

22.8.21 am What is the Kingdom of God Like?

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Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[0 : 0 0] Well good morning, a warm welcome to the service this morning and a special welcome to those who are visiting with us. I haven't had a proper scan around yet but I can see a few visitors with us already so it's good to have you with us and we pray God's blessing on you and us together as we seek to worship him. The intimations have been on the screen before the service began and just to note a couple of things. Obviously we've got the evening service tonight at six and the prayer meeting on Zoom at half past seven on Wednesday. On Friday of this week, that's the 27th of August, that is this week, the new group Rooted will start from 6.30 to 8.30pm here in the church building.

It's for all young people ages, well, S1 to S6 so please encourage them to go along and invite their friends. For those who volunteer to help, we will be arranging a meeting to discuss details so please speak to Joyce or Stuart for more information. Connect and Jam for the younger kids will hopefully start the week after, maybe the week after that. We're still kind of struggling for volunteers for that and so I would make an appeal that maybe some people would be able to help out with that work on a Friday afternoon. If you volunteer, that doesn't mean you've got to give a talk. You wouldn't need to be up front doing a talk unless you feel that that's something that you're able and got strength to do. It might just be things in the background. So the more people we have volunteer for that, the quicker we'll be able to get that back up and running so please be encouraged to do so.

Services next Sunday, I hope to take the service in the evening, an English service and the monthly Gaelic service will be at 6pm and I think John McSween is taking that service. You've also got the information about the Moldova Book Cave and there's a fair bit of detail there which was on the screen before the service and you can see it there again. So I'll leave you to read that at your own convenience.

So these I think are all the intimations. So let's now worship God, those of us who are in the building, also remembering those who are tuning in at home on the live stream. Together we come together and worship God and we begin by singing to God's praise the hymn, the words on the screen, Bless the Lord, O my soul, worship his holy name. So we'll stand to sing in just a moment to God's praise.

Let's sing in just a moment to God's praise.

[3 : 1 8] Let's sing in just a moment to God's praise.

When the evening comes. Bless the Lord, O my soul, O my soul, worship his holy name.

Sing like never before, O my soul, I'll worship your holy name.

You're rich in love and your soul to anger. Your name is great and your heart is guide. For all your goodness I will keep on singing.

Ten thousand reasons for my heart is guide. Ten thousand reasons for my heart is guide. Ten thousand reasons for my heart is guide. Bless the Lord, O my soul, O my soul, worship his holy name.

[4 : 5 1] Sing like never before, O my soul, I'll worship your holy name.

On that day when my strength is failing. The end was near and my time has come.

Still my soul, O my soul, O my soul, O my soul, O my soul, worship his holy name.

Sing like never before, O my soul, O my soul, I'll worship your holy name.

Sing like never before, O my soul, O my soul, I'll worship your holy name.

[5 : 51] I'll worship your holy name. Amen. Let's unite our hearts in prayer together. Let's pray.

Our Heavenly Father, we thank you for this your day. We thank you that as we join together, one with each other in the name of Jesus, we are once again reassured of the fact that you are here with us.

And we thank you that we have the freedom, that we have the privilege, that we have the desire to worship your holy name. We thank you that you are the God who has revealed your name to us.

And we thank you that you are the God who has revealed your character to us. We thank you for all that we have been able to sing of in that paraphrase of the psalm.

Of the fact that you are a God who is rich in mercy. You are the God who is loving. God who is kind.

[7 : 09] You are the God who is gracious to us. You do not treat us as our sins deserve because you, Father, treated your Son, Jesus, as our sins deserved.

And once more, we come before you and we acknowledge that you are the Holy God and that we are sinners. We do not have a right to come into your presence apart from the name and the finished work of Jesus.

And so once more, Lord, as we think back over past days, we confess that we are sinners. We confess the sin that may be weighing heavy on us.

Some of us may have come in this morning with sin that is unconfessed. With a weight on our shoulders. With that heaviness that the psalmists so often are wrote of.

We thank you, Lord, that we are not taught to remain silent when our sin presses upon us. But we are taught to confess our sin.

[8 : 23] And we thank you that we are told that you are the God who, when we confess our sin, will hear our prayers. And cleanse us from sin.

And purify us from all unrighteousness. So we pray for that even now in these moments. As you search our hearts. As, Lord God, you bring to our minds the things that have been an offense against you.

