

Dave Brown: Revolution in Review (8/9/18)

"In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus articulates the principles of the kingdom of heaven and sets out for us what it means to be a citizen of that kingdom." Mark Turner

The Structure of the Sermon:

1. Kingdom (Matthew 5)
 - Kingdom Qualifications
 - Kingdom Principles
2. Covenant (Matthew 6)
 - Kingdom Worship
 - Kingdom Confidence
3. Stewardship (Matthew 7)
 - Kingdom Love
 - Kingdom Commitment

A WHOLE NEW WAY:

In Matthew chapters five to seven Jesus is turning the structures of the day 'right side up.' Religion, for too long, has been conducted and experienced back-to-front. Jesus' mission, for this Sermon at least, seems to be to reframe the foundations of the whole system, replacing dead forms with a living way. That is why I am using the phrase 'a whole new way' to capitulate the essence of the sermon.

Mark 1:14,15 - Jesus announces the Kingdom. In Mark's gospel he introduces Jesus as coming to the people with a specific message - the Kingdom of God is at hand. Preparation for this kingdom, it seems clear from the weight of Biblical evidence, was the major objective of communication for Jesus' ministry. The Sermon on the Mount is no different.

1. Kingdom: A Life Worth Living

So it makes sense that the first medium of communication that Jesus uses to achieve His mission is about the Kingdom. In Matthew five Jesus clearly communicates both 'how heaven sees us,' and 'how heaven see life.'

We could say that this section, if we were to narrow the location of it's focus down, is an effort to teach us *how to see things (including ourselves) through heaven's eyes.*

Daniel 2 - The Metal Era.

The idea of Kingdom is not a new concept that Jesus has just pulled out of His hat as some kind of fancy subject to draw people away from the Hebraic mindset. It has actually been a concept all throughout the narrative of Scripture! In Daniel chapter two we see an example of this.

You may already be familiar with the story, but in case you are not, allow me to give you a brief overview of the context. Israel had its rise to 'global power' throughout the reign of King Solomon, when, in what was but a brief moment in history, God's people were fulfilling their purpose as the 'head' and not the 'tail' of society. But, after self-centred living took over yet again, the nation was taken into slavery by the Babylonians. This is the juncture of the story where we meet Daniel. He was a young Hebrew that was taken from Jerusalem to Babylon to be a Eunuch who would serve under King Nebuchadnezzar. In Daniel chapter one he and three of his friends were honoured by the King and placed in positions of authority because they were seen to be ten times wiser than their Babylonian counterparts - as a result of being faithful to God. In the second year of King Nebuchadnezzar's reign over Babylon he had a dream that troubled him. The problem was that it was one of those horrid dreams that you know are significant, but, for the life of you you can't remember a thing about them! With this predicament in mind King Nebuchadnezzar asked his magicians, astrologers, and wise men to tell him the dream and its interpretation. They were stumped! The interpretation, no worries. But the dream?! No way King! Are you crazy!? He was serious, and provided a death threat to prove it.

But when Daniel heard of this decree that they would all die unless someone could tell the King his dream and its interpretation, the King's day changed. Daniel asked for some time to think about this... and of course, knowing that he didn't stand a chance, called out to God for understanding and deliverance. God provided, and Daniel received a dream that night. But his troubles didn't end there... The dream was ok, but the interpretation was not pretty for King Nebuchadnezzar!

The King had dreamed of a giant metal statue. This metal man was made up of several kinds of metal. The head was made of gold, the chest and arms were of silver, the belly and thighs of bronze, and the legs were of iron with some clay being mixed into the iron in the feet.

