

Kingdom People - Luke 9v1-27

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Preacher: Jonny Grant

[0 : 00] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

When Jesus had called the twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases. And he sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.

He told them,

[3 : 11] And he said,

What good is it for a man to gain the whole world and yet lose or forfeit his very self? If anyone is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.

I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God. Thank you.

Well, we're going to look at that section together. We're not going to cover every verse or every aspect of it. Rather, I'm going to try and trace a theme that we see throughout these first 27 verses of chapter 9.

So if there's anything that you want to come back on afterwards, please do talk to me. Ask questions if it weren't covered or you're not sure. But we're going to pray now and ask for God's help.

[5 : 55] Father, we need your help not only to understand these words written to us, but we need your Holy Spirit to give us understanding in such a way that it changes our lives.

And we become people that love you, worship you. People who can say Christ is enough.

People who are willing to give their life, willing to die for Christ. That's a hard thing to be able to do.

And so we ask that your word would equip us and shape us and lead us in the way that you would have us to be. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen. I want to start by telling a story. It's a little parable kind of story called The King and His Kingdom by somebody called Kel Richards.

[7 : 23] Once upon a time, long ago and far away, there was a happy kingdom that was to be found in a happy valley. It had a stream that burbled and bubbled with fresh mountain water from the melting snow.

It had lush green grass. It had cows that gave lots of milk and sheep that grew lots of wool. The fruit trees were always packed with the most delicious fruit.

And the vegetable gardens were always bursting with fresh vegetables. But there was a murmuring and unhappiness in this valley. And one day, the people sent a delegation to see the king.

What on earth are you unhappy about? Asked the king. Aren't you comfortable, well-housed, well-closed and well-fed? Isn't the climate constantly delightful?

They all agreed that this was true. And yet they had one complaint. Namely, that in this whole kingdom, there was only one king. There was only one person who could issue royal decrees, make laws, give orders to the royal constabulary, and write checks on the royal bank account.

[8 : 38] Is it right, they asked, that all this should be the sole prerogative of one man, and his only by right of royal birth? Well, a little more than royal birth, the king reminded them.

I have designed and laid out this valley and paid for all the buildings and facilities that you enjoy. They sheepishly agreed that this was true. And yet they were unhappy.

Well, asked the king, what do you want? We all, they answered, want to be kings. And queens, added the women.

And princes and princesses, added the children. The king stroked his chin thoughtfully and said, This is most irregular. The normal quota is one king to a kingdom.

Go anywhere and count them. One kingdom, one king. That's how it goes. Still, the people insisted. At length, the king agreed.

[9 : 43] But he warned them that it would end in tears. Every man in the kingdom was, from that moment on, a king. Every woman a queen. Every boy a prince.

And every girl a princess. At first they were deliriously happy and went around calling each other, Your Royal Majesty, all the time. But very soon the difficulties began to arise.

When King Fred issued a royal decree that it was Queen Ethel's turn to do the washing up, She issued a counter decree saying that it was his. It often led to raised voices.

When King Fred ordered the royal constabulary to arrest King Frank next door because he annoyed them with his saxophone practice, Well, King Frank issued a counter decree ordering the king that King Fred be arrested instead on the grounds that he was a general nuisance.

It came to blows. In fact, it all ended in tears. Just as the king, the real king, had said it would. If only we could go back to the way things were before, they lamented.

[10 : 56] Now that story reflects the history of the world. And that history is recorded for us in the true story of the Bible.

We know how the story of the Bible opens with this good and beautiful world. God is the one true king and we are his subjects.

Everything we need is provided. It is satisfying and fulfilling. But instead of God being king, we want to be the king. We want to decide what is right and what is best for us.

And when we turned against God, everything was cursed. It all ended in tears.

Just as the king said it would. And the world that we live in today is very different. It's a broken world. We saw that, do you remember, back in chapter 8? The destructive storm.