We confess them and we pray that you would wash us in the blood of Jesus. That you would make us clean. And again, Lord, we thank you for that cross.

For the strange design of our salvation that the hymn writer wrote of. Amazing love, how can it be that thou, my God, shouldst die for me?

And can it be that I should gain an interest in the Saviour's blood? And, Lord, we thank you that we come this morning with our eyes on the cross.

[9 : 25] Thankful for the open tomb. The open tomb. On the first day of the week, on the Lord's day. We thank you that that truth that changed everything.

I came to such glorious light that the Saviour died and rose again, triumphant over the grave. And pleads our cause at God's right hand, omnipotent to save.

So save us, Lord, we pray. For any here this morning who have never cried that out before. We ask that there would be some, even in these moments, that would say for the first time, Realising sin, seeing Jesus, save us.

We thank you, Lord, that when we cry that from our hearts, in an instant, because of all that Christ has done, Our souls are saved.

We are secure for time and for eternity. So we thank you, Lord, for the wonder of the gospel. For the glory of your name and your character and your finished work.

[10 : 38] And we ask, Lord, that you would help us to live our lives out in response to that gospel. Help us, Lord, to do good works, not because we think they will save us.

We know that they won't. Jesus alone saves. But enable us to seek as your people to do good works. To do the good works that you prepare in advance for us to do.

Because of our thankfulness to the Lord Jesus. Help us, we pray, to live lives which are holy. To live lives which are salty, that are distinctive in this world, that are light in the darkness.

And we pray for your people here, Lord, and everywhere. We think especially of your people in Afghanistan this morning. And we see such horror on our TV screens.

We see such darkness. So much suffering. And we know that your people are suffering perhaps the most in that country. As they are hunted down. And executed even in the streets.

[11 : 43] Lord, we pray for your protection over them. We pray, Lord, that you would continue to have your hand upon them. To give them courage.

We know that there are some who are losing their lives for Jesus' sake. And yet, the witness of the faith that they have in Christ is so bright. So even in the horrors of the darkness, we pray that the light of Christ would be seen.

And the love of Christ would be felt. And Lord, we pray that you would help us to speak. We see the courage of brothers and sisters in lands where the name of Jesus is forbidden.

And where we have freedom, we can be so slow to speak. So give us courage. Give us opportunity. Help us to speak of Jesus. We pray for the faith mission over in North U.S. just now.

As they seek to speak of the name of Jesus. As they knock on doors. As they have driving missions. As they seek to reach out into the community there. We pray for Donnie and for Gordon.

[12 : 55] And for all those who are with them. Who are with them. And we ask, Lord, that you would use them as you use them here. That you would use them over in North U.S. And that those who are lost would be sought.

And would be found by Jesus and the gospel. And those who are your people, Lord. We pray that they would be encouraged. So we commit that work to you, Lord.

And we commit ourselves to you. We are conscious always of our need. For those who are sick, Lord. We pray that your hands of healing would be upon them.

And your sufficient grace would be given to them. For those who are anxious, we pray for your peace. For those, Lord, who are confused, who are apprehensive. We pray for your guidance.

For those, Lord, who battle with addictions. We pray for your power. And, Lord, for those who are lost. Once more, we pray for your salvation. That the mercy and the grace of Jesus would be seen and heard and received.

[13 : 58] So hear our prayers. And lead us and guide us as we seek to worship you. May we worship you in spirit and in truth on this day. And we pray all these things in Jesus' name.

And for his sake. Amen. Boys and girls, it's good to see you. I think it's probably an order for you guys to come down and sit at the front here.

If you want to. If you don't want to. Your mum and dad don't want you to. Don't worry about it. But if you want to come down and speak to me. It would be good to see you a bit closer. Because you don't speak to me when you're all that far away.

So. So it's good to see you. And it's good to see you close. How's your week been? Happy to be back in school? Yes. Michael's doing the head count just now.

Just seeing everybody. Pardon? 13. 13 of us. Oh, that's good. That's good. Now, I want to show you a picture today. So if you look on the screen.

[15:08] You will see a picture of something that's new in our garden. Can you see that? So what's that? It's lights, yeah?

It's lights. It's lights. When we were away on holiday. John Angus, before he went into hospital. He was working on a fence for us. So when we came back, we didn't know.

