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The Divine Conspiracy Teaching Series
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Session 6 Outline: Kingdom Salvation

What is the Gospel? You can trust Jesus.

That's the simplest form of the gospel. The gospel is Jesus. His availability. Put your confidence in Him. Come under the rule of God. God at work in your life. There is a coherent whole of finding our life in the Kingdom of God.

Romans 8:1-14 - *"There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walked not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh God did by sending his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh..." and showed up sin for what it was.*

And the result of that is those who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit. They have deliverance over sin.

"That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit."

Is this imputed righteousness, or is it also imparted righteousness?

- The Ryrie way says it's imputed: We fulfill the law because we trust Jesus who died to pay off our sins, and we owe nothing to the law. But if you read it that way, you can't make any sense of what follows, in Romans 8.
- Romans 8 is not talking about forgiveness of sins. It's talking about life.

"They that live in terms of the flesh, set their minds on the things of the flesh."

They think in "terms of" (according to) the flesh.

- Flesh is what you can do in your own natural human abilities individually and socially. Expecting outcome from natural sources.

Those who live in terms of the Spirit (kata), mind the things of the Spirit. If your mind is set on the flesh, the outcome is death. If your mind is set on the Spirit, it is life and peace. He's talking about life.

John 3:16 is not about forgiveness. It includes forgiveness, but it is about life from above. People always think in terms of forgiveness: *"God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whoever put their confidence in him would not perish..."* (go to hell), *"...but have eternal life..."* (go to heaven).

It's about life from above. Not just what happens after you die but what happens while you are alive. The life you lead will be an eternal one. What you do will be of the Spirit so they will not be perishing. The mind of the flesh is death. That means that the things that you do (Tie this to the Romans passage) will be of the Spirit, and therefore will not be death.

The mind of the flesh is death. Why? Because it puts its focus on, it involves its life entirely with the things that are natural.

Do some inductive Bible study on these kinds of verses.

Based on this view...

What is Salvation? Participating now in the life which Jesus is now living on Earth.

Of course, that involves forgiveness, and heaven afterwards. It's not a question of omitting those. It's a question of making that the whole deal.

Colossians 3:1-4 - *"If you then be risen with Christ (participating in the life Jesus is now living on Earth)...seek those things that are above (not passive, active). Above means where God is acting in the first heaven, and beyond that of course, where Jesus is on the righthand of the Father.*

"Seek those things that are above, where Christ is seated on the right hand of the Father. Set your affections on things above, not on things on earth. Because you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."

That's now.

- Bring that together with the theme of *The Divine Conspiracy* because this is a hidden life.

John 3

[7:48]

Those that are born of the Spirit will have a hidden life, which is the real thing that is going on in them. The hidden life will manifest itself in great transformation, not just of character, but signs and wonders. The onlooker will not know what is going on. That's what Jesus said to Nicodemus... *"The wind blows where it lists. You hear the sound; you don't see it."* (**John 3:8**)

The crucial point to understanding the divine conspiracy is that a person who wants to explain signs and wonders in some other way will do that. That is a part of what God has in mind with the whole process of things here on earth - to allow people who wish to go another way to do so; but to allow people who wish to know Him to find Him. The promise in Jeremiah 29:13 is *"You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart."*

So God is present. He's present in you and in the people of Christ. Salvation is there for anyone who wishes to seek and find it.

We are participating in a life that really moves with us, and us with it. That's what we are learning as disciples. Faith in Jesus means that we have confidence in Him for *everything* - not just something He did, even suffering

for us. Everything He said about life and death is correct. Life, death, everything in life. Everything he commanded us to do is what is good for us. Discipleship is not bad news, but you have to count the cost to be a disciple. You don't just look at what you pay. You also look at what you get.

There's a book called *The Cost of Discipleship*. No-one knows the cost of discipleship who does not understand the cost of non-discipleship. How about writing a book on *The Cost of Non-Discipleship*?

What is the Gospel?

The good news that we can live now in the Kingdom of God through faith in Jesus Christ. Faith in Jesus Christ means I have confidence in Him for everything. I want to be as close to him as possible and learn from Him everything I can. I believe that all of His commandments are for my benefit. Anything He tells me to do is for my good. I will be much better off when I do it.

You can only understand that if you get the background of the Kingdom.

The Ultimate Questions that Face Human Beings

[18:00]

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| 1. What is reality? | 2. Who is well off? |
| 3. Who is a good person? | 4. How do you become a good person? |

This is a framework for genuine witnessing for Christ. If you want to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ, bring those questions to the minds of people. That's what all the philosophers and thinkers have tried to answer through the ages. That's what we want to keep before the people.