[11 : 59] The demon-possessed man. The sick woman. And the dead girl. Rather than peace and harmony, there's chaos and disorder. If only we could go back to the way things were before.

Well, that's the message of Jesus as he begins his ministry. Have a look back at chapter 4, verse 43. Chapter 4, verse 43.

It's a little summary of what Jesus came to do. Chapter 4, verse 43.

But Jesus said, I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent. The good news, the good news of the kingdom is that there is a way for things to be put right.

That God is coming and God can and he will establish his kingdom. So Jesus made it his priority to tell people what God would do.

[13 : 14] Have a look at chapter 8, verse 1. Again, we get another little summary statement of Jesus' mission and purpose. Chapter 8, verse 1.

After this, Jesus travelled from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God.

So three things we're going to look at this morning about the kingdom of God, about God's plan to put things right.

First, the beauty of the kingdom. God's kingdom is all about God coming to establish his rule, a rule that is beautiful and good for his people.

And it's seen in two ways. First, in reversing the curse. Let's have a look at chapter 9, verse 1. When Jesus had called the twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons, to cure diseases, and he sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.

[14 : 30] Down at verse 6. So they set out and he went from village to village, preaching the gospel and healing people everywhere.

Now, preaching the kingdom, we get that phrase in verse 2. And then if you notice in verse 6, we get a different phrase that says, preaching the gospel.

Now, preaching the kingdom and preaching the gospel are not two different things. They are the same message. It's the good news that God has not ignored this world, that he's not given up on its people.

In fact, his heart breaks for the people and he longs to put it right. But at this stage, we've got to remember where we are in the order of things.

Jesus has not yet died on the cross. We're going to get to that in a minute. So when the disciples go out to preach the kingdom or preach the good news, it's a partial message.

[15 : 33] It's not the full message about turn to Jesus and repent because he died for you on the cross. That hasn't happened yet. So they're preaching the good news of the kingdom, a message that God is coming to put the world right.

And God is going to establish his rule. This was a promise that God had made throughout the story of the Bible. The prophet Isaiah spoke about what God would do.

On this mountain, this comes from Isaiah 25, on this mountain, he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all people. Literally, he will destroy the curse upon all peoples.

The sheet, the curse that covers all nations. He will swallow up death forever. The sovereign Lord will wipe away the tears from all faces.

It's a beautiful picture of the curse being reversed, of establishing a kingdom of beauty. So as Jesus sends his disciples, they are proclaiming the kingdom, they are preaching the good news that God is coming to put things right and to demonstrate, to prove that God will do what he had promised.

[16 : 57] They drive out the demons, they heal the sick, and they cure diseases. And as they do this, in some ways it's a picture of the curse being broken, of the curse being reversed.

God coming to establish his kingdom, a kingdom where there will be no more evil, no more sickness, a kingdom of beauty.

But not only is he going to remove the curse, but they will enjoy God's blessing. As the crowds began to follow Jesus and the disciples, have a look at verse 11, halfway down into verse 11.

We're told that, as the crowds came and followed him, he welcomed them and spoke to them about the kingdom of God and healed those who needed healing.

But there's another problem. Something else arises, verse 12. Late in the afternoon, so after Jesus had finished his speaking, the twelve came to him and said, send the crowd away so that they can go to the surrounding villages and countryside and find food and lodging because we're in a remote place here.

[18 : 19] There's no Lidl's or Aldi's out here. We can't buy anything. Go away and find some food somewhere else. Lots of people and no food.

Verse 14 tells us that there were about 5,000 men, not counting women and children. So there's a huge number of people gathered. But for Jesus, this becomes an opportunity to teach the crowd about what the kingdom of God is like.

The miracle that follows points to what God's kingdom is like. Verse 16. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke them.

Then he gave them to his disciples to set before the people. They all ate and were satisfied and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over.

There is an abundance of food here. Verse 17 tells us that everyone is satisfied. They're all sitting down, lying down on the grass, holding their big bellies.