But all of a sudden there was a fence up. And so the fence was up. And we were delighted with that fence. That we were able to sit at the side of the house. And have a barbecue and that kind of things. So, Mary's very good at organizing kind of design things.

I wouldn't think of that. But after we painted the fence, she got some lights. And she put the lights along the top two rows of the fence. So you can see them there. Now, here's the question.

How do these lights work? Not you, Lois. Someone else in the family. How do these lights work? Michael, I think your hand was up first.

[16:14] A switch. They do go on at night, yes. I don't know if they do have a switch.

Where is Mary? Where are you? I've got a switch on it. No switch. Okay, no switch. But they do go on at night. Okay, I think John Roddy had his hand up next.

Batteries. Good guess. Wrong answer. Do you want to know? There's not a remote. I think Miriam had her hand up as well.

Batteries. It was a good guess, but no. Bella? Not Bella. Sorry. They get power by the sun.

That's right. They're solar powered lights. So the way it works is, I don't quite know how it works, but I think there's wee panels in the lights or in the box somewhere.

[17:16] And when it's light during the day and when the sun shines during the day, then these panels, they kind of, this is not the right technical terms, they suck in all the light.

They kind of take all the light in and they store it up. And then when it comes to the darkness, then the light shines out. So the light is taken in during the day as the sun shines.

And then when it's dark, the lights shine out. So, that's what I was wanting to show you. And I want you to think a little bit about that. So, the Bible teaches us, well, what does the Bible teach us?

Who is the light of the world? Yeah, that's the, you knew that answer right away. Jesus said, I am the light of the world. So Jesus is the light of the world.

But that's only half the right answer. Who is the light of the world? God, yes. Jesus is the light of the world. God, the sun is the light of the world.

[18:18] Who else is the light of the world? Any guesses? The Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit. God himself, yes. The light, God is the light.

But that's only half the answer. So what's the other half? What was that Alistair? It was a sneeze. Jesus said, he was the light of the world.

But he also, when he spoke to his disciples, he said, you're the light of the world. In Matthew chapter 5, verse 14, Jesus says, you are the light of the world.

So if you're a believer in Jesus, if you've trusted Jesus, if you've asked him to come into your life. It's a wee bit earlier than that, Michael.

It was when he was speaking to his disciples in the same sermon about the prayer, the Lord's prayer that we're doing in the evening. That's when he said it. He said, you are the light of the world. Now, in this world, we know that dark, it can be a dark place.

[19 : 29] If you watch the news, if you read the papers, even in school, even the things that happen to us, we know that sometimes bad things happen. Sometimes sad things happen, don't they?

Don't they? And what is it that makes this world dark? Pardon? War is one of the things that makes this world dark.

But what is it that causes? Yes. Sin that makes this world dark. But who is the one who came to take our sin away? Yes.

Jesus. So, here's the question to think about. How can we be light in a dark world?

I want you to give me some answers on this one. How can we be light in a dark world? Michael? Michael? Be the Lord Jesus' disciples.

[20 : 28] Be the Lord Jesus' disciples, yeah. Lois? Tell others about God. We can be the light of the world by being Jesus' disciples and by telling people about God.

With our mouths. But also through our lives. Because when we look at Jesus, he was so kind and he was so loving and he was so perfect.

And so, if we want to be light in this world, we want to be like Jesus. But here's another question. Last question. How can we be like Jesus?

Because we know the answer is to be like Jesus if we want to be light. But how can we be like Jesus? How can we shine like Jesus? Trust in God, yeah.

Read the Bible, pray every day. And when we read the Bible, when we pray every day, when we trust God, he takes us close. He takes us really close to him.

[21 : 42] And we become like Jesus by being with Jesus. See these lights. See if I took these lights and I put them into a box and I put them into the shed.

Then I took them out at night. Do you think they would shine? No. Because there would be no power having got into them. And for us to be like Jesus, to be the light of the world, we need to be day by day spending time with Jesus.

In the Bible, in prayer, in church, in Sunday school, in fellowship with God's people. That light is off. But all these lights are on.

And we want to be lights that are on so people can see Jesus. Let's pray. Lord God, we thank you for this day. And we thank you, Jesus, that you are the light of the world.

