

The Kingdom of God part 3

Valleys Family Church Sermon
Stuart Wheatman, Sunday 22nd April 2012

Intro-

- In part 1 spoke on Dan 7 where Daniel has a dream about vast Empires. Noted the kingdom of God would be the greatest of all Empires, starting small but filling the earth, captivating hearts through God's love.
- In part 2 spoke on 'Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand'- John the Baptist's & Jesus' message from Matt 3 & 4. We spoke on the importance of repentance and faith to open the door to the Kingdom. We defined the Kingdom as the rule and reign of God and looked at the effects of this- Heaven invading earth. We looked at the Kingdom as both the presence of God physically 'near' us, as well as relating to time- that the Kingdom came with Christ's first coming, is continuing to come now, and will also come in the fullest sense when Christ returns.
- Today we will look at one of the signs of the Kingdom of God coming- deliverance from demonic bondage, and what this means to us today.

Read Luke 11:14-26

Deliverance is a normal part of God's Kingdom coming- 'And He was casting out a demon'-v14

- Funny way to start a sentence about anyone- 'And He was casting out a demon'- written as if it was not a rare occurrence but something that happened often in Jesus' line of work. Dealing with demons was a significant part of the ministry of Jesus and also the early Church. Jesus sent out the 12 with the message: 'as you go preach saying 'The kingdom of Heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.' (Matt 10:7-8) Therefore casting out demons was linked to God's kingdom coming.
- The coming of God's king would mean the crushing of the serpent's head-
I will put enmity between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and her offspring;
he shall bruise your head,
and you shall bruise his heel." Gen 3:15
- The ancient rabbis knew the messiah would mess up Satan's rule from their study of scripture and they tried to visualise what this would look like in reality. An ancient commentary on Is 60:1 which mentions 'arise shine your light has come' said this light was the light of the Messiah, the same light which had shone at creation and was being kept under God's throne for when the Messiah would be revealed. The commentary went on to say that Satan enquired for whom this light was being kept and the reply came from God 'For Him Who in the latter days will conquer you and cover your face with shame' (Yalkut vol 1. Par. 363, p.99c onwards).
- Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. 1John 3:8
- Is 61:2 said that the coming of the Messiah would include the mission: 'to proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to those who are bound'
- Who is Satan, and what are demons and are they real? Every N.T author mentions demons somewhere in their writings apart from writer of Hebrews and even then Satan is mentioned. Satan/Lucifer not like our cartoon caricature of him with horns and pitch fork but originally thought to be a chief angel created by God who later sinned. Pride caused Satan to rebel against God as king before the fall of mankind-

Is. 14:12-15 (Originally spoken of the king of Babylon, but thought to refer to the

origin of Satan, here called Lucifer).

Ezek 28:12-17 (Originally spoken of the king of Tyre, but also thought to refer to Satan).

Satan was unsuccessful in his attempts to de-throne God, he was cast out of Heaven:

Rev 12:9 (Satan cast out of heaven). Luke 10:18 (Jesus saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven).

- Jesus said about a Lake of fire prepared for the devil and his angels (Matt 25:41). Demons then are angels, fallen angels like Satan who followed him in his folly.
- The Devil and his angels try to oppose the work of God. They try to detract worship away from God. They oppose mankind and especially the Church. They lie and deceive. They want to ruin and control lives through bondage, sickness and other means. They try to gain access into people's lives through the doorway of sin and deception and try to get people addicted.
- The word 'demon' is a very emotive word, provoking a variety of reactions in people. For Christians there are two extremes to avoid. The one extreme is to have an unhealthy interest in demons, seeing them in every situation and blaming them for everything. The other extreme is to not believe in their existence or to deny their effects in people's lives. Jesus avoided the two extremes and so should we.
- In a modern, scientific culture there is a tendency to not believe in what we cannot see or prove and this can influence us today, but more and more in a post-modern culture people are trying out things related to the New Age and the occult and 'giving things a go'. Demons operate in both cultures, quite happy to work 'under the radar' in a modern culture ruining people's lives undetected and also happy to entice people into a place of bondage in an experimental culture. It is when the kingdom of God comes that their true nature is manifest. This happened in the ministry of Jesus when demons shouted out 'we know who you are'. As the kingdom comes through us we can expect more manifestations of demonic activity reacting- Stoneleigh person screams out. My testimony of seeing friends delivered when I first became a Christian.
- People panic about being possessed by a demon. The bible uses the word *daimonizomai* which means 'to be demonised'. This does not mean to be fully possessed but is a scale. We are influenced by demons to varying degrees from oppression to compulsion to possession.
- For Jesus to do His job effectively He had to deal with demons as they were opposing God's rule and reign. There is a clash of two kingdoms when the Kingdom of God comes and God is not going to lose.
- **Application-** What are your views on Satan/demons/demonisation? Do you veer more towards obsessed or more towards not interested or unbelieving? Are there any changes you need to make by looking again at what the Bible teaches?

