

# KINGDOM OF GOD – WHAT IS IT?

## INTRO THE SERIES

- Setting the tone – may have more questions than answers – that’s okay. We’re taking the next few weeks to delve into this topic – it might be a long one – it’s a big topic

## UNIVERSITY

- Entrance requirements – I did well – Dean’s honor roll, etc. – And when you do so-and-so well, it opens doors for you. You can get direct entry into different master’s programs, you can qualify for different bursaries or scholarships, and so on.
- Got mono – that next summer – exhausted – couldn’t keep up.
- The questions became “what is the minimum I have to do to pass these courses and not get kicked out of university”.
- I achieved that minimum – sadly I got a C+ in a course I loved, was super interested in, and in other circumstances I would’ve dominated in, but you take what you get, and I passed.
- I then moved on to working my GPA back up again as I got better.
- All that makes sense because my time at University was contractual – I get to go and learn and earn a degree *if* I pay certain fees on time, get certain grades, attend class regularly, etc.
- There are conditions – and if I meet those conditions, I get a degree.
- That is a contract.

## THE CONTRACT OF HEAVEN

- That’s how we see so much of Heaven
- Explain what I mean about contract
- “If I meet certain minimum entrance requirements, I get into Heaven”
- OT God is a sort of angry, distant figure, an impartial judge. The Bible lays out some entrance requirements about tithing and church attendance and swearing and murder. And if I meet those requirements, if, when the day is done, I’ve done enough of the good things, and I avoided the bad things, I get to go to heaven – God can’t keep me out.”
- Maybe we believe that Jesus relaxed those requirements. Maybe we think that Jesus came and now, rather than having to do all these things mentioned in the Bible, all we must do is believe in Jesus.
- **As if the change between OT and NT is that in the OT you had to do – in the NT you only believe**
- OT price for heaven was expensive and the NT price is cheaper – 30% off heaven – all souls must go
  - o **Sort of a heavenly version of Deal or no Deal**
- The Problem is... Jesus never said He came to bring a new contract
- He said He came to bring the Good News.
- Gospel – means Good News

## WHAT IS THE GOOD NEWS?

- For most evangelicals it would be something like this “That Jesus Christ was the Son of God, that He died on the cross for my sins, that He rose again on the third day, and that He sits at the right hand of God and if I believe in Him, then one day I will go to heaven to be with Him there.”

- This is the Sinner's Prayer for most people – this is the **Minimum Entrance Requirements**
- **Accept that this isn't what Jesus said was the Good News.**
- These things are true – they are important – they are necessary, but they are only a piece, a part, of what Jesus said was the Good News -
  - o **Believe some things about a man and it will save you. Just believe. In your head. Done.**
    - **That is just a new contract – that is just new minimum entrance requirements**
      - **And Jesus Never Said That This Was The Good News**
- **The thing Jesus came to tell us about, the News He was bringing, is bigger than one 3-day period over 2000 years ago or one decision that someone is supposed to make at camp when they are a teenager – or the revelation that when you die you go to heaven**
- We've neutered the Good News –turned it into a contract – the result of which is heaven when I Die
- **We've made the Good News cheap – The Good News is FREE – but never Cheap**

## Mark 1:14-15

14 After John was arrested, Jesus went to Galilee, preaching the **good news** of God: 15 **"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe in the **good news!**"**

## Luke 4:43

43 But He said to them, **"I must proclaim the good news about the **kingdom of God** to the other towns also, because I was sent for this purpose."**

## Luke 16:16

16 **"The Law and the Prophets were until John; since then, the good news of the **kingdom of God** has been proclaimed, and everyone is strongly urged to enter it.**

- We are in the Good News era – Jesus came to for the express purpose of telling us the Good News that the Kingdom of God has arrived – or rather it has started to arrive – and some people are grabbing it.
- The Kingdom of God contains God's grace for the *forgiveness of our sins* – but it contains more
- The Kingdom of God must be *believed* in to be received – but it is bigger than something you believe
- **There are instructions about *how we need to live* in the Kingdom of God – but the Kingdom of God isn't something we can 'lifestyle' our way into**
- The Kingdom of God includes the truth that we go to *heaven when we die* - but the Kingdom of is infinitely bigger and much more relevant than a good place to retire eventually
- It is so much bigger than any of that
- We are going to spend the next several weeks unpacking what the Kingdom of God is, why it's here, how it got here, what we are supposed to do about it, and how it grows
- I'm excited for this journey but today I want to tackle one thing – How do we enter the Kingdom of God – or, rather, how do we let the Kingdom of God enter us? **If it isn't a contract deal – what is it?**
- If Jesus came to bring the Good News – the gospel – that the Kingdom of God is here, it's near, it's among us, in our midst, and graspable, then how do we grasp it?

