

Christ Community Covenant Church
The Story: Chapter 24 – No Ordinary Man!
Pastor Dave Scherrer - March 18, 2012

No Ordinary Man!

He most certainly was not. The scriptures record 37 unique miracles. His first miracle was to turn 150 gallons of water into a nice merlot. He cast a legion of demonic spirits from a crazed man with just a word. He taught as one having authority not the way the rabbis of His day. He fed thousands with one lunch. He healed a man blind from birth, raised a little girl from the dead and maybe his best act of all, he chased the money lenders out of the temple. Only God can make people making money run for their lives!

Mark 4:35-41 page 343

That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side." Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

What would you think of this guy? Would you be scared? Would you find him intimidating or engaging? Would you be skeptical or would you be one of those early believers?

Mike challenged us last week to try to imagine the story of Jesus without knowing the end of the story. As if you were hearing it for the first time. It is a good exercise.

The first time you see the demons scream and flee from the man who couldn't talk, what would you think? How about when he told the paralytic, "Your sins are forgiven?" Would you have pulled him aside and said, "You can't say things like that." You want to give credit to God, but maybe this guy is a trickster. If you watched him long enough you would have to ask, "What on earth is God up to?"

What on earth is God up to? God is up to a "Kingdom!"

He is turning the world inside out by teaching a new life, by showing us how to live a new life. The Jews of that day had God figured out. He was going to send a messiah who would be a great military King who would throw out the Romans and re-establish the nation of Israel as a political power. Or so they thought and then Jesus came along sharing stories and teaching truths that had a new ring of authority. Like this story that is called a "Kingdom" story or parable:

Mark 4:3-9 Page 335-336 the Story

"Listen! A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants, so that they did not bear grain. Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up, grew and produced a crop, some multiplying thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times."

Then Jesus said, "Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear."

The Messiah isn't a warrior King; He's a farmer for goodness sake.

Jesus' kingdom weapons are not armies with swords, but farmers with seeds.

And it turns out that the criteria for entering the Kingdom of God isn't defined by your bloodline (all the descendents of Jacob get a ticket for first class, everyone else is left on the runway) but by your heart. Based on this math, three out of four will not receive the Kingdom of God.

Three out of four people will not receive the kingdom of God.

Kind of scary. Jesus himself said, "The way is narrow and few are saved." He said the love of most will grow cold. Only two of the lepers came back to say thank you, so maybe even a 25% saved rate is generous. How would you feel if you heard Jesus talking like this? Sure of your salvation or maybe not so sure? Would you say, "This guy is full of himself." Or would you say, "I don't understand most of what he says but I think he is from God." Or would you be so bold as to make a statement like Peter, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the Living God."

When I was working for Youth for Christ we had a saying about sharing the Gospel with teens. We made every effort to teach the whole gospel, and we summarized that our mission was to participate in the evangelism of youth by sharing the person work and teaching of Christ.

The Person, Work and Teachings of Christ

Have you ever thought of summarizing the story of Jesus like that, because I think it helps us think of the life of Christ as more than just John 3:16. Don't get me wrong, I love that verse. And in many ways it says it all. But in many ways, John at the *end* of his book says, "Now there were many other things that Jesus did. Were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written," (John 21:25). So can we summarize the life-framework of this extra-ordinary man? I like this paradigm, coming to understand the *person, work and teachings of Jesus*. Let's unpack this for a bit.

The person of Christ can be understood in his three titles:

Person of Christ: Three Titles

Priest, Prophet, King

A prophet of God is someone who reveals God, speaks for God, and communicates to people the truths that God wants them to know. Jesus did this when he came to do the will of the Father; He also came to speak the things of the Father (John 8:28; 12:49).

In the Old Testament Moses said, "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him" (Deut. 18:15). This prophecy is quoted by Peter in front of the Sanhedrin in Acts. Jesus is a prophet, but not just a prophet. He is also given the title of Priest.

The priests were the ones in the Old Testament who offered sacrifices to God in order to cleanse of sin. Jesus was the High Priest that made the sacrifice of Himself to once and for all cover the penalty of our sin. Remember Jesus' words when he was in front of Pilate when Pilate said, "Don't you understand that I have the authority to release you and to crucify you?" And Jesus said, "You would have no authority if my Father had not given it to you."

Hebrews 6:20

Where our forerunner, Jesus, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.

This was the plan from the beginning of time, for Jesus, as the High Priest, to willingly lay down His life as a ransom for many. He was at once the High Priest and the Lamb. What a plan!

So, Jesus is a prophet who delivers the word of God to us and he is also the priest who delivers his sacrifice, on our behalf, to God the Father. And he is also *a King*. A king is someone who has authority to rule and reign over a group of people. Jesus is just such a king. He is called the King of the Jews by the Magi. And Jesus accepts that title in Matthew 27:11,

Matthew 27:11

Now Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor questioned Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" And Jesus said to him, "*It is as you say.*"

Is there a kingdom of God without a King? No. Jesus is that king. Our King and we fall down and obey him and worship him as Lord and King.

