

Life Group Notes

Sunday 15th October 2023

Speaker: Andy McCullough

Title: Kingdom Come: Clash of Kingdoms

Passage: Matthew 12:22-30

In today's passage we learn that there is actually another kingdom, a rival kingdom. And a zone of conflict between the two kingdoms. This man is demonised/demon-oppressed, and he is blind and mute. Jesus heals him. There are many ways in which demonic influence renders people blind or mute.

There are many kinds of blindness: People can be blindly trapped in bad relationships or bad habits or destructive cycles. Selfishness and routine are forms of blindness, as are prejudice and racism.

There are many kinds of muteness: survivors of personal or national trauma struggle to speak out. There are justice issues that we don't address. We do not share the gospel with people.

So Jesus sets this individual free, and in so doing he is initiating a clash between his kingdom and the kingdom of darkness. Remember, the kingdom of God advances and is displayed not through the "air" but through people. In exactly the same way, the kingdom of Satan exists as an unseen spiritual reality, but we see it, touch it, interact with it *in people*. **The work of the Devil is never just individual - it's always systemic. And it's never just systemic - it's always individual.**

Don't miss the connection between the demonised man getting healed and the religious authorities hitting back. Don't miss the connection between Jesus being slandered and "Satan" the slanderer. This whole chapter 12 is about Jesus bringing freedom in different ways, and as a result the religious leaders attacking him, plotting to kill him, venomously hating him. In verse 34 he calls them a "brood of vipers" - he says they are sons of the snake! **Jesus is son of David, and the religious elite are sons of the snake!**

Jesus teaches that there are two kingdoms, the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Satan. Both express themselves through people. One is oppressive, one is liberative. One makes people blind and mute, one releases people to see and speak. One hurts, one heals. One accuses, the other un.masks. One is advancing, the other is being invaded, supplanted, removed.

But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

Then we have this wonderful verse. It's one of Jesus' little one-liners. It's actually trinitarian; The Son casts out demons by the Spirit, ushering in the Kingdom of the Father.

Or how can someone enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? Then indeed he may plunder his house.

This verse is a microcosm of the gospel. Jesus enters the strong man's house in order to plunder his goods. He enters the world, come from heaven, in order to rescue those who are under the power of the devil - all people! Jesus, at the cross, will bind the strong man. At the cross, Jesus defeats the devil. The devil's trump card was death, and Jesus defeated death by rising again.

To Recap: Jesus wants to set the individual free. In so doing he is unmasking the demonic which provokes a response - an attack back on him in the form of slander. He then teaches about the fact that there are two kingdoms - the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan. He speaks of the cross by announcing that one day he will bind the strong man and plunder his house.

Suggested Questions:

1. Do you have any experience of “spiritual warfare?” Have you ever been involved in a “deliverance?” Do you want to share your experience?
2. *“The work of the Devil is never just individual - it’s always systemic. And it’s never just systemic – it’s always individual.”* Do you agree? Discuss.
3. How does knowing that there are two kingdoms effect the way you live?
4. In what ways are you seeking to extend the kingdom of God in your day to day life at the moment?
5. Is there anyone in this group feeling oppressed at all? Can we pray for you?
6. Is there a big-picture, systemic evil issue you are troubled by? Can we pray about that?