[19 : 33] They've had enough, more than enough, seconds and thirds. In fact, there's so much food, there are twelve basketfuls left over. Now, food and feasting are used throughout the Bible to describe the blessing of God's kingdom.

A kingdom where people are truly fulfilled and satisfied, not just in the physical sense, but spiritually. God had promised through Isaiah, the same chapter in Isaiah, God said this, on this mountain, the Lord Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine, the best of meats and the finest of wines.

And here we have Jesus welcoming the crowds, calling the people to himself. Okay, they don't have meat and wine, they've got bread and fish, but I still think we get the point, don't we?

They're all feasting together. There is an abundance of food. It's overflowing. And as they eat, they are satisfied because in the kingdom of God, we are truly filled and satisfied.

In God's kingdom, we are blessed. This is the beauty of the kingdom. So God has come to put all things right.

[21 : 13] He has come to establish his kingdom, to bring his rule, a kingdom where the curse is going to be removed and in place of that, the blessings are going to flow.

So, the kingdom of beauty. Second, the suffering of the king. As God had promised to establish his kingdom, he had also promised a king who would rule over that kingdom.

We see this in verses 18 to 20. Let's read verse 18. Once when Jesus was praying in private and his disciples were with him, he asked them, who do the crowds say I am?

You remember that back in verses seven and eight, Herod was also asking the same question as news was filtering back. And verse 9, he's asking, who is this that I hear such things about?

And so Jesus is asking the crowd, well, who do people say I am? Verse 19, they replied, well, some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah. Still others, that one of the prophets of long ago has come back to life.

[22 : 35] These were the rumours that were spreading about Jesus. But he's not interested in what other people think. he wants to know, what do you think? What about you?

He asked. Who do you say I am? Peter answered, the Christ of God. Jesus is the Christ, or some of your translations might have the Messiah.

Christ and Messiah mean the same thing. It means the anointed one. So in the Old Testament, kings were anointed as a means of setting them apart for a particular task of ruling.

But God had always promised that he was going to send his anointed one. He would send the Christ, the Messiah, the true and ultimate king.

So when the birth of Jesus was announced, remember what the angel said? You can have a look back. Chapter 1, verse 32. Chapter 1, verse 32.

[23 : 45] This is what the angel said as Jesus was being announced that he would be born. He will be great and we be called the Son of the Most High, a title reserved for God alone.

The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever. His kingdom will never end. Jesus is God's king.

And Jesus has proved to be God's king by what he has been doing. If we go back to chapter 9, verse 1, we read that when Jesus called the twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out the demons and to cure diseases.

Not only did Jesus calm the storms, destroy demons, heal the sick and raise the dead, but now he gives power and authority to his chosen disciples, his apostles, to go and do the same.

Now, it's not every day that we meet someone who claims to be God's king. But Jesus does. And when Peter announces that Jesus, well, you are the Christ, Jesus doesn't back off and reject the title and go, oh, no, no, no, that's not for me.

[25 : 10] He welcomes the title. Now, some people don't like to think of Jesus in this way. They like to think of him rather as just a good man or a great teacher.

It's easier to handle. But if we are unconvinced as to who Jesus is, listen to this comment from the author C.S. Lewis.

It's a well-known quote. You may have heard it before. A man who was merely a man and 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.

[26 : 19] But let us not come with any patronising nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.

Jesus is king and we need to worship him as king. Sorry, I missed out part of the quote there for you.

Well, if Peter got Jesus' identity right, then why did Jesus want to keep a lid on it? If you look at verse 21. So Peter has got Jesus right.

Yes, you're the Christ. And then Jesus responds, verse 21, Jesus strictly warned them not to tell this to anyone. Why does he, if he's wanting people to know who he is, why is he on the other hand telling people, don't tell everybody that I'm the Christ.

Keep it quiet. Well, you see, as far as the disciples were concerned, the Christ was going to come in military might.