We thank you that when this world was in darkness, you came into this world to be the light. We thank you, Lord, that when our hearts were in darkness, you came into our hearts when we turned away from sin.

[22 : 55] And when we trusted you and you bring your light. We pray that you would help us to be light in this dark world. Help us to be kind.

Help us to be loving. Help us to be gracious. Help us to be like Jesus. And we know, Lord, that the only way that we can be like you is when we are with you.

So help us, whether we are young or whether we are old, to be making time each day to be close to you. And we ask, Lord, that as we are with you, you would work in us.

And that you would work through us. So that people would see more of Jesus. And we pray all this in Jesus' name. Amen. Thank you, boys and girls, for listening.

We are going to sing again now to God's praise. And we are going to sing from Mission Praise 275. You can just say that if you want. 275 in Mission Praise.

- [23 : 57] And the words are on the screen. I heard the voice of Jesus say, Come unto me, come close to me, and rest. I heard the voice of Jesus say, Come unto me, and rest.
- Lay down thou willing one, lay down thy head upon my breast. I came to Jesus as I was feeling. I heard the voice of Jesus say, Come unto me, and rest. Come unto me, and rest. Lay down thou willing one, lay down thy head upon my breast.
- I came to Jesus as I was feeling. I came to Jesus as I was feeling and worn and sad.
- I found in him a resting place, and he hath made me glad.
- I heard the voice of Jesus say, Behold, I freely give.
- [25 : 13] The living water, thirsty one, Stood down and drink and live.
- I came to Jesus as I was feeling. I came to Jesus as I was feeling and I ran all that I'm giving steam.
- My thirst was quenched, my soul revived, and now I live in him.
- I heard the voice of Jesus say, I am this dark world's light.
- Look unto me, thy morn shall rise, and all I gave he rise.
- [26 : 09] I look to Jesus and I found in him my star, my sun.
- And in that light of life I'll walk till falling days are done.
- Amen. Amen. Okay, boys and girls, if you head off now to Sunday school. Thank you.
- Let's turn in our Bibles to Luke chapter 13, please. Let's turn in our Bibles to Luke chapter 13.
- Luke chapter 13, and we'll read from verse 10 to verse 21. On a Sabbath, Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues, and a woman who was there, who had been crippled by a spirit for 18 years.
- [27 : 49] She was bent over and could not straighten up at all. When Jesus saw her, he called her forward and said to her, Woman, you are set free from your infirmity. Then he put his hands on her, and immediately she straightened up and praised God.
- Indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, the synagogue ruler said to the people, There are six days for work, so come and be healed on those days, not on the Sabbath.
- The Lord answered him, you hypocrites. Doesn't each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or donkey from the stall and lead it out to give it water? Then should not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has kept bound for 18 long years, be set free on the Sabbath day from what bound her?
- When he said this, all his opponents were humiliated, but the people were delighted with all the wonderful things he was doing. Then Jesus asked, What is the kingdom of God like?
- What shall I compare it to? It is like a mustard seed which a man took and planted in his garden. It grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air perched in its branches.
- [29 : 02] Again he asked, What shall I compare the kingdom of God to? It is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour until it worked all through the dough.
- Amen. And may God bless that reading of his word to us. We're going to sing again now to God's praise. We'll sing from the Psalms, and we're singing from Psalm 25 in Gaelic.
- Psalm 25 verses 4 and 5, that prayer, as we come back to God's word. Show me thy ways, O Lord, thy path so teach thou me. And do thou lead me in thy truth, that in my teacher be.

For thou art God at dust, to me salvation send. And I upon thee all the day expecting to attend. These two verses of Psalm 25, we sing in Gaelic, and we remain seated to sing in Gaelic.

Amen. And do thou art God at dust, to me salvation send. And do thou art God at dust, to me salvation send.

[30 : 11] And do thou art God at dust, to me salvation send. And do thou art God at dust, to me salvation send. And do thou art God at dust, to me salvation send. And do thou art God at dust, to me salvation send. Israel sa SPINER Shalom CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS Satsang with Mooji

Good morning.

on yeah yeah Freiwarm water supplies, lets eat them, Amen.

Amen. Amen. If you could turn back with me now to Luke chapter 13, please.

[35 : 05] Amen. It's a short passage that we read this morning, but it's a short passage that's in a fairly sizable chunk of text.

