

(English) Story of the New Testament

Lesson 3 (Part 2) - The Mission of the Kingdom

Welcome back to the story of the New Testament. We're going to continue with Lesson 3, the Mission of the Kingdom, and this will be Part 2.

In Lesson 3, Part 1, we talked about the birth of the church. The book of Acts is a continuation of the gospel of Luke. The continuation of the work that Jesus started. As he ascends, the Holy Spirit is sent, the church is birthed at Pentecost, and this new community is established, this new community is called the church.

We saw a picture of this New Community in Acts 2:41-47. There were many unique characteristics of this new community. The church is intended to embody the love of Christ, to reflect the glory of Christ, to be on mission for Christ. We have been entrusted with the authority of Christ. We are the body of Christ, the figurative body of Christ here on earth.

Jesus is in heaven, but though we are many, we form one body, and we are bought with a price, and so we are set apart for a special purpose. As we continue with part 2 of Lesson 3, we are on page 33.

Not only was there a new community that Jesus established called the church, there was also the King's global cause. There was a mission that was to span the entire globe to go and make Jesus known, to go and make disciples of all nations.

If we were teaching this in person, I would divide the class into 5 groups and each group would read and discuss one of the passages on page 33. We want to explore what the Scriptures tell us about the King's mission for the church.

In this recording, you may want to pause the audio to allow time to read each passage and make your own notes for the five passages:

- Acts chapter 2
- Acts chapter 13
- 2 Corinthians 5
- Philippians 1
- 1 Peter 2

Pause here, read these passages, write down a few points that describe the mission of the church. And then we will continue with a summary.

It was the mission of the church then, and it is still the mission for the church today.

Welcome back. As we look at these passages, I'm just going to highlight the key points. I will not take time to read each passage since you have already done that.

- Acts chapter 2:1-12: The church was birthed at Pentecost. All the nations are to hear and respond to the good news. This takes us all the way back to Genesis chapter 12, and the covenant promise to Abraham in chapter 12:1-3. Through Abraham, all the nations of the earth would be blessed. And remember, at Pentecost, people from all these different nations were there in Jerusalem. They heard the gospel and were able to respond. This is a picture of what God desires. To take the gospel from Jerusalem to Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth.
- Acts chapter 13:46-49: The mission of the church moves from just being for the Jews and extends to the Gentiles. Salvation is to go to the ends of the earth. The word of God is being spread. This was the beginning of Paul's first missionary journey. The gospel is preached, churches are planted, leadership is put in place, people are strengthened and discipled and encouraged in their faith.
- 2 Corinthians 5:17-2: In this chapter, Paul says that the love of Christ should compel us to take the gospel forward. That is our motivation. And in these verses, we are told that we have a ministry and a message. We have the ministry of reconciliation. We have the message of reconciliation. We are ambassadors for Christ. An ambassador is someone who represents the leader of a nation, maybe a president, a prime minister. We represent the leader, the king, in a foreign land. That's what we are. We are in enemy territory. We represent the King of kings who is in heaven, We have a message to communicate. God has already reconciled the world to himself through the death of Jesus on the cross. Jesus took on all the wrath of God. God's heart was changed towards us. We now need to be reconciled to God. We need to receive this gift of reconciliation so we no longer need to be alienated from God. We are called to let others know that they be brought back into a right relationship with God. This is our ministry and message.
- Philippians 1:27-30: We're called to stand firm as we live out this mission. We are to strive for the sake of the gospel. We are not to fear the opposition. We must accept that there will be suffering, there will be persecution. Jesus said, they persecuted me, they will persecute you. In this world, you will face trouble, but

take heart, I've overcome the world. We have an enemy. Satan is a roaring lion. He wants to shield people who are already separated from God to continue to blind them. He wants to distract and deceive those who have trusted Christ. He can't take away our salvation, but he can tarnish our witness. He can take us off the playing field and put us on the bench. We are called to stand firm. We are to continue to strive with all of our strength for the sake of the gospel, not to be fearful and to face the opposition in the power of the Holy Spirit, to stand strong in his mighty power. As we read in Ephesians chapter 6, as we put on the full armor of God.

- 1 Peter 2:9-12: The mission we have is to declare God's praises, his excellencies. We are called to call people from darkness into light. We are to be proclaimers of the truth of the gospel. And not only to speak with our words, but our lives are to reflect the truth of the gospel as well. We are to live holy lives, lives that reflect the character of Christ.

These passages provide a good summary of the mission that Jesus gave to his new community, the church, then and now.

The King's mission is to advance his kingdom to all nations and tongues.

The church was born in the context of mission.

