

Why worry about tomorrow?

Jesus Christ had one central message: “The kingdom of God has drawn near. Repent and believe the good news!” Those words certainly sound spiritual, but what do they mean? Let’s try and compare it to another announcement: “The kingdom of the internet has now drawn near. Repent and believe the good news!” Is not this proclamation an invitation to align oneself with a new reality, known as the internet? So too with Jesus’ message.

The one announcing “the internet” would joyfully explain how wonderful life will be while using it. Why, one can check highway directions, today’s weather, send electronic messages anywhere, instantly, find out the news, order stuff without having to drive anywhere, and pay bills, quickly, and without stamps! Assuming this “good news” sounds good to you, what would be your response? In Biblical terms, you would repent and believe. But what would “repenting and believing” look like in terms of the internet? Well, you would make plans to access the internet. In other words, you would contact Time-Warner Cable, make an appointment, and have them install internet service. In addition, you would purchase a computer, a wireless router, and “join” yourself to the kingdom of the internet!

In announcing the present availability of the kingdom of God, Jesus makes a similar proclamation and invitation. The availability of the “kingdom of God” is a reality in which God will personally oversee and take charge of an individual human life, in the same way He intimately takes charge over and rules the cosmos. “But,” one might ask, “Isn’t God already ruling over human lives?” No, He is not, at least not in the sense of that question. Certainly God is ultimately in charge over everything. But God does not lead individual human lives in paths of blessedness and fruitfulness without their personal invitation and agreement that He do so. It is like the difference between the love you have for your own children, versus the love you have for friends of your children. Certainly, you have a care and concern for the friends of your children—but the love you have for your children rises from their being part of your own “kingdom.”

The invitation to enter the kingdom of God is a promise that no matter who you are, no



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matter what you have done wrong in your past, God is willing to adopt you as His child and be your Father. He will rule over your life with all the tender regard a good father has for his own child. He will teach you, guide you, protect you, yes—discipline you as needed, but primarily make you into a wonder and glory, just like Himself.

This is why Jesus healed the sick and cast out demons. He was demonstrating the present availability of the loving power of God towards those who would have faith in Him. Jesus as the Son of God would personally lead His disciples into fullness of life in His kingdom.

This is also why Jesus taught His disciples they have nothing to worry about. Since God is personally aware of each and every bird, every flower of the field, and even every hair on their head, He will certainly see to it that their needs in this life will be met. And not in a stingy, barely squeezing by sort of way either (remember the feeding of the 5,000? Twelve basketfuls of food left over!) but in a way-more-than-sufficient manner. “Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor about your body, what you shall put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of much more value than they?” (Mt 6:26)

God has entered into a solemn covenant with those of us who follow Jesus. It is a covenant signed in blood—the blood of His Son Jesus. It is unbreakable and irrevocable. We now belong to God and God to us. Our concerns become His concerns; His concerns become our concerns.

The gospel of the kingdom which Jesus proclaimed is this very good news: that we can now enter into an eternal covenant with this great, kind God. This covenant includes our food and clothing, our healing and deliverance from evil spirits (for tribal people especially this is one of the most blessed aspects of the gospel), the forgiveness of our sins and justification before the holiness of God, the present indwelling and anointing of the Holy Spirit, our transformation of character into Christlikeness, and the persevering of God with us through all the trials of this life, passing through death itself, and beyond it into a glorious eternity, reigning with Jesus Christ in this universe forever.

So, believing this to be good news indeed, we “repent and believe.” What will that look like? Like the entering the “kingdom of the internet” we take steps to avail ourselves of this new reality. Simply put, we surrender control over every aspect of our life into the hands of Jesus Christ, with the intention of being His disciple. We trust Him to rule over all parts of our life, from family to finances, and we agree to let Him call the shots. As we proceed over time and experience, we will discover many further things to surrender to His control, almost always things we either long for or are afraid of. But that is why, in this life, the disciple of Jesus will never have “arrived.” We are on a journey, following Jesus. He speaks—we listen; He directs—we trust and obey.

Jesus said that it is the unbelievers whose hearts are filled with fretful worry over securing life, finding food, clothing, and trying to control tomorrow. And no wonder, for they have no one else providing for them, except themselves. We who trust Jesus though have the privilege of living in the present moment, free of concern for tomorrow. We abide in God and God abides in us. He is in charge for us and over us. He has promised that we will have a sufficiency—now, and forever!

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