Why is the gospel that Jesus preached being omitted?

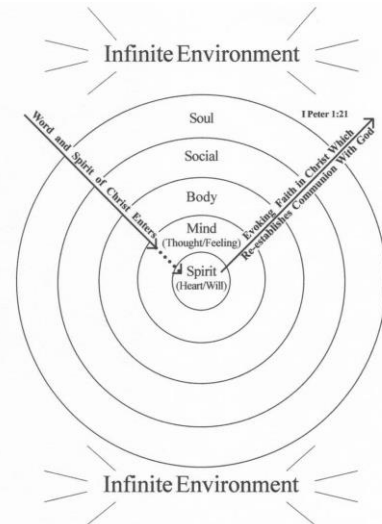
The message of Jesus was the availability of the Kingdom of God. What don't we hear more about it?

There must be an emphasis on whole life involvement with Jesus as Lord regardless of the language you use.

Three Areas of Discipleship

#1 - Learning to do the things that Jesus said.

Doing the things that Jesus said is not a matter of trying to do the things that Jesus said. It's a matter of becoming the kind of person who would naturally do them. The focus is on changing the stuff in our circle diagram. The Pharisee always fails, and winds up in hypocrisy, because they aim at the action and not the change in the person. The things that Jesus explicitly said to do are guidelines, and we need to have in mind becoming the kind of person who does that.



#2 - How to live life in the areas where there is no explicit command

This is a combination of learning how to do the things he explicitly talked about, but also how to do stuff that we have to have guidance with. We have to learn to hear the voice of Christ, listen for it and learn to follow. Learn to do the particular work we do with Jesus at our side and to hear his prompting and direction so that life as a whole is lived in the Kingdom. This includes areas of prudence as well as morality. *"What is the wise thing to do?"*

Colossians 3:16 is a whole life wisdom of Christ. This includes our business decisions, our family's financial welfare, all kinds of concerns that have to do with ordinary life that we might not think about if we just look at the Bible alone.

#3 - How to act with power in the Kingdom.

Prayer and giving are the two baby steps in learning Kingdom life. they are the two ways that we take tiny steps for learning how to act with the power of God in the Kingdom.

We ought always to be undertaking to do things we cannot do. We are meant to live in the Kingdom of God under the direction of God. That's learning to act and live in the power of God.

Why is the Preaching of the gospel of Jesus Omitted?

One idea that comes up is that Jesus preached one gospel and Paul preached another. There is no such difference. The gospel Jesus preached and the gospel Paul preached are the same. Walk through the book of **Acts** and watch how the gospel of the Kingdom and the gospel of Jesus come together. You will see them separate at the beginning and together at the end.

- This was a matter of putting a face to the Kingdom and a Kingdom to the face. People did not know what Jesus was talking about when He talked about the Kingdom of God. Even when Jesus was getting ready to leave, they were still asking the question in the wrong terms.
- **Acts 1:3** - Jesus spoke of things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.
- **Acts 8:12** - Phillip in Samaria preaching the good news about the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus. In the name of Jesus, you can invoke the action of the Kingdom. That's what they had to learn in the early chapters in the book of Acts. Here, they have learned that when you ask and act in the name of Jesus, the Kingdom comes into action.
- **Colossians 3:17** - "Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ." Acting "in the name" is important because it ties into Kingdom.
- Do an inductive study through the book of Acts and watch the Kingdom and Jesus come together. By the end, in the area where the letters were written, and the church was emerging as a separate kind of entity in the world, the face of Jesus has been put on the Kingdom, and the Kingdom is presented in terms of the King Jesus. A King always brings a kingdom with him, so they come together.

Spirituality Without Ontology Produces Legalism

[33:25]

Ontology is the theory of being, the understanding of reality.

It applies not just to God, but also to us as human beings. What really matters in us is the hidden aspect - the sources of our behavior.

We are spiritual beings. That's ontology. When we get the ontology right and the order right in the person, then we are able to escape legalism. But spirituality without ontology produces legalism. That will be Pharisaism. Religious people are often so angry and can be very mean because they are focusing on behavior - on faith and practice - and they are judging themselves and everyone else in terms of that. This produces mean and contemptuous Christians, and that things Christians have done to one another. This comes from the insistence on behavior and specific beliefs. They try to understand spirituality in terms of explicit behavior or faith in practice or explicit kinds of belief.

