord of the Sabbath. (v. 8)

2. v. 5-6 The Pharisees recognized that certain things that the priests were called to do on Sabbath days would have, technically, broken the Sabbath. (for example removing the bread and replacing it with new bread. The requirements of the temple supersede the Sabbath. I am greater than the temple. (v. 6)

3. v 7-8 The key verse here is Matthew 12:7 “I desire mercy, not sacrifice.” (this is his second time quoting Hosea 6:6. Also in Matthew 9:13)

Don’t let your rules govern your actions. The key is doing good to people-helping them, not applying legalistic rules.

There are commands and principles in the New Testament and in the Kingdom of God, but love, grace and mercy should always guide how we apply those commandments and principles.

Our actions and decisions should all have a redemptive purpose.

Church attendance, dealing with sin in people with mental illness, dating advice, etc.

Matt 12:9-14 Adding insult to injury (but illustrating this point) Jesus heals a man with a shriveled hand on the Sabbath.

Pharisees: Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?

It is always OK to serve people and to do good.

v. 13 Looking straight into the eyes of the Pharisees, Jesus says, “stretch out your hands.”

v. 14 The Pharisees are not happy about this. To them the rules superseded showing mercy. They make a fateful decision.

If Jesus were to come to our world, he would be killed again. Who would kill him? Probably people who call themselves Christians would. People who are more concerned about correct doctrine or defending their tradition at any cost.

Matthew 12:38-45 Jonah Again, different responses to Jesus.

Matt 12:38 Jesus, impress us with a miracle. Then we will believe. Put God to test.

Like we said when we studied Mark, Jesus did not do miracles on command.

We, too, had better be careful not to put God to the test by demanding he work a sign. God, help me out of this situation, and I will believe in you.

God, if you love me you will give me a job or heal me of this illness or save my sick mother from death.

Jesus: “A wicked and adulterous generation” Wow!

I will give you a sign, all right. (He knew what was in their hearts—a plan to kill him.

Kill me and I will rise on the third day (as Jonah was raised on the third day).

Like he said about Bethsaida, Chorazin and Capernaum, the people of Tyre and Sidon would be more likely to repent.

The Ninevites and the Arabs (Queen of the Sheeba) would be more likely to repent than these religious people. (praise the Lord, Hallelujah, but not living the life.)

Jesus is greater than the temple

Jesus is greater than David

Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath

Jesus is greater than Solomon (v. 42)

Stop making excuses and submit to the Son of Man, the Lord of the Sabbath, the one greater than David, the one greater than the temple. Let us submit ourselves to the one who yoke is easy and whose burden is light. Let us submit to Jesus.

v. 43-45 Otherwise all of your religious efforts will be for naught. We need to fill our life with Jesus, not with religion.

12:46-50 Jesus is turning everything upside down. In the kingdom the first loyalty is to king Jesus. Our family is those who, like us, submit to king Jesus. Whoever does his will is our brother or mother or sister.

Jesus your king has come. Submit to him!!

Don’t doubt—you are greater than JTB. You are chosen.

Don’t be discouraged when the “sharp” people do not believe. You are chosen.

But… Take Jesus’ yoke on you.

And exercise mercy, not “sacrifice.” Love before rules.

Submit to the one whose yoke is easy and light.