

## **The Kingdom of God - Preaching Series 2025**

### **The Gospel of the Kingdom (1/10) – Mark 1:14–15 – Sunday 1 June 2025**

This morning, we start a 10 session look at what the Bible says about the Kingdom of God – which we pray for each Sunday in ‘The Lord’s Prayer’.

We say **“Your kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven”**, and of course, after the Second Coming, when all things are restored and renewed, The Kingdom of God will be in place in full.

‘The Kingdom’ came with Jesus, but not in full. That happens after the Second Coming and the day of judgement – the Bible tells us.

Heaven – or eternity, won’t be some eternal holiday at the beach. At eternal retirement after maybe 70 or 80 years here on earth. God is a creator God and we shall all live united, in love – from hundreds of nations and peoples, according to The Kingdom.

So what is The Kingdom of God? We shall explore in 10 sessions, 5 before summer break, 5 after.

This morning we will look at : **The Gospel of the Kingdom – Mark 1:14–15.**

Jesus begins His ministry by proclaiming the Kingdom; we’ll explore what this gospel actually is and how it’s different from cultural views of religion.

Next week - **Thy Kingdom Come** – what does it mean to desire and seek God’s rule in our world and lives? Then **‘The Kingdom Is Like ...** a look at Jesus’ parables describing the nature, value, and mystery of the Kingdom. Then .. **Entering the Kingdom** – spiritual rebirth as the requirement for seeing and entering God’s Kingdom.

Then the last in the 5 parts: **The Upside-Down Kingdom** – How ‘The Beatitudes’ reveal Kingdom values—contrary to worldly success, God blesses the humble, merciful, and pure in heart.

Since the Second World War, leaders of all the major democracies have believed that living and working together is the best for maintaining peace, for prosperity and for cooperation and the good of all people.

Now, while Globalism clearly, like any system, has its faults, it has stopped major wars between the major nations for 80 years. Sadly, in the last 5 years we’ve seen a rise in Nationalism, in isolationism, in putting one country above others, and a tendency to divide.

There’s only one beneficiary of that: a super-power seeking to divide and conquer.

For Christians, while we may have been born in the United Kingdom, in France, Germany, America, Pakistan or anywhere else, and on our passport it might say we are a citizen of that country, in reality we are nomads – just walking through that country on our way to our final destination: The Kingdom of God.

So, it’s a good thing to know where we are going, what it’s like and, if we are not sure, know how we can be sure that at the right time, we shall be welcomed in.

The Kingdom has come, but is yet to be fulfilled in its wholeness and over these 10 sessions, and through personal study each week, we shall see that more and more.

**Mark 1:14–15:** After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. <sup>15</sup> ***“The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!”***

## 1. Introduction: The Announcement of a Kingdom

Imagine getting a letter from HM Government announcing that Stanford in the Vale has been chosen to become the capital of the nation.

Your whole life is about to change — new laws, new leadership, new security, new people, new economy.

Jesus comes into Galilee — not Jerusalem, not Rome — and says something far more profound:

***“The kingdom of God is at hand.”*** This isn’t just religious talk — it’s royal talk.

It’s the announcement of a new King and a new reign. After 400 years of NO PROPHECY, no hint at exactly WHEN or HOW, God would act in the form of the Messiah and set His people free.

Then, here comes along a carpenter’s son from a remote little village – let’s say Shillingford – and claims that ***“The kingdom of God is at hand.”***

Now, to the religious illiterate, such a phrase would only mean one thing the man was delusional.

But to the Jewish people, the Scribes, the Pharisees, the chief priests, such language - in that formation - would have meant something totally different.

Could it REALLY be that the Messiah had come? They’d heard rumours 30 years ago, of course, when that baby was born in Bethlehem and Herod, that unstable, narcissistic leaders sent spies and soldiers to find the child, his rival.

He’d even ordered all babies from that town be killed. Surely that got rid of the ‘problem’?

Surely IF the Messiah had come, he would not wait till his third decade to announce? There would surely be signs of his messianic power before now?

What sort of Messiah, what sort of King is this person? He’s certainly not the sort that they were expecting. That’s just not how Kings of Kingdoms arrive.

**Key Thought:** *The gospel is not just good advice. It’s good news — it is an announcement of something that has happened.*

## 2. What Is the Gospel?

The word *gospel* means **good news**. But what news? In the Roman Empire, a *gospel* was proclaimed when: • A new emperor came to power, • A great battle had been won.

Jesus isn’t bringing a *new religion*. He’s proclaiming a cosmic victory and a new reign.

The Gospel Is:

- **God’s Rescue Plan:** God sent His Son to restore the world through His life, death, and resurrection.
- **More Than Forgiveness:** It’s not just about getting to heaven when we die — it’s about heaven breaking into earth now – God’s children bringing in the Kingdom values NOW – and then continuing the other side of our human life on earth – for all eternity.

• **A Story, Not a System:** The gospel is not a set of moral rules. It's the true story of the world — creation, fall, redemption, and restoration.

God's 'saving plan' goes right back to the garden of Eden, and each time His people failed Him, God offered them a route back to a full relationship with Him.

But each time they chose their way, not Gods'. But God never let up on them.