If we come to Jesus, we have to have beliefs about Him. But the significance of the beliefs is not so that we will be identified as having the right answers. Salvation is not like passing a test. The significance of faith is being enmeshed in reality, in the way that accords with truth. And when you do that, then your life is different.

If I believe that Jesus is the Son of God, that he was uniquely divine, I relate to Him differently than I might relate to Him just as a nice man who had historical significance and we ought to be like him. *My belief is designed to integrate my action with reality.* That's why it really matters. We seek the Kingdom in Jesus, we come to Him, we began to listen to Him, and if the Holy Spirit in the Word works the faith in our heart, then we begin to say, "*This is the Son of God. This is equal with God.*" Now we have a different kind of person that we're relating too.

We come to seek the Kingdom in Jesus and live out the righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, and we live in uncompromising obedience.

Do we have to be perfect? No. Why? We are not accepted on the basis of perfection or performing. We are accepted because of our relationship with Jesus. When I go to Heaven, they are not going to check the computer to see if all my sins have been paid for. They will see another friend of Jesus. What characterizes a disciple is not the level of their perfection, but that they are learning, they are progressing, and before very long, they are very different in how they behave because their inner being is being transformed.

An Inversion of the Two Kingdoms

[39:38]

Running through all Jesus' teachings is the principle of the inversion of the two kingdoms.

1. What the New Testament calls "the World".

- Early Christians took a stand against three things: the World, the Flesh and the Devil.
- The World is socially organized historically developing flesh. It is superintended by the prince of this world, Satan, whose primary job is to direct the ideas of this world in such a way that people are controlled by a false system of belief. One of its primary components is the way people are ranked. This is where contempt comes in because contempt is tied to the rankings.

Jesus is conscious of this and how it is tied to theology and how human rankings are identified with God's rankings. This is key.

Central to Jesus' proclamation of the Kingdom is the inversion of human ideas about rank, and the insistence that God has a different ranking: "*The first shall be last and the last shall be first.*" He's always referring to those two orders of ranking.

Wealth, social influence and having the right qualifications were very important. But Paul was one of the first who "got it," as we see when he talks about his qualifications in **Philippians 3:4-6**. He was "rich in spirit" in terms of the first Beatitude. He was on the upside in the scale of God's favor. But he counts those things as "loss" – rubbish, or worse words. What

Paul had learned was you can have all of those things and not be blessed, and you can be blessed and have none.

The things that are thought to be "up" in the human kingdom do not guarantee blessedness. What guarantees blessedness is life in the Kingdom of God. There are many scriptures about the inversion of the Kingdoms.

[49:40]

2. The Kingdom of Heaven

Luke 6 is apparently another version of the Matthew passage, preached in a different place possibly and using different formulations.

Luke 6:20 - "*Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the Kingdom of God.*"

After Jesus' conversation with the rich young ruler, he said, "How hard it is for those who are rich to enter the Kingdom of God. " (**Mark 10:23**) Jesus did not say it was easier for poor people to get in. He didn't say you couldn't get in if you have riches. He confronted the teaching that if you are rich, you are "in" with God.

When he says, "*Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the Kingdom of God,*" he's looking at poor people. Jesus reads a list of things that are regarded as bad positions to be in.

Jesus says if you're in the Kingdom of God, you are blessed even though you are in those bad positions. And you are equally blessed - you don't suffer by comparison. Is He saying everyone who is poor is saved and going to Heaven when they die? No. Poor people can be just as wicked as rich people. They can be more hung up on wealth than people who have it.

I've heard people preach that if you don't do what the Beatitudes say, you will not be saved. They miss the whole point of the Beatitudes, which is the inversion of Kingdoms and the availability of the Kingdom to people who are not "up" in the world's system, and the unavailability of the Kingdom to some who are "up" in human estimation. I've heard people say if you are rich, you will go to hell.

If you are obsessed with the issue of going to heaven or hell, you are going to have a hard time reading the Bible because it isn't always talking about that. If you read "Blessed," don't say "That means saved."

Look at the other side:

v. 24 - "*Woe to you who are rich.*" If you are rich, you are in trouble.

- I worked on this in *The Spirit of The Disciplines* in a chapter called "Is Poverty Spiritual?"

This is a huge tangle in contemporary thought and life. Huge segments of the church visible believe riches are a sign of decadence, and you couldn't possibly be rich or powerful and be right with God. That God is in favor of

poor people over rich people. All sorts of confusion largely derived from a misunderstanding of these teachings.

The Beatitudes don't tell you to do anything. They are announcements about the reality of the Kingdom of God in relationship to the kingdom of man.