[27 : 28] Jesus was coming to fight off the enemies, kick the Romans out and set up a kingdom for God's people and just for the Jews. But Jesus was not coming to start a military revolution.

He was coming to bring about redemption, to welcome all kinds of people because for Jesus, the real enemy was not Rome and the authorities, but sin and Satan.

But perhaps even more shocking was the way in which Jesus would bring redemption, verse 22. Then he said, the Son of Man.

Now, Son of Man, there is again another title. It comes from Daniel 7 and it's one who comes with absolute power and supreme authority. So Jesus is saying, me with all power and all authority must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests, teachers of the law and he must be killed.

And on the third day be raised to life. Now, there's a conflict there, isn't there? Kings don't get defeated.

[28 : 53] They are victorious. If you're in power, you don't suffer and die. You fight with power and you kill your enemies. So what's going on?

Well, Jesus is pointing us ultimately towards his death. You see, it's through the death of Jesus that we get to enter God's kingdom.

As Jesus would die on the cross, as he is hanging there on the cross, he is taking the curse for us so that we might receive the blessings.

Because people like you and I have rejected God as king, we deserve the curse of God. We deserve to be kept out of his kingdom. We deserve to die.

But in love, Jesus comes and he takes the curse for us. And in its place, the blessings will flow to us.

[29 : 54] You see, if Jesus does not die, then we are left under the curse. We are without blessing. If Jesus does not suffer for us, then we can never know and experience the kingdom of God.

There is no other way. Jesus must suffer. Jesus must die. But the disciples haven't grasped it.

They can't get their head around it. So he tells them, don't tell anyone. They must first understand that Jesus must die. That's why he says in verse 27, I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God.

As the crowds were listening, as the disciples were listening, Jesus was saying, look, when I die and as I rise from the dead, the way will be opened into the kingdom of God and all who come to me will experience, they will taste and they will see and know the kingdom of God.

So first, we have the beauty of the kingdom. Second, the suffering of the king. And then third, the people of the king.

[31 : 23] Look, if God has given to us the beauty of his kingdom, if he has given to us a king who gives his life for us so that we can experience this kingdom, then there is only one way that we are to live in God's kingdom.

first, we must put self to death. Look at verse 23. Then Jesus said to them all, if anyone would come after me, he must deny himself.

He must deny himself. To deny oneself does not mean we must give up nice food, downgrade the house that we live in, stop enjoying the pleasures of life.

No, it's not about abstaining from luxuries. It's much deeper and more radical than that. Here's a quote on the screen. I think it's all on one page here.

You can follow along. John Stott put it like this. To deny ourselves is to behave towards ourselves as Peter did towards Jesus when he denied him three times.

[32 : 52] Peter disowned Jesus, repudiated Jesus, turned his back on Jesus. So self-denial is actually denying or disowning ourselves, renouncing our supposed right to go our own way.

You see, I want to go my own way. I don't like to do things that get in the way of my plans, my desires, my ambitions.

But there's no place for this kind of living in the kingdom of God. We need to put that attitude to death. Look at verse 23 again.

Jesus said to all of them, if anyone must come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.

To take up the cross is that picture of literally taking on your back that wooden beam that Jesus carried as he walked through the streets.

[34 : 02] The cross is where executions take place. It's where people are put to death. It's bloody and it's violent. And Jesus is saying this is what we must do on a daily basis.

We must put self to death just as Christ must be killed. So we must crucify our me centredness.

Nail ourselves to that cross. when I'm asked to serve or to help there's no problem in giving reasons as to why I can't.

My favourite TV programme is on tonight. Well, I've just had a very busy day and I just want to sit down. I've got things to sort out at home.

Well, if you really knew what my life is like, it is just full of serving. I deserve a break. But the problem is it's all me and I.

[35 : 11] It's all about my comfort and what I want. Well, in the kingdom of God, we need to continually repent and put ourselves to death.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote a book called The Cost of Discipleship. He was a German pastor, ended up in the concentration camps where he died. And his book, The Cost of Discipleship, says this.

