**What is the Kingdom of God Like?**

Luke 13:10-21

Key Verse 13:18,19

1. **Read vs. 10-13. What was Jesus doing on the Sabbath? What was wrong with a woman who was there? What did Jesus do for her?**

* Jesus was teaching on the Sabbath: although his passage doesn’t seem like it’s about “teaching”
  + Teaching the truth, exposes lies (false knowledge) and expels ignorance (absence of knowledge). The spiritual reality, and the world of man’s heart is what matters to God. Man’s level of thinking rarely penetrates to the level where God is working. Jesus’ teaching goes below the surface level. It takes us to the real reality, the spiritual reality where the mind of God operates.
  + The teaching of Christ launches us on a rocket far beyond the atmosphere, where we attain a higher view of life—higher than any philosophy or good minded way of thinking can ever hope to achieve. From this high vantage point, we see the reality—who I am and who God is.
  + Jesus’ teaching was always the CORE of his ministry.
* She had been crippled by a spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not straighten up.
* Jesus gave his word to the woman, “Woman, you are set free from your infirmity.” Jesus’ teaching has healing power to transform life. This is an important truth that is often neglected or ignored by evil doers.

1. **Read v.14. Why was the synagogue leader “indignant” about the woman receiving healing? Why did he (and some others) care so much about the “Sabbath”?**

* He thought it was breaking the Sabbath laws.
* They were “indignant” because they believed the law to do no work on the Sabbath was the supreme purpose for mankind. This revealed the shallow nature of the synagogue leader’s knowledge and teaching—merely rules taught by men.
  + I**saiah 29:13** The Lord says: “These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is based on merely human rules they have been taught.
  + Without the love of God, people become legalistic, self-righteous and followers of rules rather than followers of Jesus.

1. **Read vs.15-17. Why did Jesus call these men “hypocrites”? What point did Jesus make through the healing of this woman? Why were Jesus’ opponents “humiliated” by his words? Why were the people “delighted”? Why are good shepherds so important?**

* Hypocrisy is often described as saying one thing but doing another. In the case of the Pharisees, they said to not work on the Sabbath, but for their own ox or donkey they were were willing to make concession, and work.
* He pointed out that the religious leaders showed compassion and love to their ox or donkey but they neglected the love of God towards people like this woman who was a “daughter of Abraham”.
  + **Luke 11:42** “Woe to you Pharisees, because you give God a tenth of your mint, rue and all other kinds of garden herbs, but you neglect justice and the love of God. You should have practiced the latter without leaving the former undone.
* By his reply Jesus clearly revealed their hypocrisy, that they cared more about their ox or donkey than a precious “daughter of Abraham” who was bound for 18 years.
  + The “religious leaders” were not “Men of God” and thereby had not served, fed, or taken care of God’s people. Jesus, the good shepherd had come. As the Good Shepherd, he healed, protected, strengthened, fed, served, and loved. Jesus’ deep love and concern for them “delighted” them and made them happy.
* Jesus’ church should be composed of real shepherds who, in Christ, love the flock of God with Jesus’ compassion and care. If a body of Christ has many members who live to serve, then the body will be healthy and can grow as God makes it grow. Those who come into the church newly can find Jesus’ healing touch and freedom from Satan’s chains just as in the case of this one woman.  
   Conversely, if a church fellowship is polluted with people like the Pharisees, who don’t know the heart of God, it will be defiled and brought low.

1. **Read vs.18-19. Why did Jesus suddenly change topics and begin discussing the Kingdom of God? Describe the details of Jesus’ parable. What is the meaning of this parable? How does it relate to the previous incident involving the woman and the synagogue leader?**

