

# Kingdom of Heaven

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Welcome to this presentation from the Downey Seventh Day Adventist Church. We are located in the greater Los Angeles area at 9820 Lakewood Boulevard in Downey, California. We would love to have your worship with us any Saturday you are in our area.

Don't we have the best kids story team? I think I've mentioned this before, but I was already ripping their stories off before I even came here. I mean, borrowed, not ripping, borrowed without asking. Thank you, everyone. For Kids story team. We appreciate you. Thank you.

Let's begin with prayer. Father in heaven. As we continue our series, Lord and Matthew be with us. In Jesus name. Amen.

All right. Anybody know who Tia and Tamara Mallory are? Okay, some of you, those of you who answered are probably older because well, you got to be a little older, know who they are, right? Well, if you grew up in the 80s, or 90s, you know, that they were stars of the web show, Sister Sister. And when they were I believe they were 19 years old. They were being interviewed. And I don't remember what the exact question was. But one of them responded with a lot of girls expect this Prince to come into their life, as a white as a white horse and make everything wonderful. And then with the Lord told me is first you have to get right with me. And then I will send the right person, obviously, you know, when you're talking. When you're 19, you generally talk about, you know, boys and girls, and, and here, you know, this comment actually isn't so much about dating as far as what I took from it, but more of actually the proper approach in life. Seek first the kingdom of heaven. And all of these things will be added to you. In the book of Matthew, depending on the version, I think in the in the King James Version, the kingdom of heaven, as mentioned 32 times. This idea of Kingdom is a major narrative and major theme that as you read, the book of Matthew just jumps out.

Now, before Bill talked about basically the fulfillment of the Old Testament, that of the Messiah that will come we last week, we talked about the Messiah being the divine King, and the king cannot rule on this. A king has a kingdom. God has the kingdom of heaven. And in the book of Matthew, Matthew is centered around this theme of the good news. All right, the book of Matthew is centered around the good news of the kingdom of heaven. And just real quickly in Matthew 4:23. It says Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and disease among the people. And 9:35. It says Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of heaven, and dealing and healing every disease and sickness. And then finally, in 24:14, it says, In this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

What do these three verses have in common? Anybody? They're in the book of Matthew. Yes. There's an element of teaching, of preaching, and of healing. In fact, even you know, when Jesus gives the, his mission statement, of what he is calling the disciples to do is to in Matthew 20, to teach, preach, baptize to make disciples and in line with this idea of the good news, the gospel of Jesus Christ to be shared throughout all of the world. Now, Matthew uses the kingdom of heaven, if you look to, to Mark and Luke, they tend to use the kingdom of God and basically they're synonyms. But Matthew is writing to a Jewish audience. And if you were a good Jew, you didn't even want to mention the word God, so he changes it to heaven. They have such a reverence for God to even think about saying God's name is like, well Let's, let's call it the kingdom of heaven.

Now George Knight, which by the way, I got to give credit a bunch of what I'm going to be talking about, I'm basically borrowing from him. But he says, The good news is that the rain or the rule of God has arrived in history through the presence of Jesus, amen. And so last week, we talked about Jesus being the Messiah, Jesus, God coming down from heaven to earth. Jesus was amongst his people, he taught he preached He healed. yet this kingdom that he talks about, is this kingdom present? Or is it future? Often times, we think about the kingdom of heaven, we always think about the future, all going to heaven, right. But in Matthew's gospel, the kingdom is not just future. The kingdom is both present, and future. Now, we're going to go through a couple of verses, quickly as well. And, you know, it didn't strike me that this concept until I was I was you know, I was in college and and then really think it really kept me as I was preaching on the Lord's Prayer fact, let's go to let's go to Matthew 6. Let's go to Matthew 6:9 and 10. Are we all there? Alright, so it says this, then is how you should pray. This is the beginning, Jesus is teaching his disciples to pray. And right off the bat, it says, Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, the adoration and then Jesus follows up with your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Think about that. what's what's Jesus telling us? What's Jesus asking us to pray for? Do a little dialogue. Spit some answers out? What do you think?