The Person of Christ is Priest and Prophet and King. But is that all that there is to talk about? Not by a long shot. It is also a great way to think of Jesus by looking at the work of Christ, His accomplishments. Theologians will sometimes talk about the "three fold works of Christ";

Work of Christ: Three Accomplishments

Those three would be our salvation, our sanctification and our healing;

Salvation Sanctification Healing

The salvation part is pretty well known. I think for most of us that is why we gather here Sunday mornings, to worship Jesus Christ who at such a terrible cost, saved us from the helpless condition of our souls. It is a good reason!

1 John 4:14

We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son *to be* the Savior of the world.

Our salvation was why Jesus came to earth. Jesus Himself said so;

Luke 19:10

For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

But it is not that simple. Saving us was only one of the endeavors of Jesus. He also works to sanctify us;

1 Thessalonians 5:23

Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Sanctification, in the Greek language it is "hagiasmos" which literally means "making holy". It means that which is sanctified is "set apart" for a special holy purpose. In the Christian life, sanctification has two parts - God's part and ours. In most things in the Christian life God plays the major role but yet we have our part to do also - which is to respond in faith and obedience to what God is saying. In sanctification, our part is to offer to God our bodies as a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1) - to consciously offer our whole spirit, soul and body completely to God so that we

devote ourselves to forever do His will and not our own. But God promises to do the heavy lifting in the process of perfecting and completing us.

God's part in our sanctification is to change us; transform us, by the power of His sacrifice of blood, His Word and His Spirit. We are sanctified by God's grace. We have to trust God to work in us. He is the One who produces godly character in us, the fruit of the Spirit and the ability to consistently overcome sin.

And still there is more, so much more. Jesus has not only saved us and sanctified us but he has healed us too. These words from the writing of the prophet Isaiah;

Isaiah 53:4-5

Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering,
yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted.
But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.

Or consider these words from Jesus;

Matthew 11:2-5

When John, who was in prison, heard about the deeds of the Messiah, he sent his disciples to ask him, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?" Jesus replied, "Go back and report to John what you hear and see: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor.

In some mysterious way not only have we been saved and set aside for God's purposes, we have been healed too. Now our job is to live into that healing. And someday we will receive our promised new resurrection body and live in heaven with Christ, freed from the curse of sin. Healed and free at last. Thank God Almighty!

And what good would it be to have all this work done for us if we didn't know how to access its transforming power? So we can look to his teachings to help us understand his person and work. And his teaching is about living in the Kingdom of God.

The phrase, "Kingdom of God," occurs 66 times in the scriptures. Things like;

Mark 1:14

"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel

The teachings of Jesus can best be understood as Kingdom Truths and we want to finish by looking at three of these

Teachings of Christ: Three Kingdom Truths

Video

The Price of the Kingdom
The Power of the Kingdom
The Peace of the Kingdom

Matthew 13:44-46

"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field. "Again, the kingdom of heaven

is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.”

In these little parables he is telling us that the way is narrow and few are saved, but here is our hope! We follow after him hard, with God’s grace empowering us. Nothing stops us from following Christ because we know that nothing is as precious as the Rule and Reign of Jesus.

But there is more, always more. Not only is the Kingdom precious but it is filled with Power as well – mysterious power that we cannot ever fully comprehend;

Mark 4:26-29

He also said, “This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. All by itself the soil produces grain—first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come.”

Scientists like to say they have figured everything out but I am not so sure. I think Jesus is onto something. When he says “Night and day, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how.” He is referring to the mystery of life from death. Remember Jesus also said, “Amen and amen, I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.” Who can understand the power of the Kingdom of God? Our job is to live in it and release it by faith. And doing this we will find peace, the peace of the Kingdom of God that passes understanding;

Matthew 6:25-27

“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?”

This is certainly no ordinary man. When we take the time to study Him and his work and his teachings, he only gets even more mysterious and engaging. I have heard some say, I don’t believe in Jesus as God – maybe as a teacher or moralist. But I can’t buy the God part of him.” CS Lewis had a good response to this thinking;

I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: "I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept His claim to be God." That is the one thing we must not say. A man who said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic--on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg--or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to. *C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity*

He was either who He said he was, God in the flesh following the will of the Father or he was crazy or a bold faced liar.

Lunatic, Liar or Lord?

This was no ordinary man!
Yet chapter 24 of the Story ends kind of sadly. After all this victorious living and hard teaching we read on page 350 that **“From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him.”**

This week, today, will you set your heart, soul, mind and strength on following Him well?

Here is a man who was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman. He grew up in another village. He worked in a carpenter shop until He was thirty. Then for three years He was an itinerant preacher.

He never owned a home. He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never had a family. He never went to college. He never put His foot inside a big city. He never traveled two hundred miles from the place He was born. He never did one of the things that usually accompany greatness. He had no credentials but Himself...

While still a young man, the tide of popular opinion turned against him. His friends ran away. One of them denied Him. He was turned over to His enemies. He went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed upon a cross between two thieves. While He was dying His executioners gambled for the only piece of property He had on earth – His coat. When He was dead, He was laid in a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend.

Nineteen long centuries have come and gone, and today He is a centerpiece of the human race and leader of the column of progress.

I am far within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched, all the navies that were ever built; all the parliaments that ever sat and all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man upon this earth as powerfully as has that one solitary life.