It really sums up the whole theme of the book. He says, the cross is laid on every Christian. As we embark upon discipleship, we surrender ourselves to Christ in union with his death.

We give over our lives to death. When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die.

When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die. Second, not only to put ourselves to death.

[36 : 26] If we do that, we are then to live for Christ. Look at verse 26. Jesus says, if anyone is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.

it's a call to live for the glory of Christ. You see, most of the time, I want to live for the glory of Johnny. I decide what I want to do on the basis of, well, does it promote me?

Will how I spend my time and use my money, will it benefit me? Is it going to bring more happiness and bring more comfort to my life?

But if self has been put to death, if Johnny has been nailed to the cross, then there is no longer any I or me, all that is left is Christ.

You see, to follow Christ as king means I want to seek his desires and serve his priorities. In summary, it's living for his kingdom, not Johnny's kingdom.

[37 : 51] Three things, very simply, that will help us to live for the glory of Christ. Here's the first one. Pray for the expansion of God's kingdom.

Pray that the good news of God's kingdom, that his kingdom will be proclaimed to all people in all places, starting with those you live with and work with.

That they may hear the good news that God has not given up, he will put things right, and he has put his king in place, a king who has died for us, so that we might experience his kingdom.

Pray for the expansion of God's kingdom across this land and across this world. Here's the second.

Give of your financial and material resources to God's kingdom. Give not what is left after you have taken what you want and what you want to do with it, but give sacrificially at cost to self.

[39 : 10] A little person just asked me just now, they said, why does Jesus get all the money? He's referring to the collection.

Great question. And I just simply said, well, it's to help people hear about Jesus, to support people who are telling others about Jesus, to see the kingdom of God grow.

God has blessed you if you are working with the resources that you have. But if you are in God's kingdom, they are a gift to be good stewards, to use for his purposes.

And third, let's live our life for God's kingdom. You know, everything that we have, everything that we hold dear, the things that are most precious to us, even the people that are dear to us, our loved ones, those that we are sitting beside this morning, it's all temporary.

Nothing is going to last. The homes we live in, the cars we drive, the people we love, it'll all go. But the kingdom of God is eternal.

[40 : 32] The kingdom of God is eternal. God is so dedicate our life, commit your life, invest all that you are to what will last.

Pray, give, and live. Why? Well, look at verse 24.

For whoever wants to save their life will lose it. Whoever wants to save their life will lose it.

But whoever loses his life for me will save it. What good is it for a man or woman to gain the whole world and yet lose or forfeit his very self.

The beauty of the kingdom, the curse removed, the blessings flow, the suffering king who dies for you and for me and gives his life so that we might enter into his kingdom.

[41 : 47] He has given us all that we need so that we will be fulfilled and satisfied for an eternity. Our response, give your life, lose your life for that which will never be lost, the kingdom of God.

Let's pray. as we pray, you might just look at the screen, those three statements that we finished with, pray, give, and live.

Let's just have a moment's quietness to reflect and ask God that he would help us to live these things out in our lives if we're on our own, or if we're married here today, how we can do it together.

Amen. the kingdom of God is the very best place to live because it is with the King, the Lord Jesus from whom all blessings flow thank you that through Christ we may enter your kingdom and experience life with you and look forward to the fullness of that kingdom when you return and as we wait

Father we pray for the building and extending of your kingdom that the people you have placed around us will become part of that kingdom as they hear the good news of Christ Father, thank you for blessing us materially and financially may we have a light grip of the resources that you have given to us may we give and may you continue to give to us so that we can give even more to the kingdom of God and Father would you help us to live our lives for that which is eternal to invest in the kingdom of God which will last for all eternity help us we pray in Jesus name

[44 : 51] Amen we're going to sing from heaven you came which talks about the King the servant
King the Lord Jesus but the chorus this is our God the servant King