

Join the movement. Have you been invited to join any movements recently? It seems like everyone has a cause. Movements are built on a common ideology that moves people to action. I believe people join movements for a couple of reasons. Sure, there is a shared value system, an ideology that binds people together and motivates them to action, but a related and perhaps an even greater underlying reason is that we all long to be a part of something that is beyond us. We love to be a part of that which is greater than we are. Movements are built on the invitation to be a part of a cause that will change the world and change you in the process. A quick search reveals that everyone loves to use this language. Some organizations and causes using this language include: Dance USA [invites people to "join the movement to strengthen dance in America." a radio station in Toronto (**99.9FM**, Virgin Radio), "**Occupy Flash**: join the movement to rid the world of flash player plug-in," an interesting one I came across, "**The Passionate Monogamy Movement**." and ones that are much more serious and urgent in nature, like **The National MS Society**.

Have you joined any movements recently? Are you advocating for a cause that you believe can change the world? What would it be like to be invited to be a part of the greatest cause? To join the movement of God?

### **"Joining the Movement of the Kingdom"** **Luke 13:1-14:6**

In Luke 13:1-14:6, Jesus invites us to . . .

**The Point: Join the movement of the kingdom through repentance and enjoy bearing fruit for God.**

Context:

#### **I. To belong to the kingdom is to repent and believe in Christ (13:1-5, 10-17; 14:1-6).**

Story: 1-5

- V.1: Sacrifice and Death. This had to be headline news in Israel. . .It seems there were some Galileans who were on their way to offer sacrifices who were killed by Pilate's men. It seems they want an interpretation, a way to understand how to respond to this tragedy. In responding, Jesus raised another tragedy that would have been common news.
- V.4: Tower of Siloam. Siloam was a reservoir for Jerusalem located near the south and east walls of the city. Tragically, some type of structural failure occurred with a tower at the reservoir and it killed 18 people! How were people to respond. The situation is analogous to the situation with Pilate. Human tragedy and suffering. What is the answer?
- Jesus actually raises what would be the typical conclusion in v. 2. "Do you think they were worse sinners??" He says the same thing in v. 4: Do you think they were worse offenders?

*Sin & Human Suffering:*

- To which many Jews, and even many religious leaders, would have answered with a resounding "yes!" They often associated human suffering with sin, as though there is a proportionate relationship. The more you sin, the greater your risk for suffering. We know from reading our Bibles and from opening our eyes and looking around us, that wicked people prosper and righteous people suffer.
- Conversely, many thought the absence of suffering meant favor from God. The Jews were presuming upon a false sense of security, and we do this today, but as we saw last week, we all will give an account of our lives to God. [To quote the words of a famous Baptist preacher named R.G. Lee, there is a "pay day someday."]
- So Jesus answers by not necessarily focusing on the why of tragedy, but what our response should be in light of any tragedy.

*The Question of Theodicy*

- In verses 1-3, we see tragedy by human hands. In verses 4-5, we see tragedy by natural causes or natural disaster (4-5)
- This is the world we live in as well. Jesus plainly says we will have trouble in this world. This world is fallen.
- 9/11: World Trade Center; tsunamis, earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes,

*The Call to Repentance:*

- So Jesus responds directly and decisively and calls them to repent so that they do not face a more drastic result: not simply physical death, but also spiritual death. This is what Jesus is referring to with the word: "perish" He compares dying tragically in this life with a more tragic death, "perishing ultimately before God."
- The call to repent formed the first recorded words of Jesus' preaching ministry: "Repent for the kingdom of God is at hand."
- Repentance is a change of mind that leads to a change of heart and action before God. We see our sin, God's way, his grace, and turn from the life we once lived to live for God.
- Darrel Bock says, "Only repentance will prevent the death that lasts." (Bock, 1206).
- So repentance is how we enter the kingdom, but repentance is also how we continue in the kingdom.
- FCF: Sadly, people often want to come to God on their own terms, not his, and to come to God on our own terms is to fail to repent, and [to fail to repent is to continue down the road that ends in eternal death.]
- The Pharisees were those that wanted to come to God on their own terms. They sought self-righteousness by adding laws that God never prescribed. Sabbath...

