

B. Entering the kingdom is a community project.

Miroslav Volf: “This increasing difficulty of connecting faith and life stems primarily neither from *lack of effort* nor from *the absence of skills* on the part of communities of faith and their leaders.... Part of the problem is that in a market society, *faith has a difficult time escaping the logic of the marketplace*.... But the main problem is that the communities of faith have not found effective ways to offer a compelling vision of an integral way of life that is worth living.”

C. When we live our lives this way, we become a parable to the watching world of the coming kingdom of heaven.

### LIVE THE STORY

*The following questions are designed for use in our Community Groups as an aid to growth in the Gospel and Community.*

- Discuss the Kavin Rowe quote from the start of the message. How does that goal compare with other goals leaders might have?
- Discuss: “What often prevents us from receiving the kingdom is that the power of God’s redemptive reign frequently looks like weakness” (based on 1 Cor. 1:23-25). Why is this so?
- What is the fruit that the vineyard owner looks for, or expects, from the vineyard? What does he discover instead?
- If the Pharisees, teachers of the Law, and chief priests are those from whom the vineyard is taken, to whom is it given? What might this say about what is important in the church today?
- What verbs do the Gospels frequently use describing how we respond to the kingdom, or reign of God? What does this tell us about how we are to engage the kingdom?
- Examine the verses describing how we are to respond (III, A, I, a-i), what stands out? What surprises you?
- Why is faith essential for the proper response to God’s kingdom?
- What does it mean for our lives to be a parable? Who is the “our” in the subtitle: “The Parable of Our Lives”?

## The Church: A Faithful Gospel Witness *Living Out Jesus’ Kingdom Message*

Jerry Cisar — January 24, 2021

Text: Acts 1:1-11

### Introduction

K. Rowe: The goal of biblical leadership is “to cultivate thriving communities that bear witness to the inbreaking reign of God that Jesus announces and embodies, in all that we do and are. That is our goal: Christian communities that are a picture of and testament to God’s reign.”

A. Already/Not Yet (Acts 3:21-23)

- i. The restoration of all things began with Pentecost; but can and will only be completed at Christ’s second coming.
- ii. The kingdom *has* come and yet we still pray and hope for its coming!

B. Jesus’ Urgent Message

- i. Jesus’ message about the kingdom that drove the church forward in Acts.
- ii. What Jesus said about the kingdom in those 40 days shaped the apostles’ message and must shape ours too.

### I. The Parable of the Donkey Ride (Luke 19:28-44)

A. [The Ten Minas Review]

B. Jesus goes up to Jerusalem (28)

- i. “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord.”

➤ Zech. 9:9-10

- ii. As Jesus draws near Jerusalem, He weeps. (Luke 19:41-44)
  - a) Why will they reject Him and kill Him? *Because they reject His ways.*
  - b) The money changers lives showed they had rejected his way of prayer and embraced the way of profits. They had mixed God's kingdom with earthly economics.
  - c) As disciples of the crucified King, we are called to conduct business in the world in a cruciform way!
    - 1 Cor. 1:23-25

## II. The Parable of the Vineyard (Luke 20:9-19)

### A. Background to the Parable (Isa. 5:1-8)

- i. What is this fruit which the Lord God looks for?
  - ii. The landowner in Jesus' parable is looking for the fruit of justice and righteousness, but instead the leaders of God's people in Jesus' time were "devouring widows houses" (Luke 20:47).
- B. This parable has a target.
- i. Jesus spoke this parable against the teachers of the Law and chief priests (20:19).

- ii. Who are the others to whom the vineyard is given?
  - a) The vineyard is given to the apostles, and therefore ultimately to the church, in order that they might care for the people of God?
  - b) The Vineyard and the Kingdom of God (Matt. 21:43)
- iii. *Apostolic teaching is that which is intended to bring about the fruit which the Pharisees' teaching did not.* (Acts 2:42-47)

## III. The Parable of Our Lives

- A. Kingdom Language
  - i. Scripture emphasizes our response to God's reign: *receive, enter, seek, and inherit.*
    - a) Luke 10:8-11 The kingdom made an immediate claim on our lives.
    - b) We are to pray, "Your Kingdom come." (11:2)
    - c) "Seek the kingdom" (12:29-31)
    - d) *Giving us the kingdom requires a response* (12:32-34).
    - e) In your midst (Luke 17:20 -21)

*The kingdom is always present when the gospel message is proclaimed. We have to mix that message with faith and enter into it.*

- f) Receive like a child and enter (18:17), or not (18:24-25)
    - Giving away his wealth seemed foolish!
  - g) Entering involves suffering and faith (Acts 14:22).
  - h) Leaving things for the cause of the kingdom (18:29, 30)
  - i) Inheriting the kingdom (Matt. 25:34)
- ii. These verbs help us understand how we as the church relate to the kingdom.