

The Lord Reigns

Part 1

Intro: The Plaque

The Church- is it a place we go (is it defined as a meeting or an activity or a set of programs and by an organizational structure?)-- Red Brick, Church Behavior. The question of the day is... what does it mean to be the church? (Rom 12:4-5)

Church and the reign of God...

I. The Reign of God

A. Repent... for the Kingdom of heaven is near...

1. Popular message?
2. Is someone willing to warn of God's Ax?
3. I'm Surprised to hear Jesus say it
 - a. I want Jesus to make my life better, easier-- not guilty!!
 - b. Jesus doesn't change the message... (I like him in white robes and making me feel nice)
 - I know I'm a sinner...

B. Jesus seems to think repentance is good news!

1. Jesus preached the Good News of the Kingdom **Mt. 4:23 & Mark 1:14,15**
2. Repent and Good News?
3. Perhaps repent means more than feeling guilty about how wretched we are.
4. Repent also means to change my behavior in this different way of thinking and feeling
 - Why? (We need to know this or we are simply playing Church)

C. Repent, because the Kingdom of God is near!

1. It's God's promise of what He will do in my life now.
2. People who have been living in darkness have been flooded with an overwhelming light

II. The Church and the Kingdom are not the same thing (Matt. 16:18-19)

A. God's kingdom is not a visible place, or a particular congregation or a movement that we can see...

1. Jesus responded to the pharisees question about the Kingdom **Luke 17:20-21**
2. Wherever the will of God is done-- there is the kingdom of heaven

B. The kingdom of heaven has always been there... Christ makes it available to us through Him

1. Jesus is redeeming a rebellious world
2. God created us in His image-- to have dominion over the rest of creation **Gen 1:28-30**
 - a. His intention was to reign over this creation through us-- but we were not satisfied with that
3. In Christ, God has appeared among us to bring us back under His reign again

- a. To restore life to what it was intended to be.
- b. Only to the extent that the church lives under the reign of God is it in the Kingdom
- c. Jesus' words to Matthew are "follow me" **Mark 2:14**

This is why we can not get away from that word... REPENT! It's not that we have to repent... we get to repent!!

- Repentance is the first step of submission to the reign of God

III. There's a better way of thinking and living, rooted in God's life. Matt 6:33

A. Through Christ we can be freed from the twisted values of the world that are killing us

1. Repentance is not adding a trailer on an out of control train/but that we become new kinds of creatures.
2. The end of time is coming and we are living in a world where all kingdoms are passing away.
 - a. The Ax is coming...
 - b. The powers of this world that claim dominion are all coming down
3. The reality of the coming kingdom is the call to repent individually and to become disciples

Jim Mcquigen- We have so often as we've talked about the gospel we have reduced salvation to something like electronic banking)

"Christians aren't perfect; just forgiven..." -Is that the only difference?

4. What about the reign of God?! (The kingdom that's coming/at hand)
 - a. More than forgiven sinners, he calls us to be disciples- people who model their life after his
 - b. People are not attracted to Christ if he does not make a measurable difference in our life...
 - c. Living under the reign of God is real Church!

I was talking to a sister the other day about church... she was discouraged with the garbage

B. An anemic discipleship will not only harm our mission it will make us miserable

1. A preacher once said... "most Christians have just enough Jesus to be miserable in the world and just enough of the world to be miserable in Jesus"
2. Our dissatisfactions in life come from those places where we have failed to trust Jesus

Dallas Willard- "many fail to become disciples, not because it is so difficult, but because they have never seriously attempted it."

3. We admire Christ, but have you really read what he said?
4. It may be a little irrelevant to life, good stories to tell children... but it wont work!!

- C. Insults are cute and anger is a good tool for accomplishment/ Jesus teaches not to even call someone a fool!
- a. Lust/better to gouge out your eye
 - b. Divorce /Jesus forbids us to break our vows
 - c. Don't get mad--get even/Jesus says turn the other cheek and forgive 70X7 times
 - d. Crush your enemies/ Jesus says... pray for your enemies and do good to those who harm you.
 - e. "He who dies with the most toys wins/ Jesus says, do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth
 - f. To get ahead--assert yourself/Jesus says submit yourselves to others and trust God to raise you up.
- D. It sounds nice but it doesn't work!
- a. In the business world (where it's a dog eat dog world... and you better be a dog)
 - b. But Jesus came to help us see that the world we're living in isn't the real world
 - Yet, in the Church the most common reason people give for not obeying Jesus is... it won't work!
 - I don't see where that has anything to do with why we embrace his life or obey his teaching
 - Church! we're part of a different world-- the Kingdom of heaven
- E. Discipleship doesn't offer part time or the full plans
- a. Jesus calls us to follow Him... not to give us a free pass into heaven
 - b. People who claim their salvation in Christ who do not model their lives on His are missing out on the heart of the gospel and on the greatest blessings of knowing Jesus 2 Cor. 5:17
 - c. God forgives our sins so that we can have an intimate relationship with Him
 - John's baptism was for repentance and forgiveness of sin
 - Jesus' baptism was with fire and for the indwelling of the HS
 - and His desire is to remake us into what He had in mind when He created us in the beginning
 - His intention is to form in us creatures who will be suitable to reign with Him -- 2 Tim 2:12

Conclusion: To be True Church we need to let the Rule of God reign in our lives!
 CS Lewis-
 Sometimes this process is slow... but like Rte. 3, it really is getting done!

2 Cor 3:17 "Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit."

Repent for the kingdom of heaven

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