Then Daniel saw that a giant stone that had been cut out of a mountain without hands came and crashed into the statue - completely demolishing it! The interpretation, hard as it would have been for Daniel to deliver to the King, was that the head of Gold represented Babylon,

but Babylon would be overcome by another kingdom who would be represented by silver, and Medo-Persia would be overcome by the bronze era of Greece, with Greece being overcome by the iron kingdom of Rome, and Rome, though never truly overcome by another kingdom, would be divided and have another material mingled with it that never truly mixed. King Nebuchadnezzar was proud as punch - no doubt - when it was told him that the head of gold represented his own kingdom of Babylon. But you can imagine that as Daniel continued to unfold the prophetic trajectory that the dream mapped out the King was less and less pleased.

But what does this have to do with 'kingdom' in the Sermon on the Mount? Well it all comes together when, at the end of the dream, this rock that is 'cut out of the mountain without hands' comes crashing down and makes bare all of the kingdoms of the world. The rock represents the Kingdom of God. It is the kingdom that will never end, but, perhaps even more important than that, it is the kingdom that is made of a different material than any kingdom before it.

The Kingdom of God is not just another metal. It is the rock! It is made of a completely different substance. This, I believe, is precisely how the people would have felt about what Jesus was saying in the Sermon on the Mount. These sayings were *revolutionary*, they were completely *other*.

But Jesus wasn't just making this up! This had been God's message all along. This was God's intention with Israel, it was the message of His dream to Nebuchadnezzar, and it was the message that had been given in that very first promise in Eden "He will crush your head, but you will bruise His heel."

Benevolence - A Whole New Kingdom.

Different than any kingdom this world has ever known, the Kingdom of God is based upon the consistent, immovable principles that describe a life truly worth living.

Matthew 5:3 - Wait... What!?

When Jesus stood and spoke those words the people must have been flabbergasted. This was completely revolutionary! 'Citizens of the Kingdom are qualified in this way' He said.

Kingdom Qualifications - Turning the expectations right-side up.

The Kingdom of God is open to different people than we imagined.

1. Poor & Needy
2. Broken & Spilled Out
3. Humble & Trusting
4. Hungry for Faithfulness
5. Dealers in Mercy
6. Purely Loving
7. Ministers of Reconciliation
8. Persecuted by those who Hate Right

Matthew 19:24 - Riches & 'togetherness' make it harder to enter heaven - not easier.

The qualifications for entering are vastly different from what we might judge them to be. Jesus totally revolutionised popular perspectives and said that those who will enter are those who *know* their brokenness.

Kingdom Principles - Revolutionising our perspective of governing structure.

The principles of the Kingdom of God are more far reaching than we imagined.

- Wholehearted, Peaceful Living
- Faithful Love
- Commitment to People
- Integrity of Work & Action
- Unconditional Mercy
- Grace like God's

"True Righteousness, as Jesus points out, is not so much about what you do (on the outside), but is really about who you are (on the inside)!" Dave Brown

Matthew 5:23,24 - 'First things first...' Jesus seems to be saying, 'go and be reconciled to your brother!'

"The challenge from Jesus to us today is this: 'if you're only friendly to the friendly, what's the difference between you and anyone else.'" Mark Turner

2. Covenant: Embracing the King

After radically shifting their perception and pointing out the way that heaven perceives reality, Jesus now hones in on our experience with the King of 'the Kingdom.'

Matthew chapter six, as we will see, is like the bridge between Matthew five and Matthew seven and it is here, after shifting our focus, that Jesus sets us up for success.

Genesis 12:1-3 - "Get out" and "I will..." This is essentially the message of Scripture tied up in a single Biblical story. God says to humanity 'get out of (fill in the blank/get out of the way)' and 'I will (fill in the blank/do the rest).'

God's promise came first, then came Abrahams response as a result of the confidence that He had in the promise maker. This is hugely informative to the way that we should relate to God.

Jesus - A Whole New King.

Because He is good (like no other king) the way that we relate to Him is different - better.

Kingdom Worship - Turning worship right-side up.

We worship with a heart that is full of adoration - not from compulsion.