* At the end of verse 17, Jesus’ “opponents” were “humiliated” and defeated. The people were “delighted” with Jesus and all he did. Most people might make a mistake in thinking that the war was over, that his opponents would disappear and go away forever. Jesus knew better. Jesus knew that his opponents would not relent but would persevere all the more, not only in his lifetime, but throughout the time of the “Kingdom of God” on earth. In reflecting on the persisting influence of hypocrites, like the synagogue leader, Jesus gave a parable of warning and challenge to resist the influence of evil men and their hypocrisy.
* Jesus’ parable begins with a mustard seed—a seed that is very small, but nonetheless potent. A man plants this seed in his garden. This seed grows, grows and grows...until it becomes a tree. It becomes so big that the birds of the air see it and realize there is plenty of room to perch inside it by sitting on its branches. Since birds typically fly in flocks, we can visualize not just one or two birds but many birds perched inside.
  + “mustard seed” - this is Jesus himself; though just one man, seemingly small and insignificant, he was planted into the ground (through his death). From there, He broke through the topsoil like a green shoot rising from the dirt (resurrection).
  + “which a man took and planted in his garden” - this is God the Father (the man) whose will and purpose sent Jesus into this world. His plan was not just for Jesus (the seed) but anticipated great things to come from his seemingly small life and sacrifice.
  + “it grew and became a tree” - this is the movement of the Kingdom of God (the church). The key characteristic here is great growth, expansion, and size. The Kingdom of God has been forcefully advancing, growing and expanding through the lives of one person after another. What began with Jesus, expanded to 120 people in an upper room, which then expanded to thousands, and has not stopped growing since.
  + “birds perched in its branches” - these are people who have been coming into the church but are not part of the church. As much as birds are totally separate from the tree they perch in, so these people are foreign bodies living and resting within the church. They are not part of the tree. They are not branches of the tree. But they sit on the branches, using them for their own purpose.
* Jesus is prophesying about the future, about what would happen as the movement of God (the fire on the earth) grew and spread. From Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth the Kingdom of God would move and advance but along the way, corrupt individuals, people exactly like the synagogue ruler, would come into the church to perch. This problem arose almost immediately after the church began to expand. Paul, Peter, Jude, James, etc. all warned the flock of God of such corrupt people.

For example, Jude wrote…

* + Jude 1:3 Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt compelled to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to God’s holy people. 4For certain individuals whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.
  + Jude 1:12 These people are blemishes at your love feasts, eating with you without the slightest qualm—shepherds who feed only themselves. They are clouds without rain, blown along by the wind; autumn trees, without fruit and uprooted—twice dead.

Paul said to the Ephesian church…

* + Acts 20:28-31 Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. 29 I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. 30 Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. 31 So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears.

1. **Read vs. 20-21. How would a disciple of Jesus and/or a Jewish audience understand “yeast” from the Old Testament scriptures? What did Jesus equate yeast to in Luke 12:1? What similarities does this parable have with the preceding one? What does this passage teach us about Jesus’ concern for the “Kingdom of God”?**

* When we look at the Bible, Jesus’ teaching is in fact very consistent with the OT teaching. He leverages many of the same symbols and extends his teachings from the foundation of the OT scripture. Yeast is always presented as a negative influence in the Old Testament scriptures. For example…
  + **Exodus 12:15** - For seven days you are to eat bread made without yeast. On the first day remove the yeast from your houses, for whoever eats anything with yeast in it from the first day through the seventh must be cut off from Israel.
  + **Exodus 12:20** - Eat nothing made with yeast. Wherever you live, you must eat unleavened bread.”
  + **Exodus 34:18** - “Celebrate the Festival of Unleavened Bread. For seven days eat bread made without yeast, as I commanded you. Do this at the appointed time in the month of Aviv, for in that month you came out of Egypt.
  + **Deuteronomy 16:4** - “Let no yeast be found in your possession in all your land for seven days. Do not let any of the meat you sacrifice on the evening of the first day remain until morning.”
* This referred to hypocritical teaching that taught people to cleanse themselves outwardly but not inwardly.
* Both parables reveal the reality of the Kingdom of God—that it’s under attack. Attack not from swords, guns or knives, but an attack of corruption and compromise. It is under invasion from false teachers who pervert the Word of God for their own selfish gain. The body of Christ must resist these influences to the end.
* Jesus wants his kingdom to remain pure, uncorrupted and steadfast. He wants mercy and love to abound, so that people like the woman in the passage may find healing and rest for their souls. Let the lost be found and the lame be healed as we hold to the gospel truth.