

## 22T09f 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 4 of these parables,

- Bridesmaids (Matthew 25:1-13)
- Talents (Matthew 25:14-30)
- Plough (Luke 9:62)

I'm going to begin with the Bridesmaids parable from Matthew 25. Matthew 25:1-13 (NLT) *<sup>1</sup>“Then the Kingdom of Heaven will be like ten bridesmaids who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. <sup>2</sup>Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. <sup>3</sup>The five who were foolish didn't take enough olive oil for their lamps, <sup>4</sup>but the other five were wise enough to take along extra oil. <sup>5</sup>When the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and fell asleep. <sup>6</sup>“At midnight they were roused by the shout, ‘Look, the bridegroom is coming! Come out and meet him!’ <sup>7</sup>“All the bridesmaids got up and prepared their lamps. <sup>8</sup>Then the five foolish ones asked the others, ‘Please give us some of your oil because our lamps are going out.’ <sup>9</sup>“But the others replied, ‘We don't have enough for all of us. Go to a shop and buy some for yourselves. <sup>10</sup>“But while they were gone to buy oil, the bridegroom came. Then those who were ready went in with*

*him to the marriage feast, and the door was locked. <sup>11</sup>Later, when the other five bridesmaids returned, they stood outside, calling, 'Lord! Lord! Open the door for us!' <sup>12</sup>'But he called back, 'Believe me, I don't know you!' <sup>13</sup>'So you, too, must keep watch! For you do not know the day or hour of my return.*

So that is the bridesmaids parable. Did you understand what Jesus is saying. Then the kingdom of Heaven is like bridesmaids waiting on the bridegroom.... The kingdom of heaven is like the bridesmaids, not the bridegroom, not the wedding. Like the bridesmaids waiting. Like us waiting on the return of Jesus. Again, Jesus is telling us we are already in the kingdom of God. But. There is always a but in these stories. The bridesmaids are supposed to be prepared, for when the call comes, if they are not ready, then they won't be part of the party. If we are not ready, we won't get our happily ever after when Jesus returns. Did you hear the last part though. Jesus says, I don't know you. The other five bridesmaids know the bridegroom, which is Jesus, but knowing Jesus is not enough. They have to be ready, or Jesus will say I don't know you. Jesus says this several times in the scriptures. People claim to know Jesus, do things in the name of Jesus, but Jesus says I don't know you, depart. We need to recognize how important Jesus thinks preparing is. If you are not spending your time preparing for Jesus to return, you might just be caught unprepared and wanting to enter the party, but the door is already closed.

Let's read another parable, the parable of the Talents from Matthew 25, Matthew 25:14-30 (NLT) *<sup>14</sup>'For it is just like a man about to go on a journey, who called his own servants and entrusted his possessions to them. <sup>15</sup>To one he gave five talents, to another, two, and to another, one, each according to his own ability; and he went on his journey. <sup>16</sup>The one who had received the five talents immediately went and did business with them, and earned five more talents. <sup>17</sup>In the same way the one who had received the two talents earned two more. <sup>18</sup>But he who received the one talent went away and dug a hole in the ground, and hid his master's money. <sup>19</sup>'Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. <sup>20</sup>The one who had received the five talents came up and brought five more talents, saying, 'Master, you entrusted five talents to me. See, I have earned five more talents.' <sup>21</sup>His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter the joy of your master. <sup>22</sup>'Also the one who had received the two talents came up and said, 'Master, you entrusted two talents to me. See, I have earned two more talents.' <sup>23</sup>His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter the joy of your master.' <sup>24</sup>'Now the one who had received the one talent also came up and said, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed. <sup>25</sup>And I was afraid, so I went away and hid your talent in the ground. See, you still have what is yours.' <sup>26</sup>'But his master answered and said to him, 'You worthless, lazy servant! Did you know that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter seed? <sup>27</sup>Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my money back with interest. <sup>28</sup>Therefore: take the talent away from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents.' <sup>29</sup>'For to everyone who has, more shall be given, and he will have*

*an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away. <sup>30</sup>And throw the worthless servant into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

