

22T09e Kingdom of God

Hello my friends. Thanks for joining me @ the PUNLA coffee table We have been talking about the most prominent topic in the New Testament, the kingdom of God. I know many of you are probably surprised by that. In fact, Jesus talks about the kingdom of God or kingdom of heaven more than any other topic, more than all other topics combined. The obvious next question is what is the kingdom of God. Well, Heaven, right? Well, yes, no or maybe and. Actually, Jesus starts much of His teaching with the phrase, “the Kingdom of God is like....”

But what, where, when is the Kingdom of God. Now that is the right question. And I know the Bible has the answer. So, today we are going to look at some parables of Jesus and see if we can answer some of these questions. What is the kingdom of God and where, when and how is Jesus talking about it.

Let us pray.

Heavenly Father. Thank you for your good news. Lord use me to share your message. If I say something in error, please let them remember what you wanted them to hear, not my errand words. Help us not to be confused by the many voices and opinions we hear. May we stay focused on your word Lord. Guide our discussion. We pay in your name Lord Jesus, Amen.

I told you last time that there are so many parables of Jesus that start with the phrase the kingdom of God is like... I have broken these into four groups,

- 1) Matthew 13 (Wheat and mustard seed) (also Luke 13) and Mark 4 (Seed)
- 2) Matthew 13 (Leaven, hidden treasure, pearl and dragnet) (also Luke 13, Mark 4)
- 3) Matthew 18/20/22 (unforgiving servant, labors, marriage feast)
- 4) Matthew 25 (ten bridesmaids, talents) & Luke 9 (plough)

Today we will concentrate on group 3 of these parables,

- Unforgiving Servant (Matthew 18:21-35)
- Labors (Matthew 20:1-16)
- Marriage Feast (Matthew 22:1-14)

I'm going to begin with the Unforgiving Servant parable from Matthew 18. Matthew 18:21-35 (NLT) ²⁰*And* ²¹*Then Peter came to him and asked, “Lord, how often should I forgive someone who sins against me? Seven times?”* ²²*“No, not seven times,” Jesus replied, “but seventy times seven!* ²³*“Therefore, the Kingdom of Heaven can be compared to a king who decided to bring his accounts up to date with servants who had borrowed money from him. ²⁴In the process, one of his debtors was brought in who owed him millions of dollars. ²⁵He couldn't pay, so his master ordered that he be sold—along with his wife, his children, and everything he owned—to pay the debt. ²⁶“But the man fell down before his master and begged him, ‘Please, be patient with me, and I will pay it all.’ ²⁷Then his master was filled with pity for him, and he released him and forgave his debt. ²⁸“But when the man left the king, he went to a fellow servant who owed him a few thousand dollars. He grabbed him by the throat and demanded instant payment. ²⁹“His fellow servant fell down before him and begged for a little more time. ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay it,’ he pleaded. ³⁰But his creditor wouldn't wait. He had the man arrested and put in prison until the debt could be paid in full. ³¹“When some of the other servants saw this, they were very upset. They went to the king and told him everything that had happened. ³²Then the king called in the man he had forgiven and said, ‘You evil servant! I forgave you that tremendous debt because you pleaded with me. ³³Shouldn't you have*

mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had mercy on you?’³⁴Then the angry king sent the man to prison to be tortured until he had paid his entire debt. ³⁵“That’s what my heavenly Father will do to you if you refuse to forgive your brothers and sisters from your heart.”

Unforgiving heart. I hope you heard what Jesus said. It is a very important warning. If you have an unforgiving heart, you have no part in the kingdom of God. But did you understand what Jesus was parallely? The kingdom of God is like a king who asks to square accounts. The king expects to get what is owed him. But he is merciful only if we also show mercy to others. This parable does not address our question of when is the kingdom of God. But it does show us a little of how God views forgiveness and mercy. He is willing to forgive us for our huge debt of sin toward God. Jesus paid the price so we could be made right in the sight of God. But. And there is almost always a but. But, if we do not in turn forgive others, then why would we expect God to show us mercy. If we show not mercy, then God will not show us mercy. No matter what someone has done to you, you have to forgive them. Now that does not mean we forget it. It does not mean we allow others to take advantage of us again. We should learn and avoid those situations in the future. But we have to forgive them. We forgive because God has forgiven us. We deserve to be judged for what we have done, but God forgives us. Other deserve to get punishment for what they’ve done, but we are to forgive and let God avenge us. God alone can judge and punish. I know this is tough.