Each time He offered a way back – BUT he never forced His way on His children.

Each time there was an invitation, but every individual then – like now – has to make an intentional choice to turn away from their way of doing things, and to turn back to God and follow His ways, his word, his Kingdom – that's what repentance is.

**Illustration:** If you've ever had a loved one in the hospital and the doctor comes out with good news — **"She's going to make it!"** — that's the kind of joy we're talking about. Relief. Hope. A future.

I wonder, does The Church, certainly in this country, live as if they've heard such news?

### 3. The Gospel of the Kingdom

**"The kingdom of God is at hand."** This is the central message of Jesus' ministry. But what is the kingdom of God?

Definition: **The kingdom of God is 'God's reign through God's people over God's place'. X 2.**

The Kingdom of God:

• It's not geographical — it's spiritual. • It's not only future — it's breaking into the present.

And note from the Bible, wherever Jesus goes:

• Demons flee • The sick are healed • The poor hear hope and receive help • Sinners are forgiven

Why? Well, because Jesus brings the kingdom with Him.

• "The time is fulfilled" — the long wait is over. • "Repent and believe in the gospel" — not just think about it.

I wonder, just a few weeks out past Easter Sunday, have we each entered into it?

**Illustration:** Imagine standing on a train platform and the announcer says, "Your train is now arriving."

You can either keep standing there or you can get on board. Jesus is that train. The kingdom has arrived.

### 4. How It's Different from Other Religions

John 14:6: Jesus says: ***"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me"***.

Every other religion says: • Do this and maybe God will accept you. • Follow these steps, live this way, earn your way up.

- Start as a human, fail, you may come back as an animal, but do good, and maybe you'll keep coming back as something better and better.

The Gospel says:

- It is done. The price for all the wrong that you and I have ever done – and ever will – which separates us from a Holy God has been paid for by Jesus via his death and resurrection on the cross.
- Jesus came down from the very seat of God to earth, because we couldn't climb up.
- Salvation is a gift, given to us, not a wage.

**Ephesians 2:8-9:** *"It is by grace you have been saved, through faith... not by works."*

**Illustration:** Imagine falling off a cliff. Religion throws you a book on how to climb. The gospel sends a rescuer to carry you home.

Jesus didn't come to give us a ladder — He came to be the ladder.

## 5. Personal Applications: Repent and Believe

Jesus gives us ONLY TWO responses to the gospel of the kingdom – no others:

**1. Repent :** • That means for each of us to **turn from sin and self-rule** and to commit to fully following God's ways and will for our lives – now and for all eternity – whatever the cost

• **Not just feeling bad** — but a change in direction.

**Illustration:** If you wanted to head off to Cribbs Causeway Shopping mall outside Bristol on a Saturday morning, and you drove along the A420 towards Swindon, took a left, drove past the Great Western Hospital on the dual carriage way down to the M4.

Then, you went around the roundabout, but INSTEAD of turning WEST on the M4 towards Bristol, you went round and took the slip road going EAST towards London, it's no good just feeling bad and regretting the decision.

If you want to get to Cribbs Causeway you need to get off at the next junction, turn 180 degrees, face the opposite direction then put your right foot to the floor and head that correct way.

So many people have heard just enough about the values and good of what Jesus said to think that if they just continue to try to be good, somehow at the end of time, there will be a side queue of those who didn't live the Christian life to the full, but chose to opt for some parts, so long as they could keep their independence.

They've taken a **Christianity Inoculation** injection: you know, they've just had enough of the dose to stop them getting the real thing.

The Bible says the 'gate; or the 'door' to eternity with God is a narrow one – which means there are no side gates. There's only one entrance and that's through repentance and faith in Jesus, turning 180 degrees, facing in Jesus direction and following in His ways. None of us, the bible says, can enter the Kingdom of God while clinging to our own thrones.

Jesus gives us ONLY TWO responses to the gospel of the kingdom – no others:

## 1. Repent ... and ... 2. Believe – Trust in the King.

Believe the Good News is really for you and for me and for all whom we love. Believe that His kingdom is better than yours and mine.

**Question:** A Bible commentary I read in preparation for this sermon asked a question: ***Are you living under Jesus' kingship or just inviting Him to bless your own little kingdom?***

That's quite a question to ponder this week.

### **Let me offer you a final illustration:**

A little brother and sister go to Weymouth Beach for their annual holiday with mum, dad and gran.

The boy builds a large sandcastle, and the girl, his older sister, writes around the walls of the castle in the sand: **"NO TRESPASSING"**.

Later that day, the inevitable happens: The tide comes in and wipes it away. Many of us build kingdoms of career, comfort, or control. But the tide of the Kingdom is coming. Only one kingdom will last.

### **In Conclusion:**

The gospel of the kingdom is not just an invitation to go to heaven where we eventually die. It is a call to let heaven reign in your life and my life - now.

• Jesus is King. • The time to act and respond is now. • Repent and believe the good news.

### **This week – A Call to Action:**

For believers: Are you and I living daily under the rule of King Jesus?

For seekers: Will you step into His kingdom today?

***"Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all other things shall be added unto you." Matthew 6:33***

**AMEN.**

*NB: See A5 Handout of questions to reflect and pray on over the week.*