- Not only were they guilty of legalism and seeking their own righteousness, but they also were guilty of continuing to reject the work of Christ.
- We see two examples of this. One in chapter 13, and one in chapter 14. *Read 13:10-14.*
- Jesus then answers their rebuke with a rebuke... vv.15-17. "You hypocrites!" You care more for animals than you care for people! The blatant inconsistency and nonsensical prioritization of oxen and donkeys over people made in the image of God is asinine and self-condemning.
- God loves animals. He made them after all. To think otherwise is to miss the point and the force of Jesus' love for people, especially those sick and hurting and oppressed.
- This same conversation and this same rejection of Jesus surfaces again in Luke 14:1-6. Different occasion. Same story.
- *Read 14:1-6.* Their mouths were stopped (expound).
- BUT... Here's the good news! Jesus always wants the conversion of men. Why else would he have gone to eat with the Pharisees? **"For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Lord GOD; so turn, and live."** (Ezekiel 18:32)
- Nicodemus. Jesus went after the worst of the worst, and that included the religious leaders.

## II. To participate in the kingdom is to bear fruit in the movement of God (13:7-9, 18-21).

- *Read 6-9.* This would have been a common scenario then as it is today. There is a tree in your garden that bears no fruit year after year. The dilemma involves whether or not to cut down the unproductive tree that only serves to take away nutrients from other plants in the vineyard, or to allow it one more year.
- If you are the impatient and impulsive type, *not to say* there is anyone like that here today, you would go get your ax or chainsaw if you prefer, and cut the tree down and plant another in its place.
- Thankfully, Jesus is neither impulsive nor impatient. He says, give it another year, but with the expectation that it will be fruit. Otherwise, he commands it to be shut down.
- The fig tree: represents unrepentant Israel. They had continued in their unbelief.... Because the fig tree represents unrepentant Israel, it consequently represents all who continue in their unbelief.
- Jesus tells this parable to heighten the effect of his call to repent. He calls them to not only respond, but to respond quickly.
- FCF: We want to be in the game without change. We often talk a good game but play a very poor game.. (NCAA Tournament)
- But fruitfulness is evidence that we actually belong to the kingdom of Christ

### The spread of Christ's kingdom...

- *In vv. 18-21* Jesus tells two parables to communicate something of the character of his kingdom.
- Parable One: mustard seed.
- Parable Two: leaven
- These parables are quite simple: the kingdom is moving! Many thought the Messiah would establish a permanent militaristic kingdom that would reveal immediate and drastic transformation, but Jesus says that this transformation, this movement will happen over time. It is the transition of an incredibly small seed to a tree large enough to provide shelter for animals.
- Jesus is saying that his kingdom, though it begins with a few followers in Israel will spread far and wide across the face of the earth and one day be so great in size and significance that people from every tribe and language on the planet will come to be included as worshipers in his kingdom.
- But God spreads his kingdom, one person at a time.
- This is why it is so exciting to be a part of a church plant. In a very tangible way, we are seeing the church grow and the kingdom spread right before our eyes. It is our prayer that Redemption Hill would be a small movement in the larger movement of the kingdom of God.
- One pastor says, *"There is no more practical index of whether your church has movement dynamics than examining whether you have a culture of sacrifice."*
- Sacrifice our time, give ourselves in sacrificial service, sacrifice our ego and invite people to join us....
- *App: PICTURE 5,000 Door Hangers* have gone out... how many more we get out today depends on how many people stick around after the service (1k? 3k? 5k?)
- Trans: To participate in Christ's kingdom, which is an indescribable privilege, is to bear fruit in the movement of God. Finally..

## III. To enjoy the benefits of the kingdom is to receive the compassion of Christ (13:22-35).

Read 22-30

- As Jesus continued his teaching ministry in route to Jerusalem, someone raised a serious question: "Will those who are saved be few?"
- What is the greatest benefit of the kingdom? Salvation!
- To answer the question, Jesus answers in a typical and yet, unexpected way. He could have given a yes or no answer, but instead his answer shifts the focus in two ways.
- Number one, he moves from the abstract and general to the concrete and personal. A lot of times people want to discuss theology in a very impersonal manner, but theology is intensely personal and that should be clear when we talk about what it means to know God in Christ.