Let’s read another parable, the parable of the labors from Matthew 20, Matthew 20:1-16 (NLT) *¹“For the Kingdom of Heaven is like the landowner who went out early one morning to hire workers for his vineyard. ²He agreed to pay the normal daily wage and sent them out to work. ³“At nine o’clock in the morning he was passing through the marketplace and saw some people standing around doing nothing. ⁴So he hired them, telling them he would pay them whatever was right at the end of the day. ⁵So they went to work in the vineyard. At noon and again at three o’clock he did the same thing. ⁶“At five o’clock that afternoon he was in town again and saw some more people standing around. He asked them, ‘Why haven’t you been working today?’ ⁷“They replied, ‘Because no one hired us.’ “The landowner told them, ‘Then go out and join the others in my vineyard.’ ⁸“That evening he told the foreman to call the workers in and pay them, beginning with the last workers first. ⁹When those hired at five o’clock were paid, each received a full day’s wage. ¹⁰When those hired first came to get their pay, they assumed they would receive more. But they, too, were paid a day’s wage. ¹¹When they received their pay, they protested to the owner, ¹²“Those people worked only one hour, and yet you’ve paid them just as much as you paid us who worked all day in the scorching heat. ¹³“He answered one of them, ‘Friend, I haven’t been unfair! Didn’t you agree to work all day for the usual wage? ¹⁴Take your money and go. I wanted to pay this last worker the same as you. ¹⁵Is it against the law for me to do what I want with my money? Should you be jealous because I am kind to others? ¹⁶“So those who are last now will be first then, and those who are first will be last.”*

I know what you are thinking. That’s not fair. I have had the same thoughts. But is it fair. Well, yes. The landowner can pay however he chooses. He is not cheating anyone. He paid each exactly what he promised. Kingdom of heaven is just like this. The thief on the cross and the apostle Paul each get the same thing. A happily ever after with Jesus. The thief had only a few minutes of surrender to Jesus, but Paul had a lifetime of difficulties in the name of Jesus. I think all of us would think Paul deserved more. But, there is really only two options. The wages of sin are death, option 1. And option 2, is eternal life with Jesus. Two options, the same reward regardless of how long you have followed Jesus. Is that fair? Absolutely, none of us deserve anything, so yes God is just and the reward is beyond measure for all of us. Think of it this way. Say it took 1 billion credits to enter heaven. The thief had 1 credit and Jesus paid the rest of the billion for him. Paul had 100 credits and Jesus paid the rest of the billion for him. Compared to

a billion 1 or 100 are really nothing. They are both infinitely far from the target and without Jesus there is no way to get there.

Next, I want to look at another parable from Matthew 22 about Marriage Feast. Matthew 22:1-14 (NLT), *1Jesus also told them other parables. He said, 2“The Kingdom of Heaven can be illustrated by the story of a king who prepared a great wedding feast for his son. 3When the banquet was ready, he sent his servants to notify those who were invited. But they all refused to come! 4“So he sent other servants to tell them, ‘The feast has been prepared. The bulls and fattened cattle have been killed, and everything is ready. Come to the banquet!’ 5But the guests he had invited ignored them and went their own way, one to his farm, another to his business. 6Others seized his messengers and insulted them and killed them. 7“The king was furious, and he sent out his army to destroy the murderers and burn their town. 8And he said to his servants, ‘The wedding feast is ready, and the guests I invited aren’t worthy of the honor. 9Now go out to the street corners and invite everyone you see.’ 10So the servants brought in everyone they could find, good and bad alike, and the banquet hall was filled with guests. 11“But when the king came in to meet the guests, he noticed a man who wasn’t wearing the proper clothes for a wedding. 12‘Friend,’ he asked, ‘how is it that you are here without wedding clothes?’ But the man had no reply. 13Then the king said to his aides, ‘Bind his hands and feet and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ 14“For many are called, but few are chosen.”*

This is a hard parable to hear. The kingdom of heaven is at hand. God has prepared the banquet for us. We know Jesus, but won't commit fully to him. We have to surrender completely to him, or we are just like the those who were invited but refused to come. God has opened His kingdom to everyone. To the outcasts, and forgotten, to the marginalized. We are all invited to come to the king. But, I hope we heard the last part. The invitation is free but we still need to come prepared. The man who wasn't wearing proper clothes for a wedding. This is not about the clothes you wear to church. This is about clothing yourself with the things of God. Reading the bible, studying the bible, praying to God continually, going to church to fellowship with other followers, serving others in the name of Jesus. This is clothing which are appropriate for the wedding feast of Jesus. Many are called but few are chosen. Everyone is called and invited but reality is not everyone will take it seriously and follow Jesus with all they have. Surrender all you have to Jesus, then trust Jesus with everything even your life. Listen to the king and do what he is asking you to do.

Let us pray. Heavenly Father. Thank you for your good news. Thank you are every story, every message in the Bible. Help us understand your purpose for giving them. Help us to understand how you intend us to view them. Help us not to be confused by the many voices and opinions we hear. May we stay focused on your word Lord. Help me Lord to let your word lead the way so we can see your message. Thank you, Jesus, for what you did for me or all of us. We pray in your name Lord Jesus, Amen.

The Kingdom of God is like... All three of these parables have very powerful messages about how we should live right now. There are consequences if we do not surrender to the king now, if we don't forgive others now just like our king. Trust God with all your outcomes, then do what He is telling you to do. Get prepared, focus on God. Put God first in everything you do, so that someday you will show up to the wedding feast properly dressed in the righteousness of Jesus.

Thank you for joining me @ the PUNLA Coffee Table. If you liked the message, please click like. And please share the link with a friend to our channel. Send me comments to my email on the screen. So, until next time @ the PUNLA Coffee Table. God bless.