Deliverance demonstrates that Jesus is King- 11:20 'if I cast out demons by the finger of God then surely the kingdom of God has come upon you'

- Messianic miracle. Jesus' kingship is demonstrated by His authority over demons
- The usual ways that demons were cast out contrasted with the authority of Jesus
- Baal Zeboul/ Baal Zebub (Beelzebub)- used as a reference to Satan. Originally was an idol in Philistine city of Ekron (2Kings 1:2-3, 6, 16 where King Ahaziah falls through lattice and enquires of this idol if he will recover, only for the message to be intercepted by Elijah who says 'no because you went to an idol for the answer'). Baal Zebub meant 'Lord of the flies' – 2 possible meanings- either a deliberate biblical distortion of Baal Zeboul, 'Lord of the high place (heaven)' so that the followers of the idol are the flies and the idol is the dung, or it may have actually

been 'Lord of the flies' indicating a belief that the idol had the power to dispel disease and thus expel flies.

- Jesus turns the accusation around. He asks who their followers (sons=followers, like sons of the prophets) expelled demons by- i.e. what authority and results do they have? Ancient Hebrew ways involved reciting scripture, blowing the shofar, using rituals, fumigating the demons out, using the name of God, finding out its name and coaxing it out. The scribes and teachers of the law are contrasted with Jesus as they did not speak with authority (Matt 7:29)- they would quote a list of views of various other rabbis. The 7 sons of Sceva:

And God was doing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, so that even handkerchiefs or aprons that had touched his skin were carried away to the sick, and their diseases left them and the evil spirits came out of them. Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists undertook to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "I adjure you by the Jesus whom Paul proclaims." Seven sons of a Jewish high priest named Sceva were doing this. But the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and Paul I recognize, but who are you?" And the man in whom was the evil spirit leaped on them, mastered all of them and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. And this became known to all the residents of Ephesus, both Jews and Greeks. And fear fell upon them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was extolled.

Jesus said about a divided kingdom not standing- sure, one or two demons might choose strategically to leave a person for the greater gain of getting someone to put their trust in a false teaching, but it would be suicide for Satan's kingdom to do this wholesale wherever Jesus and the gospel went.

Acts 19:11-17. The 'finger of God'- from Exodus- the pagan Egyptian magicians acknowledged God's authority more readily than those critical of Jesus here.

- Jesus has overcome the strong man- to plunder someone's goods first you need to overpower them, and to do this you need the greater strength. Not an equal competition- not dualism heresy or yin yang equal and opposites- Jesus is sovereign. God is sovereign. Horror films etc. give distorted impressions of the power of evil compared to God's power.
- The ways that demons get a foothold in people's lives
- The victory of the cross against sickness and bondage-

And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death. Rev 12:11

'It is finished'. (John 19:30)

- Through the cross Jesus made a spectacle of all principalities and powers -Col 2:15 the term 'made a spectacle' here means to despoil, to strip of power, parade your spoils, make a public show or spectacle (it is the term used to describe what Joseph wanted to avoid with Mary when he had in mind a quiet divorce rather than making a spectacle of her). Paul says Jesus triumphed over these powers. This is an amazing picture which needs explanation:

John MacArthur comments that 'triumph...is a technical term, and it had some very significant meaning in the Roman world. The Romans had what they called, "a triumph." It was the highest honor that could ever be paid to a victorious Roman general. When the Roman government gave a general a triumph, that was the ultimate. Before any Roman general could be granted a triumph, he must have achieved certain things. He must have been the actual commander-in-chief in the field, and not a secondary leader; the campaign that he engaged in must have been completely finished; the region which was conquered completely pacified, and the victorious troops brought home. Furthermore, according to Roman history, 5,000 of the enemy, at least, must have fallen in one engagement so that it fell into the category of a slaughter. Furthermore, as a result of this campaign, a positive extension of Roman territory must have been gained, and not merely a disaster retrieved or an attack repelled. And the victory must have been won over a foreign foe, and not in a civil war. Triumphs didn't happen very often. But in an actual triumph, the procession of the victorious general marched through the streets of Rome all the way to the capitol. And you can even read about the sequence of that march and the order of the people in the parade itself. First, there came the state officials and the Senate-- always the politicians. Then there came the trumpeters, who were heralding what was coming. Then came the spoils taken from the conquered land, carted along. For example, when Titus conquered Jerusalem in 70 A.D., the seven-branched candlesticks, the golden table of shewbread, the golden trumpets were carried through the streets of Rome in his triumph. Then there came some painted pictures of the conquered land and some models (can you believe it?) of conquered citadels and conquered ships. Then there followed the white bull, which was going to be offered as a sacrifice to the gods. Then there came the wretched captives, the enemy princes, leaders, and generals in chains, shortly to be flung into prison and, in all probability, to be executed. Then there came the, what were called lictors, or punishers, who were beating these people with rods. And then