What do you think Jesus is trying to say here? He's what he's on Earth. Right? So should we not live here on Earth as we live? should live in heaven? Alright, so if we're going to be if we're to live now here on Earth as we should live in heaven? What would that look like? Oh, some of us are thinking I got to change some of the words I say, right? Or I think maybe I should change my driving, Thank you stop. Oh, Lord, I should probably change my diet a little bit. Should probably think a little bit more positive thoughts. Now look, let's let's be real, okay, we are we live on earth and we are sinners. yet Jesus is saying when you pray, may your lives reflect how we should live not only in heaven, but now. And, and so Your kingdom come, Your will be done. Now, there's another passage later on in chapter 12, Matthew 12:28. Let's go to Matthew 12. And, and we're going to actually read it a little bit more. But the first, the main verse that I want you to reflect on, is Matthew 28, where it says, but if it is by the Spirit of God, that I drive out demons in the kingdom of God has come upon you. Let's go. Let's go look at this picture. This, this verse in context. Now, Matthew 12, verse 22, just prior to this, Matthew includes a description he quotes Isaiah, and it's a reference to the Messiah, a servant. And, unfortunately, Jesus when he was here on Earth, unfortunately, he encountered conflict. It was usually the Pharisees and the Sadducees that gave him some grief. And so after he has been dealing With them yet again, they come

back. And in verse 22, then they brought him a demon possessed man who was blind and mute. And Jesus healed them, so that he could both talk and see. Now, if somebody who is blind and cannot talk, and then is all of a sudden, able to do so, what would your natural response be? You will be like, Whoa, or if you're Keanu Reeves. Whoa.

And they all were wondering, could this be the son of David, we talked again about the Messiah last week, the Messiah came from the line of David, right. When the Pharisees heard this, they said it is only by Beelzebub, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons. And the Pharisees were haters. I don't think I could stand to be around them, if they're gonna act like that. Something that is good is true. They're trying to turn it into evil. They're trying to discredit Jesus. And so Jesus responds with. He knew their thoughts in verse 25, and said to them, every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined. And every city or household divided against itself will not stand, if Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself, how can his kingdom stand? And if I drive out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your people drive them out? So then you they will be your judges. But if it is by the Spirit of God, that I drive out demons, then the kingdom has come down upon you. Jesus is talking about this in the present context. Or in verse 29, it says, or how can anyone enter a strong man's house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man, then he can plunder his house. See, the Pharisees are trying to discredit Jesus in his whole ministry, because they're a threat to their livelihood, their authority. We talked a little bit about this in the past. And yet, Jesus says, No, no, no, no, no, no. There's many, many passages and we're gonna, we're gonna get into them even more, I don't want to give it away. But let's just say Matthew 13, Matthew 18. It talks about how we should live in the kingdom of heaven. Okay, next couple of weeks when we talk about discipleship especially. And when we talk about eschatology. All right, the future we'll be talking more about this kingdom of heaven. So the kingdom is not just in the future, something that we should be awaiting for, but it is now. To me, that's a beautiful thought. And that's a beautiful idea. Because why should we wait to live for something in the future when we can live now?

And when Jesus this idea in Matthew, the whole premise of being centered around the good news, to teach, to proclaim and to heal. Why do we wait and not just practice these things? Now that others may know and they may find peace? They may find joy, they may find redemption? Hmm.

Yeah, not just present, but also the future. Let's go to Matthew chapter 20. Matthew 20. And rather than I've listed these verses, so you can you know, if you got the forms or if you're going to be online, you can watch these you can always have a reference. That's why I included this, but then we're gonna look at the bigger context. But these are the key verses to understand now in Matthew 20. talked a little bit about this too, in the past, just as a reminder, the mother of Zebedee son who's who has that many sons, James and John, right, some of the first disciples that Jesus called and as well, James and John, along with Peter, you know, you have the 12 disciples, but then you have a smaller circle of James, John and Peter that Jesus is, is probably closer to. So in verse 29, verse 20, mom came to Jesus with her sons, and kneeling down asked a favor of him. Now, right off the bat, I wonder what James and John are thinking. When their mom tells them to come with her and they go to Jesus, what's mom gonna say?

