“The King and His Kingdom: How God Changes His World”

Matthew 4:12-25

(notes based on the sermon by Pastor Steve Massey, Hayden Bible Church, 7/10/22)

 “How does God change this unfinished world? How does Jesus establish His Kingdom here on earth? Are we trusting His ways of changing this world?” When your pastor starts off with questions like these, you can bet you’re in for a four-hour sermon! Well, buckle your seat belts!

 I’m sure you’ve heard the expression, “Keep your eye on the ball.” In today’s lesson it means “Keep your eye on the King and His **cause**. What is His cause? Jesus is establishing the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. This is the new beginning (new covenant) that God has promised (see Isa. 9:1-7). The Kingdom of Heaven consists of God’s people, under the reign of God’s King, bringing about God’s rule over all things… FOR HIS GLORY. This is done by the power of His Holy Spirit, not political or military power.

 The arrival of His Kingdom is as light breaking into darkness (4:16). Both Jews and Gentiles lived in this part of northern Israel. Why is this an important detail? Because this Kingdom is composed of every tribe and nation. We are all born into spiritual darkness, under sin’s curse. Darkness is in us as well as around us in this messed up world in which we live. Jesus is the Light promised by the prophet Isaiah.

 The King’s cause is advanced only by the King’s means: His **call** is to repentance and allegiance to Him (4:17). Have you answered His call, or are you just warming a pew? There’s a big difference between going to church and being the church. Have you turned to Him, the Savior who came to live and die for you, to win your liberation from the wrath of God? You’re either in His Kingdom, or you’re in the kingdom of darkness. Does Jesus have dominion in your life? His call includes no PAC’s, no protests, and no self-help books. It’s simply a call to repentance and allegiance.

 The King’s **command** is, “Follow Me!” (4:18-22) There is no such thing as a Christian who doesn’t follow Christ. Belief is evidenced by following Christ. Belief is evidenced by active obedience. The follower of Christ will want to walk in His ways, however imperfectly that may happen. The follower of Christ will walk in the Spirit. (Q1) The followers of Christ are not perfect, but we’re being perfected (Heb. 10:14). (Q2) The Gospel will reach all of God’s elect. He will save His people from their sin.

 The King’s **commission** is to make known the Gospel of the Kingdom, to bring this Light into the darkness around us. (Matt. 28:18-20) How long will this darkness (where people worship anything but God) be allowed to exist? Read Matt. 24:14. It WILL happen. The Kingdom’s advance is relentless and certain. How should we do the work of advancing the Kingdom of Heaven? Our influence in our communities should be palpable. Citizens of Heaven are always the best citizens in their communities. We are to be the light of the world (Matt. 5:14-16). (Q3)

 Jesus has come to do the works of His Kingdom. The Kingdom, in its fullness, will not contain any of the problems and diseases listed in 4:24. We are meant to think about the future we are living towards. Take joy in the King’s new creation: a world and a people restored to God (Matt. 6:10). One day we will be restored forever. May God give us grace to keep our eyes on the King. Our best days are yet to come! (Q4) (Q5) (Q6)

**QUESTIONS**:

1. What does it mean to “walk in the Spirit”?
2. What are the inhabitants of the Kingdom like? Read the Beatitudes (Matt. 5:1-12) and list at least 5 attributes.
3. How do we do the work of advancing this Kingdom? I’ve shared this before, but it bears repeating: We should not be selfish; we should be selfLESS. L=love, E=encourage, S=serve others, S=share the Gospel. What one step could you take to do this this week?
4. What do Jesus’ activities (Matt. 4:23-25) indicate about His purpose in coming into the world?
5. Where do you meet people who live in darkness? How can you bring the light to them? Be specific.
6. (Personal) Ask yourself, “What stops me from doing Kingdom work?” Cowardice? Lethargy? Apathy? Discouragement? Busyness? What will you do about it?

“I’ll Fly Away”

1.
Some glad morning when this life is o'er,
I'll fly away;
To a home on God's celestial shore,
I'll fly away (I'll fly away).

Chorus
I'll fly away, Oh Glory
I'll fly away; (in the morning)
When I die, Hallelujah, by and by,
I'll fly away (I'll fly away).

2.
When the shadows of this life have gone,
I'll fly away;
Like a bird from prison bars has flown,
I'll fly away (I'll fly away)

Chorus

3.
Just a few more weary days and then,
I'll fly away;
To a land where joy shall never end,
I'll fly away (I'll fly away)