The church is empowered for this call to missions. We've received power from the Holy Spirit to be his witnesses. He has put a new heart within us. He has placed his Spirit within us to accomplish this.

He has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The church exists for the completion of this mission. What Jesus has started, he is going to, finish. When he returns, all those who have put their faith in Christ will be with him and we will spend eternity with him in the new heaven and new earth.

The church was born in the context of the mission. The church was empowered for the call to mission and the church exists for the completion of the mission. The only question is whether the church will join the King's global cause.

Are we living out this mission?

Are we participating in this mission that Jesus has called us to?

As we share this story with others and someone puts their trust in the Lord Jesus, these are questions that we can ask. Application questions that we can challenge them with.

Are you advancing the kingdom? We will miss the entire point of the New Testament if we read and study it, but don't get involved in advancing God's kingdom.

Whose kingdom are you advancing? Whose rule and reign are we coming under? Are we advancing the ministry of a particular church? The ministry of a particular pastor? Are we taking credit for it? Or, are we advancing and pointing the spotlight on the Lord Jesus Christ? It is his rule and it is his reign.

If we really desire to live out New Testament Christianity, we must advance Christ's kingdom even in the face of suffering.

2 Timothy 3:10-17

"You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra - which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me. Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil people and imposters will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching and reproof and correction and training in righteousness that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."

As we live as members of this new community, as we are participating in this mission, this global cause that Jesus has given us, we are advancing even in the face of suffering. We must be prepared for this. It should not catch us off guard.

Jesus has given us everything we need for life and godliness. The Holy Spirit empowers us. We are to continue to press forward.

What a joy to be invited by the Lord Jesus to be a part of advancing his kingdom.

The memory verse at the bottom of page 33 is Acts 1:8.

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth."

How is your church advancing the kingdom?

What are the next steps of growth for your church?

What next steps is God calling you to take to be part of advancing the kingdom of God in your own life? In your family? In your workplace? In your community? Within your church? Using the gifts that God's given you to serve to glorify God and to build up the body of Christ and then make Jesus known to the world around us?

Before we close, there is one more reference for you on page 34.

Obviously in this overview of the story of the New Testament, there is not enough time to talk through every book of the New Testament, particularly all the different letters. 21 of the 27 books of the New Testament books are the Epistles. On page 34 you have a summary of Pauls' 13 letters

The name of the Epistle is in left hand column. You also have the purpose, the key doctrine that are taught, a key verse and an interesting note for each letter.

I'll review the first letters, Romans.

The purpose was to express the nature of the gospel, its relation to the Old Testament and Jewish law, and its transforming power. I'm not ashamed of the gospel. It is the power of God for salvation to everyone who will believe, first to the Jew and then for the Gentile.

Some of the key doctrines that are emphasized in Paul's letter to the Romans: clear doctrine about salvation, doctrine of God, theology, the nature of man and sin and humanity, and the nature of the church, ecclesiology.

A key passage is Romans 3:21-26, all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Yet we are justified through faith in the finished work of Christ. There's a righteousness not of man, but that comes from heaven, that is through Christ. That's what we need.

This book had such an impact in Martin Luther's life. In 1515 AD, through preparing lectures on Romans, he was convicted. He was actually saved. He put his true trust in Jesus Christ. He was reborn after studying the Book of Romans. You are justified by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

This might be a helpful tool as you continue to study and prepare to tell the story of the New Testament. There is also a toolkit in the part 2 of the handout that includes a study guide for every book of the New Testament. You can begin to look at these letters and see how they fit into the story of the New Testament.

For the Gospels, what are the key points that you want to emphasize to talk about the Gospel of the Kingdom? The coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, the conquest, the victory of the Lord Jesus Christ through his resurrection and ascension.

Think through how you will summarize the Mission of the Kingdom. The Book of Acts and the 21 epistles give us a picture of this new community. What will we share with others about the nature of this new community, the church, the purpose of the church that was birthed at Pentecost? What is the mission that Jesus gave his church?

In the next Lesson we will tell the story of the Hope of the Kingdom found in Revelation.

Jesus is coming back again. He is coming to defeat Satan, sin and death. He will establish his kingdom on earth and he will reign from earth for a thousand years and set up a new heaven and a new earth that'll go on for eternity.

As we read through the books of the New Testament, we want to tell the story in a simple way. The Gospel of the kingdom, the Mission of the kingdom, and the Hope of the kingdom.

Lesson three, parts 1 and 2, have focused on the Mission of the Kingdom. We discussed the King's New Community and the King's global mission.

When we continue with Lesson 4, we will talk about the Hope of the kingdom looking forward to the return of Jesus as the conquering King!