You ever had that experience before? Where your mom's leading you? Maybe you don't know what she's gonna say? And they're going to talk to somebody, Oh, Jesus responds with what is it you want? She said, grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at the left in your kingdom? What? In your kingdom? whose kingdom? Jesus kingdom. Right, talking about the future because Jesus, apparently in their eyes, he doesn't have his kingdom yet. But one day, they know that Jesus has been talking about this kingdom of heaven. And, and you know, I wonder did they ask mom to ask Jesus for this spot? possible? Now, we'll talk a little bit about maybe why they did that. motivation. And Jesus responds with you don't know what you're asking, Can you drink the cup, I'm going to drink and they said we can. And Jesus responds with Yeah, you will indeed, drink from my cup. But to set up my right or left is not for me to grant these places belongs to those for whom have been prepared by my father.

Now, what do you think happens when the other 10 find out what Mrs. Zebedee did? Was it met with positivity and joyful reception? What do you think you guys are doing? Why do you guys think you're so special. So when in verse 24, when the 10 heard about this, they were indignant. With the two brothers, I just love that word indignant. And Jesus called them together and said, you know, the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them, not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave, just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. There's a couple of things here that we can take from this. So we've talked about present Kingdom of Heaven. Now we're talking about future Kingdom of Heaven. James, and John's mom asked, hey, can my boys sit at your left and right? And, and Jesus says, That's up to the Father. Okay. My father. And prior to this, the disciples had kind of been squabbling about who's going to have the best seats. Even as much time as they spent with Jesus, they were arguing over who's going to have a spot in the pecking order. Now, I have to admit, we probably all at some point want to be in the top spot, right? We want the best seat, we want to be close to have influence, maybe we'll have some authority. But Jesus turns this whole paradigm of authority and spots and positions upside down. And one of the examples of the kingdom of heaven, the people that are going to be in the kingdom of heaven. What's one of the traits that Jesus is basically spelling up for them? Humility to be servants. And there's plenty of servants in, in a kingdom, right? Look at that way, especially in the in, in times past. Why would God want to serve it? And Jesus is actually alluding to the fact of Oh, you guys are going to serve me for sure. Probably not in the way that you're gonna expect it. Your lives are not going to end in the way that you probably will not want it to be. But yet these were faithful men, they walked with Jesus for three years. as servants in the kingdom, were called to humility. Now, if you if you cross check a few verses, I think it's if you go too, I think it's Matthew 27:56, Mark 15:40. And John 19:25, you realize that Mrs. Zebedee, her name is Salome, who's also the sister of Mary. Salome. I don't know how to pronounce your name. possible that she was Jesus and James and John were his cousins. When you have a little bit of that family blood together. You think perhaps maybe you get in with your cousin or your nephew, right? But the mark of the citizens of the kingdom of heaven are that of those who are called to serve. So citizens in the kingdom of heaven hauled to serve. When you look through Matthew 24 and 25, it talks about the destruction of the temple, and the our day in our when God is going to come as is not known. There's also the parable of the 10 virgins. There's also the parable of the the servants who who were to take care of the talents or the gold, right, we talked about this not too long ago in our in our stewardship series. And then at the last to close in Matthew 25, is the parable of the

sheep, and goats. All of these parables, or at least in, in Matthew 25, talk about serving and serving one another. So, kingdom of heaven is not only present, but also future. But this is also beautiful, because Jesus, our Lord and Savior is the ruler of our hearts in the present, and the future.

We follow God not in the future. But now. Amen. And because of that, God can lead and guide us in all aspects of our lives. To be led by God is one of the most beautiful things, best things that we can do. And although the journey is sometimes it's not always easy, it's going to have its ups and downs, it's going to have his challenges and things are going to happen. I've only known joy, well. There's been hardship following God. But at least I know that I am not alone.

