“The King and His Kingdom: A Divine Initiative”

Matthew 1:18-25

(notes based on the sermon by Pastor Steve Massey, Hayden Bible Church, 5/22/22)

(“Hold the Rope” = Please pray for the indigenous pastors of Project 92 in south Asia. They are providing HOPE for the lost (1.4 Billion people, mainly Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists, and animists).

Kingdom building is a work of God: it takes God’s initiative.

The Gospel of Matthew presents us with a second genesis, a new beginning, a re-creation. Even though we desperately need it, we can’t re-create ourselves into God’s perfect image. Only God can do that. The Kingdom of Heaven is a miraculous re-creation of God’s world and God’s people for His glory.

Jesus’ birth marks a new beginning, the coming of God’s Kingdom. The Holy Spirit is the agent of God’s life-giving work (Matt. 1:18). Jesus was born with an earthly lineage and a Heavenly lineage. (Q1) That’s the miracle of the Incarnation. The Baby and His name are sent from Heaven. He’s been sent to do God’s work. Our redemption is a work of God alone.

In Matt. 1:19-25, God interrupts Joseph’s agony. (Q2) The dilemma is solved, but it doesn’t remove the difficulty of the situation. God’s work does not always go according to our plans. And sometimes it’s a disruptive work. God’s way is often not the easy, popular way. (Matt. 7:13-14)

God will not bring His Son into a life and leave that life as He found it. He’s not after a slightly improved life; He wants a renewed life! It’s not a life with God as the co-pilot. God IS the pilot! The King has come to represent us before God **in His righteousness**, and to redeem us from God’s wrath **for our sinfulness**. (Q3)

In verse 21, Matthew presents his Jewish audience with the clarity of our King’s mission, and the certainty of our King’s mission: Jesus “will save His people from their sins.” That’s right. You’re a dirty, rotten, sinner! If you had no need for a Savior, God would not have needed to send His Son. Man cannot save himself. My sin is the problem for which Jesus is the only solution.

What is sin? It means “to miss the mark.” What is “the mark”? Perfect holiness. We were created to be faithful, to honor God and our parents, to have no idols, to rest in God, to find our purpose in God, and much more. Holiness is a target that we, by nature, never hit. We try to live outside of God’s wise boundaries. That ugly sin nature still resides in each of us. “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” (Rom. 3:23) “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Rom. 6:23) Jesus never missed the target; He never lived outside God’s boundaries. He is Immanuel, God with us.

Because salvation is a divine initiative, its accomplishment is certain. Because salvation is a divine initiative, it’s work is exclusive. Salvation is NOT universal: only those who turn to Christ will be saved (read John 1:12). (Q4)

Do people need this good news in Coeur d’Alene and Hayden and Post Falls? Of course! Charles Spurgeon said, “No name can banish fear like the name of Jesus: it is the beginning of hope and the end of despair.” (Q5) Is Jesus your Savior? Do you see the peril you are in because of your sin? BUT WAIT, THERE’S MORE: Right now, the Holy Spirit is sanctifying His children, chipping off the parts that don’t look like Jesus. (see Heb. 10:14) Because salvation is a divine initiative, sin will be defeated in God’s people. So, friends, let us go forth and live as hopeful, engaged, Kingdom people! (Q6)

**QUESTIONS**:

1. Why was it necessary for Jesus to be a man? Why was it necessary for Him to remain God?
2. The angel reminded Joseph that he was a son of David. Paul also reminded us of the family we’ve been adopted into, when he told us to walk worthy of our calling (Eph. 4:1). In your own words, what does this mean?
3. Read Isa. 53:5-6. Our sin fell on the perfect God/Man. Because of this, He is able to present us holy before God. Wow! Take a few minutes just to thank Him for this tremendous sacrifice.
4. What does it mean to receive Him, to believe in His name?
5. Time for a little introspection: Our actions spring forth from our beliefs. What does the way you share Christ say about your beliefs? What, if anything, do you need to do about it?
6. Pastor Steve ended with the glorious, hopeful words of Matt. 25:31-34. To hear this passage sung by Keith Green, go to youtube.com and type in “Keith Green The Sheep and the Goats”. (I like the 12 minute version.)

“Praise Him, Praise Him!” (Crosby)

1 Praise him, praise him! Jesus, our blessed redeemer!

Sing, O earth, his wonderful love proclaim!

Hail him, hail him! Highest archangels in glory!

Strength and honor give to his holy name!

Like a shepherd, Jesus will guard his children.

In his arms he carries them all day long.

Refrain:

Praise him! Praise him! tell of his excellent greatness.

Praise him! Praise him! ever in joyful song.

2 Praise him, praise him! Jesus, our blessed redeemer!

For our sins, he suffered, and bled, and died.

He our rock, our hope of eternal salvation,

hail him, hail him! Jesus, the crucified.

Sound his praises, Jesus who bore our sorrows,

love unbounded, wonderful, deep, and strong. [Refrain]