there came the musicians. And then there came the priests swinging their censors with the sweet-smelling incense burning. And then came the general himself after all of this huge entourage. He was in a chariot drawn by four horses, he was clad in a purple tunic embroidered with gold and palm leaves, and over it a purple toga marked out with golden stars. In his hand he had an ivory scepter with a Roman eagle on the top of it, and over his head a slave held the crown of Jupiter. And after him rode his family. And finally, at the very end, came the army wearing all their decorations and shouting, "Triumph! Triumph! Triumph!" I mean, it's a pretty impressive scene. And all this massive procession moves through the streets of the city, all decorated and garlanded with flowers all shouting and, along the edge of the road of course are these mobs of people cheering. It was a tremendous day -- a day which probably happened once in a lifetime. That is the picture in Paul's mind.' (Triumphing Over Discouragement in the Ministry)

- **Application-** Believe that Jesus is powerful enough to set you or anyone else free. Repent of any wrong teaching or views you have picked up through horror films or false religions etc. Get prayer and deliverance if you need it. Get rid of anything that is against the Lordship of Christ. Confess and rejoice in the victory of the cross.
- Are you fearful of demons? Get a biblical perspective and refuse to be afraid- Jesus has all authority and He is in you- remember He that is in us is greater than he that is in the world 1John 4:4.

Deliverance is a part of the work of harvesting we are called to join Christ in gathering in- 11:23, (compare with 9:49-50, 10:1-3, 9, 17-20, 22)

- The teachers of the law were criticising Jesus for casting out this demon and for His ministry of deliverance so Jesus says 'He who is not with Me is against Me' in response to this. Earlier He had said the opposite- 'he who is not against us is on our side' when the disciples tried to stop someone casting out demons in Jesus' name because he was not one of them (9:49-50) . In effect what Jesus was saying was the teachers of the law should have been joining in this ministry, but rather than joining in they were opposing it. Jesus also uses the picture of harvesting- He had just sent out the 72 (in chapter 10) saying 'The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into His harvest'
- John Wimber said this: 'The disciples expelled demons. We advance the Kingdom of God in the same way: overthrowing every contrary spirit in the name of our King. Too many Christians do not know how to deal with demons. They are afraid of evil spirits. They do not understand the scriptural basis for our authority and power over them. We can and ought to treat evil spirits ruthlessly- binding, rebuking, and casting them out whenever we encounter them. Authority over demons is power that Christ freely gives Christians'.(1985 Power Evangelism pg 100, John Wimber, Hodder & Stoughton).
- And these signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up serpents with their hands; and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover." Mark 16:17-18
- But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." Acts 1:8
- **Application-** Learn more about deliverance ministry. Get prayer yourself for stuff. Do Freedom in Christ. Choose not to tolerate the work of demons in your life or the life of others. Take authority that Christ has given you and exercise it where it is needed. When praying for people don't be afraid to take authority over any demonic manifestations. Ask for help if you need it.

Deliverance comes so that lasting change can take place- v26 'the last state of that man is worse than the first'

- Spoken of in response to their rejection of His miraculous signs pointing to Him being the Messiah- illustration from a deliverance situation of an individual applied to the generation that turned it's nose up at Christ- in Matthew 12:45 'so shall it be with this wicked generation'
- It would be better not to have known the way of righteousness
- A dog returns to it's vomit
- **Application-** We all too quickly forget the grace of God to us in setting us free. Testify about it, remember it. Worship, praise for it.
- Right relationship with Jesus is key to maintaining healing and deliverance- walk with God & don't give the devil a foothold.

Eph 4:27 'do not give the devil a foothold'- word means a 'beachhead'. Once an army has a beachhead it can bring in reinforcements then advance. Another term would be stronghold. Satan wants to build strongholds in our lives- we are not to let him. Be accountable.

- Know (and believe and confess) the truth, the truth will set you free. -John 8:32
Submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. James 4:7

Summary

- Deliverance is a normal part of God's Kingdom coming
- Deliverance demonstrates that Jesus is King
- Deliverance is a part of the work of harvesting we are called to join Christ in gathering in
- Deliverance comes so that lasting change can take place

Song: *There is power in the name of Jesus*