

Pleasant Valley
Church of Christ

3317 Amidon
Wichita KS 67204
(316) 838-4195
www.letjesusleadus.org

Schedule of Services

Sunday

Classes 9:30 am
Worship 10:30 am
Evening 6:00 pm

Wednesday

Classes 7:30 pm

The Pleasant Valley Church of Christ is a non-denominational group of believers who are committed to following Jesus in our attitudes, our relationships, and our worship. If you want the same thing in your life, please contact us. We'd like to help.

Unless otherwise noted, all scripture quotations are from the New King James Version Bible, Thomas Nelson Publishers.

Wings



*"But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles" (Isaiah 40:31)*

May 24, 2009

The gospel of the kingdom

by David King

"And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people" (Matt. 4:23).

This verse provides a summary of the work of Jesus early in His ministry. It describes the location of His work (Galilee), the two primary activities that comprised His ministry (preaching and healing), and His audience (the people). The rest of Matthew's gospel just fills in the details of this basic outline.

We are concerned here about the content of Jesus' preaching. Matthew says that He preached "the gospel (good news) of the kingdom." What did that preaching consist of?

Some are quick to argue that since "the kingdom" is a synonym for the church, Jesus must have been preaching about the church that He would establish later. Some even go so far as to assert that Jesus was teaching people about the worship, work, and organization of the institution that He would later build. Certainly Jesus spoke of building His church (Matt. 16:18), and sometimes in the New Testament "the kingdom" refers to the church (Col. 1:18, 23). However, it is curious that in the four gospel accounts we read very little of such details.

So what was this gospel of the kingdom that Jesus taught? Look more closely at Jesus' use of "kingdom" in the gospels, and it is clear that Jesus used the term in a broader sense to describe the rule of God in the lives of men. For example, His statement that "the kingdom

of God is within you" (Lk. 17:21) certainly fits that definition much better than trying to force the church into the context.

Actually, if we stay within the context of our opening verse, we can find a good description of what the gospel of the kingdom consisted of. Notice that this verse is followed immediately by Jesus' famous Sermon on the Mount (ch. 5-7). In this sermon Jesus taught about the importance of maintaining good attitudes, how to build healthy relationships with others, and the need for keeping our priorities straight. He addressed issues like hypocrisy, worry, marriage, suffering, money—things that comprise the everyday lives of ordinary people. It was the kind of practical teaching that would have a profound impact on the personal lives of those who sought to follow it.

To be sure, the gospel of the kingdom covers all that the Lord has revealed in His word, including topics such as church organization (Titus 1), corporate worship (1 Cor. 14), and of course, the most important topic of all, the death and resurrection of Jesus (1 Cor. 15). But the bulk of Jesus' teaching, and the teaching of His apostles later in their epistles, consists of instructions on **developing personal character**. Everything else plays a supporting role in achieving that end. Persuade people to rebuild their hearts and lives in this fashion, and they will not only enjoy a happier life here in this world, but will also prepare themselves for the life to come (1 Tim. 4:8). If we want to preach the gospel of the kingdom today, our teaching must follow that model.