

Matthew 4:12-25, 9:35-10:8
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First Baptist Young Adults, Vancouver
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Good News for Humpty Dumpty
(series: Making Maturing Disciples of Jesus)

Nursery rhymes (Little Bo Peep, Peter Peter Cotton Tail, Three Blind Mice, etc.):

“Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall.
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.
All the king’s horses, and all the king’s men,
Couldn’t put Humpty together again.”

I have good news for Humpty Dumpty! The Bible has good news for Humpty Dumpty... and for everyone who feels like Humpty Dumpty. There is a King who puts us together again.

Now when Jesus heard that John had been taken into custody, He withdrew into Galilee; and leaving Nazareth, He came and settled in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali. This was to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet:

“The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali,
By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—
“The people who were sitting in darkness saw a great Light,
And those who were sitting in the land and shadow of death,
Upon them a Light dawned.”

From that time Jesus began to preach and say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

Now as Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers, Simon who was called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. And He said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.” Immediately they left their nets and followed Him. Going on from there He saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and He called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him.

Jesus was going throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people.

The news about Him spread throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all who were ill, those suffering with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, paralytics; and

He healed them. Large crowds followed Him from Galilee and the Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judea and from beyond the Jordan.

(Matthew 4:12-25)

But when the crowd had been sent out, He entered and took her by the hand, and the girl got up. This news spread throughout all that land.

As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed Him, crying out, "Have mercy on us, Son of David!" When He entered the house, the blind men came up to Him, and Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to Him, "Yes, Lord." Then He touched their eyes, saying, "It shall be done to you according to your faith." And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them: "See that no one knows about this!" But they went out and spread the news about Him throughout all that land.

As they were going out, a mute, demon-possessed man was brought to Him. After the demon was cast out, the mute man spoke; and the crowds were amazed, and were saying, "Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel." But the Pharisees were saying, "He casts out the demons by the ruler of the demons."

Jesus was going through all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.

Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd. Then He *said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest."

Jesus summoned His twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.

Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; and James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed Him.

These twelve Jesus sent out after instructing them: "Do not go in the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter any city of the Samaritans; but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. Freely you received, freely give.

(Matthew 9:35-10:8)

What grabs you about these texts?

Matthew carefully says that Jesus' ministry was preaching, teaching, and healing. And the ministry that Jesus gives to the church is preaching, teaching, and healing. Why does he keep these three together? Because all three involve the same reality.

Jesus came preaching. What was He preaching? "The kingdom of God has come near." The usual word for time in Greek is *kronos*, which comes into the English language in words like chronology. *Kronos* is "tick-tock" time, time that can be measured by clocks and calendars. *Kairos* time, however, cannot be measured in the same way – it is "opportunity time," that special moment determined by the Living God for the fulfillment of the Divine promises. Jesus came preaching that "the *Kairos* is fulfilled!" And the Kingdom of God has come near – it is time for the in-breaking of the reign of God. It is time for heaven to invade the earth. In Jesus, the glorious rule of God, which the prophets declared would come, is breaking into the world.

Jesus came teaching. What was He teaching? He was teaching about the nature and character of this in-breaking Kingdom. Nearly everyone of Jesus' parables begins "and the Kingdom of heaven is like..." His Sermon on the Mount is all about the relational and ethical nature of the kingdom; in His sermon, He describes the new character-traits and life-style of those upon whom the light has dawned.

Jesus came healing. Why healing? Jesus came healing because the kingdom whose arrival Jesus preached, and whose nature He taught, is all about healing. It's all about the restoration of human existence. Indeed, it's all about the restoration of the universe!

We know Isaiah 53 was fulfilled in Jesus, but so was Isaiah 35:

Say to those with anxious heart,
 "Take courage, fear not.
 Behold, your God will come *with* vengeance;
 The recompense of God will come,
 But He will save you."
 Then the eyes of the blind will be opened
 And the ears of the deaf will be unstopped.
 Then the lame will leap like a deer,
 And the tongue of the mute will shout for joy.
 For waters will break forth in the wilderness
 And streams in the Arabah.

(Isaiah 35:4-6)

In His acts of healing, Jesus was manifesting the very reality which He was preaching and teaching. He heals not to prove that His kingdom has come, but he heals because His kingdom is all about shalom.

This is what the word "salvation" is all about. The words "Salvation" and "Saviour" are related to the Hebrew word *Shalom*. And *Shalom* means soundness, wholeness, well-being. To be saved means to be rescued from the consequences of sin, and to be rescued for a restored relationship – with God, with others, with our self, and with creation. To be saved is to experience well being in all the dimensions of life.

Sadly, "saved" came to mean only "save souls." Yes! But we are more than souls. Jesus saves human beings – mind, soul, spirit, body. In the Hebrew view of things, a human being is a unitary reality. That

is, body, soul, mind, spirit are different ways of speaking about the same reality. In the Hebrew world-view:

I do not have a soul, I am a soul.
 I do not have a mind, I am a mind.
 I do not have a body, I am a body.

I am, or I was created to be, a mental-spiritual-psycho-somatic whole. And Jesus saves the whole of me! At the conclusion of the movie *Titanic*, Rose says that Jack “saved me in every way a human being can be saved.” Audacious to say of any mere mortal, but absolutely true of Jesus – “He saves me in every way a human being can be saved.”