- Authentic & Soulful
- Simple & Trusting
- Selfless & Giving
- Beautiful & Holy

"Prayer is not about self or status, but deepening our relationship with our heavenly Father."

Clive Wissmann

I love that! When we know God, as it is our privilege to know Him, our heart will naturally go out in recognition of His beauty and self will be lost sight of.

Kingdom Confidence - Revolutionising the location of our trust.

We have confidence in Him because He is faithful - not because of merit.

- Valuing the Kingdom
- Singleness of Purpose
- Sold-out for God
- Trustful Dependence

“Gold and precious stones are not treasures in heaven... But a repented soul who accepted Jesus and followed Him is the real treasure!” Andrés Scheffer

Having a simple trust in God's faithfulness and accepting His promises as made to you is the truest form of treasure, and the secret power of the Christian life!

Matthew 6:33 - We can be 'quietly confident.' Because we know that our God will keep His promises.

3. Stewardship: Sharing the Treasure

After revealing to us the treasure of the Kingdom (the heart of the King), and connecting us to the source of power, Jesus joins the dots - connecting what he said in the first part of the sermon with what is coming.

Matthew 7 is pretty much a mirror of Matthew 5. In Matthew 5 Jesus shares Heaven's perspective of us, and of life. In Matthew 7 He shares how we can mirror that in the way that we relate to other people, and the way we choose to 'do life.'

Disciples - A Whole New Humanity

As disciples of Jesus we are not committing to being part of another movement - we are committing to being part of a revolution of the way we express our humanity.

Psalm 16:11 - The happiest people in the world.

Knowing that God is the kind of God that He is inspires us to be a better version of ourselves.

John 3:3 - A whole new man.

Without being born again there is no way that we can live like God lives. We are drawn towards the glorification and centralising of self, but, through the process of metamorphosis (AKA transformation) that God works inside of us through the Principles of the Kingdom as obeyed with Kingdom Confidence, we can begin to function differently.

Kingdom Love - Revolutionising the way that we relate to people.

Knowing the way that God relates to us, and having confidence in His acceptance, radically impacts the way that we relate to others.

- Unconditional Acceptance
- Honour Fee-Will
- Receive God's Love
- Love Others More than Yourself

"If you see someone else struggling with sin and feel no compassion you have not dealt with your own "plank."" Luke Farrugia

Matthew 7:11,12 - Reciprocal Love.

Jesus calls us to echo God in the way that we relate to those around us. 'Do to them,' He says, 'what you believe and want God to do for you.' This is the golden rule of the kingdom.

"If we judge ourselves as better than another it is evidence that we don't know ourselves very well. If we judge ourselves as worse than another it is evidence that we don't know our brother very well." Luke Farrugia

Kingdom Commitment - Revolutionising the way we 'do life.'

As He moves towards the end of the sermon Jesus begins to wrap it up by making a call to commitment to the Principles of the Kingdom.

Life, if it is worth living at all, should be lived by these principles - peace, love, commitment, integrity, mercy & grace. So it is that He encourages us to live the way God does by saying:

- Choose the Right Path
- Beware of False Prophets
- Build on the Right Foundation

"It's not by your profession that you will enter into the kingdom." Mark Turner

Matthew 7:21 - Disciples Indeed.

'Those who make choices in accordance with God's will are the ones who will enter the kingdom at last' Jesus says.

Hebrews 12:25-28 - The Eternal Kingdom.

There is only one kind of kingdom that goes the distance. All of the other kingdoms of Nebuchadnezzar's dream were overcome, and the entire metal era was eventually brought to ruin. God's kingdom is built on a completely different kind of foundation. It is a revolutionary kingdom! It goes against the grain. And according to this passage, it is the only one that goes the distance.

So, with Daniel, with Jesus, and with the Apostle Paul, it is my privilege to make the call to revolution and say "Do not refuse Him!"

Will you accept the whole new way of Jesus' sermon?

Will you choose today to submit your life to His hands, trusting in Him to sustain you?