## HOW DO WE GET THE KINGDOM?

- Well, in university, it was simple – If I held my end of the deal, the university had to hold their end up
- **So, the question was – what is my end of the deal – What were the minimum entrance requirements? – I might exceed them, if I have the energy, but I should know what they are**
- We need to establish what the thing you need to know or believe or do to get the Kingdom of God

- If I believe the right stuff about Jesus – if I pray the sinner’s prayer – maybe if I tithe some amount or go to church or don’t swear or whatever the things are in your church – God must let me into heaven

## Matt 19:16-22 – The Rich Young Ruler

16 Just then someone came up and asked Him, “Teacher, what good must I do to have eternal life?”

- I want to get into heaven one day – What must I do?

17 “Why do you ask Me about what is good?” He said to him. “There is only One who is good. If you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.” 18 “Which ones?” he asked Him.

- What are the minimum entrance requirements? – What is the cheapest I can get in?

Jesus answered: **Do not murder; do not commit adultery; do not steal; do not bear false witness; 19 honor your father and your mother; and love your neighbor as yourself.** 20 “I have kept all these,” the young man told Him. “What do I still lack?”

- I’m doing all these good things – why isn’t my life different? Why don’t I feel better?
- Do you ever feel this way? “I’m doing all the things that pastors say I should, why am I not victorious over sin? Why don’t I feel better? Why don’t I see healings? Why don’t I see radical, biblical transformation? I am believing what I should believe and doing what I should do!”
- Because it’s not a contract! And it’s not about heaven later! It’s about a way of life and it’s for now!
- **The Kingdom of Heaven is free for anyone-but cheap for nobody**
- there is no minimum and you can’t barter for it.
- If you cheapen it – you lose it – if you accept it at face value – **free to receive** but you give it everything – than you get everything you ever wanted and more to boot. – **Seek first the Kingdom** -

21 “If you want to be perfect,” Jesus said to him, “go, sell your belongings and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow Me.” 22 When the young man heard that command, he went away grieving, because he had many possessions.

- Jesus actually spells out the Minimum Entrance Requirements – but they are the whole OT law, plus the things He added to the law
- And that crushes the man – The goalposts keep moving on him until he is crushed.
- **So... We are doomed? Jesus came to give us the Good News that the Kingdom of God is here – and that the minimum entrance requirements are so huge you can never meet them!**
- So, The Kingdom of God doesn’t come cheap! But it does come free -Let’s see another case

## Luke 23:40-43

40 But the other answered, rebuking him: “Don’t you even fear God, since you are undergoing the same punishment? 41 We are punished justly, because we’re getting back what we deserve for the things we did, but this man has done nothing wrong.” 42 Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when You come into **Your kingdom!**” 43 And He said to him, “I assure you: **Today you will be with Me in paradise.**”

- So, the Kingdom of God isn’t cheap – It’s dearly expensive – but it’s also free – how is that possible?
- **Because the Kingdom of God is like a marriage – Explain!!!!!!!!!!!!**
- No such thing as minimum entrance requirements
- The Good News is that the Kingdom of God is here, it’s like a wedding feast – it brings eternal life

## John 17:3

3 This is eternal life: that they may know You, the only true God, and the One You have sent — Jesus Christ.

- We are called to a radical realignment of who we are – a totally new way of living and a totally new life
- It involves our beliefs – but it isn't just something you believe
- It involves our actions - but it isn't something you can work your way into
- It involves our prayers - but it isn't a onetime hail Mary prayer you throw up to God
- It is free but it is never cheap
- IT IS A TOTAL REALIGNMENT FROM THIS WORLD TOWARDS GOD

## BRING IT HOME

- **The Good News of Jesus has come – that the Kingdom of God has come down to earth, that it is here! Now! That it is in our midst. That the first and ultimate example of it is Jesus; that He lived and modeled and taught Kingdom and that His death and resurrection made it freely available. And that if you will grab at it, heart, soul, and mind – beliefs, actions, way of living, way of spending money, way of talking, way of praying, way of loving – if you grasp it with everything that you got – that the Kingdom promise is of POWER – of TRANSFORMATION – and of ETERNAL LIFE with Jesus now and forever. So much so, that you will never taste death. Only love**
- But it's yours exactly as much as you want it – no less, but no more
- If you barter it, sell it, block it, water it down, cheat it, or otherwise devalue the Kingdom – as much as you do those things – you cannot inherit the Kingdom of God
- **Seek first the Kingdom – then all of these other things will get added**
- If you fast so others see you – you don't get the Kingdom
- If you go to church every Sunday and don't swear or cheat – but you go home and look at pornography, in that area of your life, you can't inherit the Kingdom
- For the Kingdom of God is eternal life – and eternal life is knowing Jesus – Like a marriage
- It's free for the taking – but it's freely available for everyone, no matter how high or low
- The Kingdom of Heaven is free -but **NEVER** cheap

## Luke 16:16

16 "The Law and the Prophets were until John; since then, the good news of the kingdom of God has been proclaimed, and everyone is strongly urged to enter it.