- This is a personal question: Will you enter through the narrow door of Christ. **“And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12)**
- AS: The narrow door of Christianity is a scandal so many. Surely God would not make the door narrow. God would make a huge door. People could get into to heaven a thousand different ways. This is what so many believe in our culture, but if God is the one who must save us, then he should be able to determine how he will save us. One of the key problems with the modern view of exclusivity is a rejection of the depravity of man. Most people don't *really* believe there is anything wrong with us, that we've really sinned against God. And oh, by the way, if there is something wrong, then God will sweep that under the rug.
- Number two, Jesus focuses not as much on the number of those saved, though all who are saved must come through the narrow door, but on the timing of salvation. There is no limit to God's love, but there is a limit to how much time each person has to respond.
- Here's the sad part: a lot of people want salvation, “many will seek to enter and not be able.” Why?
- #1) They did not truly belong to him. It was lip service. There was no true repentance, no lasting life change. Many want the benefits of salvation without really following Jesus in all things. He calls those people “workers of evil!”
- We must not assume that simply because we have been exposed to the truth, that we really have it! No one will be able to say to God, “Hey, on March 24, 2013, I sat there and heard about Jesus and the way of salvation. Doesn't that qualify me?”
- #2) They did not respond with urgency. Oh, I'll go back to church next week. I'll settle up with God in a few years from now
- Verse 25: “When once the master of the house...” The narrow door becomes the shut door, and it is shut to them because they never really truly embraced Jesus.
- When we share with people we must urge them to receive God's love and not wait. That is part of the invitation. At the same time, we know most people, need some time to process the claims of Christ before coming to faith, so we must balance urgency with realism. I like what Michael Wilcock says about this: **“Urgency is not the same as panic. In every case, wherever one man is honestly seeking the way in to the kingdom, wherever another is faithfully pointing it out, the Lord knows how long the process requires. Before time began, indeed, he had allowed quite as much of it as would ever be needed for the purpose of saving all who would ever want to be saved.”** So we should share with a sense of urgency, while always mindful of God's sovereignty.
- There is thick irony in Jesus' message of salvation. Those who think they are on the inside actually end up outside of eternal life with Christ, while those everyone thinks will be on the outside, actually end up dining with Christ and enjoying the benefits of the kingdom of God.
- Look back at vv.28-30. Just because they descended from Abraham and the prophets does not mean they shared the faith of Abraham. Who are the true people of Abraham? Those who share the faith of Abraham (Rom 4 & Gal 3).
- Surprisingly, the true people of God who belong to the kingdom will come from the four winds of the earth! All peoples!! His compassion is for all! North, East, South, and west. Outside. Outcast. Unlikely. All of them will be brought into the kingdom.
- Some who are last will be first and some who are first will be last.
- Our prayer should be: “May the few be many.” That is the heart of God who “takes no pleasure in the death of anyone,” right?

Trans: For those who enter through the narrow door, they will experience the benefits of the kingdom. Two stand out.

- We just saw that those who enter through the door will recline at the table of Christ in the kingdom of God. We will dine with God. This is a picture of our inheritance and privilege as Christians. It reveals the intimacy we enjoy with God.
- The second benefit is seen in the final verses of chapter 13. *Read 31-35*
- Herod was not a nice guy and Jesus knew it. Jesus loved to nickname people. It's one of the things I love about Jesus. He called Simon, “Peter.” He called James & John, the “Sons of Thunder.” In v. 32, he calls Herod a “fox.” He calls him a fox because he was deceitful and destructive.
- Jesus is not like Herod. It's a reason he had a noble disdain for his ungodliness because Jesus was completely righteous. Unlike Herod who was interested in taking life, Jesus sought to lay his life down. Unlike Herod who sought his own selfish desires, Jesus constantly looked for ways to give himself away.
- We see this in verse 34: “O jesusalem, Jersusalem... How I would have gathered your children together as a hen... and you would not! Behold your house is forsaken.
- God is a God who cares. He provides protection for his people. Jesus is filled with compassion! We saw that with the healing of the woman in vv. 10-17, and we see it more profoundly here as he laments over Jerusalem.
- **“The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.” (Ps. 145:8)**
- The only thing stopping Israel from being gathered up under the wings of God and receiving his protection was their own rejection, and the same is true today. People will die without Christ and go to hell, because they want to, because they reject God's love for them.
- Jesus is full of compassion!

### Conclusion:

The movement of God is a movement of mercy. **Richard Sibbes** said, **“There is more mercy in Christ than sin in us.”**

Have you received the mercy of Christ? Do not doubt that Christ is a merciful Savior. He stretched out his arms on the cross to die for you and he stretches out his arms daily to care for you.