And also because of not just in my walk with God, but I have a community here that I can lean on. And that's one of the beautiful things that we have together as brothers and sisters of Christ. The kingdom of heaven is here literally in this building, because we're called to come together as brothers and sisters to serve and to worship and to provide an opportunity to be with like minded individuals. So the question that I want to ask and something that we talked a little bit about is, is a life you're living now is the life you're living now reflect how you want to live in the future? It's a good portion, but I still think that there are things even now in my life that I know. I have to surrender it's a walk with God daily in the Holy Spirit, shaping and molding or, or like the the artists who's, who's chipping away the stone to make this beautiful creation that God has called us to. How can you serve others?

Now, Bill, were able to get the picture up. All right. Do you want to see a picture of me from 20 years ago? It's not bad. It's just it's like, wow, look, okay. Guess how much lighter I was there back then. I was 60 pounds lighter right there. Now, I was about 20. When this picture was taken, and guy on the left, name's Dwayne. When I was 14, or 15, I was told I was in the early teens class, I needed to move up to the high school class because I had graduated out a twice. idea I wanted to stay in early teens with my friends.

And I said, Fine. So I went to the youth group. When I got to the youth group, Dwayne came up. And he said, Hellow, my name is Dwayne, welcome. Dwayne's..... See I was 14 and I think he was 18 at the time. He welcomed me in. And he provided I felt good because I wasn't alone. You know, prior to it seemed like I've always been the oldest person and I was you had to be responsible. But Dwayne filled that kind of older brother perspective, in life. Dwayne was also the guy who helped me get a job to work at Camp Cedar Falls. Because of that, I was able to meet Leisa, the love of my life.

And he was also my boss, he was the boys director at the time. And Dwayne, during this time mentored me how to be a leader, especially, I think about the times when you know, when you first started, like your first real job, I had a lawn mowing business before this, but to work with others and work in an organization. He showed a lot of grace. And when I would request things that I didn't think through all we, I worked with somebody who, let's just say didn't have the best intentions and use me to try to get

what he wanted. And, you know, I was so naive and innocent back then who I still probably am to a degree. But with grace. he mentored and showed me how to do things the right way. I remember putting shingles on the sides of the flower cabins. Dwayne is always exuded love, saying, well, he always taught well. When he had to, he took he brought in family and cared for them. Because of him, I probably would not be here as a pastor. Because I was able to meet people who helped vouch for me to become a pastor, eventually. Dwayne led with grace with love. I don't I can't think of a bad thing to say about him. He loves to have fun. Earlier this week on Wednesday, Leisa woke me up and mentioned that he had passed. My first thought was why?

Why God? Why him? Why did you allow one of your best servants to go? I don't know. What I do know, though, is he was faithful. He looked forward to the kingdom. But he knew. One of the things about Dwayne was he wanted to be the best servant for God, not just in the future. But now. And he lived by what he spoke, he wasn't a perfect guy. But ultimately, I really, you know, as I was reflecting, it's like, I wasn't planning on sharing this up until this morning. But I realized as I was reflecting, it's like man, in many ways, because of Dwayne. I'm a better follower of Jesus. I learned so many lessons from him. And it's somebody that I want to emulate, moving forward. One of the things that I want to ask you as well, who is that person in your life that has been a mentor can learn and grow from take those lessons. Jesus is calling people to live with humility, to be mentors, to be leaders and to serve for the kingdom. Hall puts it best that he's we're ambassadors for Christ. And so my question how can you serve as an ambassador? How can you serve as a messenger for Christ to bring healing That God can reconcile this world. May you lead with love, Grace, empathy, courage. May God bless you. May we be the ambassadors God has called us for the kingdom of heaven.

Father in heaven, Lord, we thank you for the opportunity to God just be able to be here to worship with freedom. So many times I take it for granted that we can just come here, and the fact that, Lord we have a see, we have a family that truly loves each other. Thank you, Lord. And I pray God that daily, when we wake up as we pray, Help us, Lord, to know how to bless be a blessing to others. And that may we reflect the Kingdom Principles they've called us to live by and to be a representative for you, not just in the future, Lord, because we longed for and, and know you will come back. But until that day, may we live now as you want us to live in the kingdom of heaven. In Jesus name, amen.

Grace and peace, everybody. I love you all.