As we look at chapter 13, we looked at the parable last week of the fig tree, and we thought about the atrocity that they were speaking about that Pilate had carried out.

And we see the text going on as well. I had intended to go slightly further today than I'm going to, but I'm just going to finish at verse 21.

But even if you look at that shorter section, there's a lot going on in the verses that we read. There's a lot of activity as we scan down there, as we see Jesus healing, and as we hear Jesus teaching.

There's a lot of opposition. There's a clash of Jesus with his opponents, as so often happened in the Gospels. And there's a lot of emotion in this passage as well.

[36 : 19] We see the compassion of Jesus as he sees this woman who has been in such a state of suffering for almost two decades, and he reaches out to her.

And we see the courage of Jesus. He stands up to the synagogue ruler. This was the most powerful man in the day, really, belonging to the most powerful group. And Jesus stands up to him.

We hear the earnestness of Jesus in preaching. And if we were to fast forward to the end of the chapter, we see the sorrow in Jesus as he weeps over Jerusalem.

So there's a lot going on in this section. And sometimes when there's a lot going on in a section, it can be hard to see the big picture.

It can be hard to see the central theme going through it. But I think the main point in this section of Scripture can be found right at the center of the passage that we're looking at.

[37 : 23] And very often that's the way it is in biblical literature. We tend to start essays with the main point. This is what I'm going to say. And you spend half a dozen paragraphs saying it, and then you bring it to a conclusion.

But in biblical literature, very often the crux of it all is in the center. So if you want to see what this is all about, you don't go to the beginning or the end.

You look right at the center. And I think that's what's going on in this passage here. The central point is addressed within a question that Jesus poses twice.

He asks it in verse 18, and then he asks it again in verse 20. Jesus asked, what is the kingdom of God like?

What shall I compare it to? So really that's the question that we're going to think through today. What is the kingdom of God like? What can we compare it to?

[38 : 24] And I think the verses that surround that question give us answers to the question, what is the kingdom of God like? And the first point, there's three points in the time that we have.

The first point in response to the question, what is the kingdom of God like? The first point is we see the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is seen in Jesus.

The kingdom of God is seen in Jesus. You know, when we think about a kingdom, we tend to think of a piece of land.

The National Geographic definition of a kingdom is a piece of land that is ruled by a king or a queen. We're part of the United Kingdom.

We can see ourselves on a map. But you could go and look at other kingdoms on a map also. Sweden, Belgium, Japan, Morocco, they're all kingdoms.

[39 : 22] And we can identify them in a geographical position. They're pieces of land. But the kingdom of God is not seen in a map.

But it's seen most clearly in the person and through the works of Jesus. Remember when Jesus was sending out the 72 in Luke chapter 10 and verse 9.

He sends them out with instructions. He sends them out with a kind of summary message. And he says to them in chapter 10 and verse 9, Tell them, that's all the people in all the surrounding areas.

Tell them, the kingdom of God has come near to you. The kingdom of God, Jesus, has come near to you. Luke chapter 11 verse 20.

Jesus, as he's performing all these miracles, he says, If I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. So where Jesus is, the kingdom of God is seen.

[40 : 34] Something of the kingdom of God was seen and it was heard and it was felt. As Jesus came into this world. And we have an example of that in verses 10 to 13.

So if you scan down verses 10 to 13 with you, if your Bibles are open. And we have this encounter of Jesus with this woman who had been crippled.

It says on a Sabbath, Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues. And a woman was there who had been crippled by a spirit for 18 years. She was bent over and could not straighten up at all.

When Jesus saw her, he called her forward and said to her, Woman, you are set free from your iniquity. Then he put his hands on her.

And immediately she straightened up and praised God. So we see this woman here. And she has been suffering both physically and spiritually, Jesus tells us, for 18 years.

[41 : 43] I think the first thing to notice about this woman is she's in the synagogue. She's in church, you could say, in our language.

She's every excuse not to be there. She is bent over. She's suffering. She's in pain. She has many valid excuses. But we see here, here, and she's in the synagogue.

And perhaps there's a word of encouragement and correction for us when we're sitting on a Sunday afternoon after having a big dinner, thinking, well, maybe I won't go out tonight. I'm a bit full.

I'm a bit tired. I had a busy week. Feeling just a little bit off color. I think I'll put my feet up and get my slippers on.