I know what you are thinking, Jesus does not start this parable with the kingdom of heaven is like. But he really does. This parable is a continuation of the Bridesmaids parable. So, when Jesus says for it is just like, he is obviously referring to the kingdom of God. But what is Jesus trying to tell us with this story about the Kingdom of God? Well, I want to just concentrate on a couple of points for today. First, we are all given something to steward by God. Talents can be money, but it can be a lot of other things as well. Resources, skills, talents, time and money. How we steward these are important to God. Everything belongs to God. We have to realize this. We don't actually own or have anything apart from what God allows us to have. We are responsible to use what God has entrusted us with and use them the way God wants us to use them. If we are good with a small amount, God will trust us with more. But. Again there is always a but. But, if we are not good stewards, if we don't use what God has given us the way God wants us to use those things. Then we are at risk of God saying, "you worthless lazy servant, and sending us to a place with weeping and gnashing of teeth. That does not sound like a good place. Don't miss this though. All these servants were working for the king in his kingdom. But not all received rewards when the king returned. Only those who have worked hard and show fruit for their labors are going to be rewarded. Don't miss that point please.

Next, I want to look at another parable from Luke Chapter 9 the parable of the plough. This short little parable comes after some brief conversations with would be disciples. Listen carefully what Jesus says in each case in Luke 9:57-62 (NLT) <sup>57</sup>As they were walking along, someone said to Jesus, "I will follow you wherever you go." <sup>58</sup>But Jesus replied, "Foxes have dens to live in, and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place even to lay his head." <sup>59</sup>He said to another person, "Come, follow me." The man agreed, but he said, "Lord, first let me return home and bury my father." <sup>60</sup>But Jesus told him, "Let the spiritually dead bury their own dead! Your duty is to go and preach about the Kingdom of God." <sup>61</sup>Another said, "Yes, Lord, I will follow you, but first let me say good-bye to my family." <sup>62</sup>But Jesus told him, "Anyone who puts a hand to the plow and then looks back is not fit for the Kingdom of God."

This sequence of conversations is hard for us to hear. I hear people say often, that Jesus was being a little harsh. People, Jesus is God and as such He is always right. Anything we put first instead of Jesus is wrong. Jesus must be first. That is what it means to follow Jesus. Put God first in everything, above everyone else including you. The first person in the story, Jesus knew was wanting to follow for the wrong reason, Jesus had no place to call his own on earth. That scared the first person away. The second person wanted to bury his father. Whether the father was dead, dying or was just an excuse doesn't really matter, Jesus wants us to put him first. Jesus sees we don't have Him as our priority. Peter had a wife and probably kids, but he dropped everything to follow Jesus. Now we know, Peter was allowed to go home frequently and even took his wife with him in later years as he traveled. So, Jesus is not expecting us to abandon

our families. We are responsible for our families. But Jesus does want to be the top priority. We have to understand this. Then Jesus gives us this little one sentence parable that we better pay attention to. Anyone who puts a hand on the plow and then looks back is not fit for the kingdom of God. Once we commit to Jesus, we can't keep looking back and trying to do things our way. If we do, we just might miss our target. The plow Jesus is referring to would have been pulled by a team of oxen. But it works the same way with a car or even just walking. Try this experiment. Pick a point about 100 meters or 100 yards away. Start walking toward it. Stay focused on it. You can probably walk a pretty straight line toward it. Now look back over your shoulder for a count of 10. Now stop, you can see very quickly how far off course you are. The more you look over your shoulder the farther off course you get. Following Jesus is the same way, if we take our focus off Jesus, we will miss the target. Or as Jesus said, we are not fit for service in the kingdom of God. Now don't miss this point please. The only people in the Kingdom of God are in service to God. You can't be in the kingdom of God and not be in service to the king. So, if you are not fit for service, then you are not going to be in the kingdom of God at the end. No happily ever after. Jesus will tell you; you are not fit to be here. I never knew you, depart. Don't be in that group please.

**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 prepare right now, we might miss it. If we don't use the things God has given us the way God wants them used, we might not get that happily ever after, and if we lose our focus on the king, king Jesus we will probably miss our target and Jesus will tell us "we are not fit for service in His kingdom. Depart. Get prepared, focus on God. Put God first in everything you do, so that someday when you face Jesus, He will say. Well done good and faithful servant.

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.