How Jesus Teaches

[56:08]

Jesus does not teach, generally, by laying out general truths but by contradicting prevailing assumptions. If you're going to teach in such a way that they "get it," you can't lay out systematically a body of doctrine. You have to find ways of putting stingers into what they already believe, and so jarring them that they will not have a problem remembering it. He teaches by questioning prevailing assumptions and practices. That's what he's doing in the Beatitudes.

When He says, "Blessed are the poor", He is not saying all poor people are blessed. He is saying, "Your assumption that the rich are blessed is false." Poor people are blessed too. And there are rich people who are in real trouble.

You have to understand how He teaches if you're going to get what he says, otherwise you'll turn it into legalisms.

In **Luke 14:26**, Jesus taught that you should hate your mother and father. He was contradicting a generalization that your mother and father should determine your life - if you respect and love them, you'll do what they say.

Jesus is not teaching anyone to hate anyone. But he did realize that the interpretation of loving, which meant that you would do what your parents said even after you have grown up, had to be corrected because parents often misdirect you and you have to have a place to stand in the Kingdom of God to redeem family relations.

In **Luke 14:7-15**, Jesus goes to a dinner and watches people as they take their places around the table. He tells a story about how not to be embarrassed by your choice of where to sit. But do you think Jesus was actually concerned about that? And then he says not to invite your relatives and neighbors over for dinner, but to invite people who cannot repay you. He's addressing a general practice at the very concrete level by putting a particular case before you.

With reference to the Beatitudes, he's saying, contrary to the human expectation, the poor are often blessed because the Kingdom of God belongs to them, and the rich are not blessed because they are not in the Kingdom of God. It's all relativized to the Kingdom.

So the meaning of the Beatitudes is to be understood in the light of this great inversion. They are, primarily, the proclamation of the availability of the Kingdom. The Beatitudes don't tell you to do a thing. Look at the grammar. It's proclamation of the availability of the Kingdom. It's not guarantees of blessedness or un-blessedness. You see that when you understand how he teaches.

Two Great Questions: "*Who is well off?*" and "*Who is a good person?*" are answered in the Sermon on the Mount.

"Who is well off?" is answered in Matthew 5:2-17. It is shocking and revolutionary He has to say to those who are listening, "*Do not think I have come to destroy the law.*" You say that that kind of thing to a group when you know they're thinking that. They were thinking that because of the shocking proclamation he just made about well-being or blessedness.

In **Luke** he adds the "Woe be's." Those who have it made in the human order, may be totally left out in the Kingdom of God.

The essential message is, "*Whosoever will may come.*" (**Romans 10:13**)

Go back to **Matthew 11:11-12** and **Luke 16:16**, that since the time of John the Baptist people are violently taking the Kingdom. The Beatitudes are about that. Tie that in with Jesus's practice: he was constantly in trouble for associating with the wrong people.

- **Luke 15** – "*Now all the tax collectors and the sinners were coming near Him to listen to Him.*" Those are the wrong folks. "*Both the Pharisees and the Scribes began to grumble, saying, 'This man receives sinners and eats with them.'*" And then he told them a Parable about the lost sheep, and the lost coin, and the lost son.

The meaning of the Beatitudes is the openness of the Kingdom to all who trust in Jesus.

That's the story of the gospels - person after person coming to Jesus.

You see the remarkable generosity of Jesus in the Kingdom of God.

He's comfortable with all of them because he is solidly situated in the Kingdom of God. So He can be with anyone, He can be anywhere. That isn't necessarily always true of us; we have to grow as His disciples before we can enter into that kind of thing. But we ought to have in mind that we can, like Him, be anywhere with anyone and be perfectly safe and perfectly strong in the Kingdom of God.

Why do we constantly try to go back and civilize the Beatitudes? Why do you have people put in such effort into how mourning will save you? And how "*Poor in spirit*" is a matter of thinking you are poor? We try to translate these to fit them in the legalistic mindset of human beings.

This is actually the announcement of the stone that is cut out without hands in Daniel, that comes and crushes human order and fills the whole

Earth. (Daniel 2:45) That's the eventual outcome of the Kingdom of God. It shakes the foundations (Haggai 2:6-7) so that the things that are not eternal will disappear. The kingdoms of the world have become that of our Lord and of His Christ.

This is a very essential part of the gospel of the Kingdom of God. Because that gospel inverts the natural human orders we see about us in the wisdom of the world. *In our fellowships of disciples, we will not respect the human pecking order of values.*