And, you know, I've got a number of excuses I can use. Well, here's a woman who has a whole lot more excuses than you and I have. But she's there. And it's good that she's there.

[42 : 48] Now, we can expect that she was there in the synagogue on a regular basis. We can expect that she had been there many times before.

But on this occasion, it says, Jesus saw her. Yes, he saw the crowds. But he saw her. And she, as we sang, heard the voice of Jesus say, come unto me.

And she comes to him. As she comes to him openly, there's a crowd there. It would have been embarrassing, we could maybe say. She likely felt conspicuous.

She perhaps was the type of person who would rather not be seen. But she heard the voice of Jesus say, come. She doesn't say, I'll come later when everybody's cleared.

No, in the moment, whilst there's opportunity, she comes forward publicly. She professes faith in Christ, really, as she comes forward.

[44 : 07] And as she comes forward in faith, we read that she finds rest. She finds freedom. She finds healing.

She felt the power of the kingdom of God coming through Jesus into her life as he put his hands on her.

And we read that she praised God, maybe for the first time ever. She praised God. Maybe week by week by week she's coming and she's snoozing in the synagogue.

But on this occasion, she's arrested by the words of Jesus. She responds to the words of Jesus. And she praises God.

And I wonder perhaps if some of us are like this woman. And week by week we come to the place of worship.

[45 : 14] Or perhaps we tune in to the same broadcast. And maybe we expect nothing very much. It's just a routine. It's something that we do week by week.

And then all of a sudden, one day, we hear the voice of Jesus saying, you, come unto me. Yes, I'm looking at you.

Come to me. If today there's somebody here who is hearing the voice of Jesus saying, come to me.

Can I encourage you? Can I plead with you to come? Whilst there's opportunity.

Whilst you can hear. Come. And if we come in faith to Jesus he will drive none away.

[46 : 22] But the same saving power that this woman felt. The same saving kingdom of God power that this woman felt coming through her in this instant in the synagogue.

we can feel. The same forgiveness. The same soul healing. The same eternal life. The same peace.

The same freedom. The same eternal health. It's promised to the souls of those who will respond in faith and come to Jesus as he calls us.

J.C. Ryle wrote this and I read it this morning. I think I'll share it with you. Ryle says let us hold fast this blessed truth and never let it go.

You know maybe there's somebody here this morning you're hearing the call but you're thinking surely not me. Listen to what Ryle says. He says let us hold fast this blessed truth and never let it go.

[47 : 32] Let us never despair about our own salvation. Our sins may be countless. Our lives may have been long spent in worldliness and folly. Our youth may have been wasted in soul defiling excesses of which we are lamentably ashamed but are we willing to come to Christ and commit our souls to him?

If so there is hope. He can heal us thoroughly and say you are loosed from your infirmity. Then for those of us who are Christians who are praying for other people Ryle says let us never despair about the salvation of others so long as they are alive.

Let us name them before the Lord night and day and cry to him on their behalf. We may perhaps have relatives whose case seems desperate because of their wickedness but it is really not so.

There are no incurable cases with Christ. No incurable cases with Christ.

So the kingdom of God is seen in Jesus. That's the first point.

[48 : 52] The second point is the kingdom of God is opposed on earth. The kingdom of God is opposed on earth. Now we think ourselves into the situation in the synagogue on that day.

Crowds are there religious leaders are there and there is this amazing miracle. A woman who's recognized who has 18 years been in this position of being sick and suffering.

She's made well in an instant. So we might expect on that day there's a celebration. We might expect everyone to praise Jesus for such an act of power and such an act of compassion but that's not what happens and in verse 14 to verse 17 we see that there is opposition.

So let's scan down these verses. We have the religious leaders and it says in verse 14 indignant angry because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath the synagogue ruler said to the people there are six days for work so come and be healed on those days not on the Sabbath.

the Lord answered him you hypocrites. Sometimes people say Jesus is a nice man.

[50 : 19] We can't call Jesus nice and kind of beige in the way he responds. He calls things straight. to the most important man in that place at that time and he looks him in the eye he turns to all the power brokers of that day and he says you hypocrites doesn't each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or donkey from the stall and lead it out to give it water and should not this woman a daughter of Abraham whom Satan has kept bound for 18 long years be set free on the Sabbath day from what bind her when he said this all his opponents were humiliated but the people were delighted with all the wonderful things he was doing.

So we see that the kingdom of God the work of the kingdom is opposed on earth it's opposed in the synagogue on this day and the reason that was given for the opposition was that the healing was done on the Sabbath day and the religious Jews had a whole catalogue of rules and this was one of the rules not God's rule but one of their man-made rules that was outlawed no healings on the Sabbath not of this type and that's what they had distorted the Sabbath into it was a day of rules it was a day of restrictions it's a day of misery but if we think about God's design for the Sabbath what was the purpose of the Sabbath well it was a day that God created and set aside so that his people could enjoy rest physical rest and spiritual rest the Sabbath was a day where God's people were given space to take time to be in his presence and here we see a woman in these verses and for the first time in 18 years she finds rest she finds rest in the presence and through the power of God the Son there couldn't be a greater higher definition picture of what

Sabbath blessing should look like and yet the religious leaders hated it because they hated Jesus and they were opposed to the work of the kingdom of God and so Jesus he takes the hits that they are filing in his direction but he calls them out on it he squares up to them and he exposes their hypocrisy and in very plain speech Jesus he says to them well you care about your donkeys don't you you make sure on the on the Sabbath day that your donkeys are not tied up but they enjoy some measure of freedom but you don't care for this woman a fellow Jew you don't care about her being set free after being in this state of suffering and imprisonment for almost 20 years that was

Jesus' argument and it was a powerful argument and the crowds loved it and the religious leaders hated it because they had no answer and they were humiliated which made them all the more determined to oppose Jesus and the work of the kingdom of God and just a word of application really for those who are Christians or those who are thinking about becoming Christians if you're going to follow Jesus expect opposition if you're going to do kingdom work don't expect a safe easy trouble free life expect opposition in this world you know even if you're a young person beginning life in the working world and a

Christian you'll very quickly realise that the name of Jesus and the work of Jesus is hated and opposed speaking to someone even this week young person with that realisation starting to bite we know a little of this here the kingdom of God the work of the kingdom it's opposed on earth it's opposed in the playground it's opposed in the workplace it's opposed on the hospital ward floor it's opposed in a cafe but think about Afghanistan think about these Christians brothers and sisters in Christ who get a message saying we're coming for you we know who you are we know that you're a

[56 : 12] Christian we know where you live we know your family we're coming for you and we're hearing stories we're seeing pictures of Christians who have been beaten murdered crucified hanging on the streets in Afghanistan because they trust in Christ pray for them pray for those brothers and sisters in Christ who are going through such desperate persecution for Jesus sake yes we feel a little of it we pray for strength when we are treated badly or swept aside or given a cold for Jesus sake but think about our brothers and sisters pray for them the kingdom of God is opposed on earth the final point is the kingdom of God looks insignificant it looks small

Jesus asked in verse 18 what is the kingdom of God like what shall I compare it to now if we were to hit pause there and just speculate over what we might have expected to come next if we had been standing in that crowd on that day and Jesus said let me tell you what the kingdom of God is like I wonder what we would have expected him to say next I think we might have expected him to say well it's mighty it's powerful we might have expected golden crowns and majesty and splendor and large scale things for Jesus to talk about I think the crowds on that day might have expected Jesus to paint some grand picture something big and impressive but instead what Jesus says I think would have taken them by surprise he tells him about a mustard seed he tells him about a little bit of leather it's like a mustard seed says Jesus in verse 19 which a man took and planted in his garden it grew and became a tree the birds of the air perched in its branches again he asked what shall I compare the kingdom of

God to it's like yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour until it worked all through the dough and this crowd that were listening to Jesus immediately these pictures would have resonated with them they would have connected with us they knew what a mustard seed looked like it was tiny it was almost invisible and yet when these seeds were planted they would grow into trees that could be almost 12 feet high and the birds would perch in the trees they would get shelter and the message is who would have thought something so impressive could come from something so seemingly insignificant and then the yeast the measurements that are in the passage here in the picture that Jesus paints he's talking about a lot of dough he's talking about just a little bit of yeast and he says to them you know when a little bit of yeast just a just a small amount is added to a large amount of dough the yeast it can't be seen working it can't be seen but we know that a bit of dough that's that size leave it for an hour it's double the size we can't see it happening but it's happening in a few minutes a bit of dough is transformed by a little yeast which can be then baked into bread and then gives nourishment and life to those who eat it the point is clear it's a simple point but it's a clear point

God's kingdom and the work of God's kingdom it may not look like much think about the occasion where Jesus is preaching Jesus is preaching in the synagogue as far as we can see only one woman is touched in the service perhaps half of them were asleep the Pharisees are raging they resolve they will rebel against Jesus with everything they have because of what he says and so on the face of it from a human perspective this service hasn't gone well there wasn't a revival no one's giving Jesus a round of applause things are going downhill from here and very often this is how it looks with the work of the kingdom of God it might not look that impressive now you compare a small gathering like this to 60 70 80 thousand football fans in a stadium that I watched last night this is small that's big but God works through the small might not look that impressive it might not appear on the face of it to be that dynamic but when God is at work even though there might not be a whole lot of fizz and pop about it we can expect great things because

Jesus is a great saviour and a great king and yet that's not what the world thought Jesus and his disciples as the crowds and the Pharisees looked in on them they were an unimpressive looking bunch fishermen and uneducated men mainly they didn't look like they were going to make much impact with their low key mission and their low budget methods Isaiah in chapter 53 and verse 2 speaking of Jesus said he had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him nothing in his appearance that we should desire him he wasn't on the front page of any magazines he wasn't getting invited to the big fancy parties he didn't have the paparazzi chasing after him he wasn't getting invited to tell a story on the talk shows of the day in the eyes of the world

[63 : 30] Jesus looked insignificant but all was not as it seemed think even about the life of Jesus think about that poem I noted down the poem that we see from time to time it's called One Solitary Life by a guy called James Alan Francis and he writes of Jesus this is what he writes he was born in an obscure village the child of a peasant he grew up in another village where he worked in a carpenter shop until he was 30 then for three years he was an itinerant preacher he never wrote a book he never held an office he never had a family never owned a home he didn't go to college he never lived in a big city he never travelled 200 miles from the place where he was born he did none of the things that usually accompany greatness he had no credentials but himself he was only 33 when the tide of public opinion turned against him his friends ran away one of them denied him he was turned over to his enemies and went through the mockery of a trial he was nailed to a cross between two thieves while he was dying his executioners gambled for his garments the only property he had on earth when he was dead he was laid in a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend 20 centuries have come and gone and today he is the central figure of the human race

I am well within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched all the navies that ever sailed all the parliaments that have ever sat all the kings that ever reigned put together have not affected the life of man on this earth as much as that one solitary life the life of Jesus the death of Jesus looked so insignificant so much of a failure in the eyes of the world and yet it's through his life and his death and his resurrection and no other way that we are saved the religious leaders for all their religion all their apparent power all their might all that they mustered to stand against them they will one day when

Jesus returns bow the knee before him and confess that he alone is Lord and the question I want to finish with because time is gone is are you with him are you with him you're either with him or against him you're either standing with this woman who's been touched with the saving power of the kingdom of God or you're standing with the Pharisees who eternally were lost because of their refusal to trust in Christ so where are you where am I are we with him let's pray heavenly father we thank you for the name that is above every name the name of

Jesus we thank you that he came to be the savior we thank you that he is the lord we thank you that he is king of kings and we pray that as we think about these verses that we've studied that we would bow before the name of Jesus whilst there is time we thank you that just as he saw the woman he sees us we thank you that just as Jesus called the woman to come to him in the gospel we are called to come so enable each of us we pray to come and trust Christ as savior enable us to bow the knee before him now and receive that salvation may none of us be in the position where we have to bow the knee before a judge who sends us away eternally give us eyes to see give us ears to hear give us hearts that will receive the blessings the salvation that come through Christ and we pray these things in his name and for his sake amen we'll sing to conclude the service the familiar psalm psalm 72 and the last three verses his name forever shall endure last like the sun it shall men shall be blessed in him and blessed all nations shall him call the last three stanzas of this psalm to God's praise his name forever shall endure last like the sun it shall men shall be blessed in him and blessed all nations shall him call now blessed be the

Lord our God the God of Israel for he alone doth wondrous works in glory in glory out of Israel and blessed be his glorious name to all eternity the whole earth let his glory fill amen so let it be and now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the fellowship of God the Holy Spirit be with us all both now and forever more amen amen