So, between the texts we read, Matthew records the Sermon on the Mount and ten deeds of Jesus. The ten deeds are concrete illustrations and expressions of Jesus’ good news. Ten times showing us what the kingdom come looks like.

Jesus touches a man with leprosy and he is cleansed. That is kingdom come.
 Jesus heals a Roman centurion’s servant. That is kingdom come.
 Jesus touches the head of Peter’s mother-in-law who has a severe fever, and she is restored. That is kingdom come.
 Jesus rebukes the winds and waves of a storm, and it become calm. That is kingdom come.
 Jesus says a word and releases two men from a demonic grip. That is kingdom come.
 Four men break a hole in their neighbour’s roof and their paralyzed friend is forgiven and told to walk home. That is kingdom come.
 A synagogue official pleads with Jesus to lay His hands on his daughter who has just died. Jesus takes her by the hand and she comes to life. That is kingdom come.
 A woman who has been hemorrhaging for twelve years sneaks up behind Jesus and touches his robe. She is healed. That is kingdom come.
 Two men who are blind get touched by Jesus, and they see. That is kingdom come.
 A man who cannot speak and who was demon possessed is brought to Jesus, and Jesus drives out the demon and the man speaks. That is kingdom come.

This is what we are told to pray for: “Father, Your kingdom come.” Literally, it is “Come Your Kingdom.”

This raises all kinds of questions. If it is true, why do we not see more? If it is true, why all the wreckage? How much of the kingdom-healing can we expect this side of the new heaven and new earth?

May I offer four “boundary observations” to help keep us on track?

1) The Mystery of Resistance. We resist the in-breaking kingdom. I am not sure why, but we do. The kingdom happens whenever Jesus is allowed to be King, which means that in order for him to be King, I have to stop trying to be king. And even when we do want the kingdom to come, we resist, for to be healed means our lives will end up changing, and we resist change. In John 5, we hear Jesus ask a man who had been lame for 38 years, “Do you want to get well?” Of course he does! Or does he? There are certain benefits to remaining broken, certain advantages to being sick.

2) The complexity of our humanity. There are many dimensions to our brokenness, and often brokenness in one dimension is due to brokenness in another. Experienced brokenness in one area may be rooted in another. So doctors tell us that much of our physical illness is but the symptom of emotional or relational, or spiritual illness. How many times do doctors say, “there is nothing structurally wrong with you”? Guilt produces physical symptoms. Guilt can make us more susceptible to illness. The Psalmist cried out “my body wasted away, my vitality was drained away, when I kept silent [about my sin]” (Psalm 34:3-4). Jesus sees the true cause of the sickness, and goes to that point. The King is working in each of us, digging deep to the root cause of our brokenness.

3) Tension in the gospel. In his preaching, Jesus uses the term “at hand” or “come near,” and in doing so, he is pointing to the tension in His gospel, a tension that theologians call “the already-not yet”. In Jesus Christ, God’s kingdom of wholeness is already present in some form, but not yet present in the form it will be at the culmination of history.

The church has tended to swing between two extremes, either emphasizing the “not-yet” to the exclusion of the “already” (Just bear it!), or emphasizing the “already” to the exclusion of the not yet” (Just claim it!). We must resist both extremes and hold both. None of us is completely healed until he comes again, but we can experience “substantial healing” (Francis Schaeffer).

4) Jesus. The issue is Jesus. Fix your eyes on Jesus who stands in the midst of the wreckage. In Matthew 8 and 9, in the ten deeds, two things stand out about Jesus – His authority and compassion.

He has authority over all that threatens us: sin, disease, the demonic, chaos, death. He heals simply by speaking:

To the man with leprosy: “be clean!”

To the centurian: “Let it be done to you as you have believed.”

To the demons: “Be gone!”

To the paralytic: “forgiven!”

To the dead girl: “Talitha kum,” “little girl, arise!”

Throw yourself on His authority.

Compassion. Matthew 9:36 says that Jesus “felt compassion.” The word Matthew uses is a very vivid, visceral word – *splangkna* – which refers to the inner parts of our bodies, the seat of our most intense and tender emotions. It can get translated as bowels, or guts. Jesus’ guts get ripped up. He feels our pain. Throw yourself on His compassion.

No one I know of grasped this fact better than the Japanese theologian Kazoh Kitamori. In his book, *Theology of the Pain of God*, written in 1965 when Japanese Christians were finally emotionally able to wrestle with the dropping of the bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Kitamori writes these daring words:

“God in pain is the God Who resolves our human pain by His own. Jesus Christ is the Lord who heals our human wounds by His own.”

He then writes:

“Salvation is the message that our God enfolds our broken reality.”

He feels it all. He makes it His own. So keep your eyes on Jesus in the wreckage.

This is how the Matthew texts lead me to pray:

Lord Jesus,
You are the great King, and you are the Good Shepherd.
We do not pretend to be able to tell You how to run Your kingdom.
But because You are the Shepherd King,
You invite us to tell You our heart's desire.
And it is this...
Will you please ...

Humpty Dumpty, I know a King who knows your pain, who enfolds your pain, who feels your pain, and heals it. When or how, I cannot tell you. But when He does, you will be more than you were before your fall.

Question 1: Who do you want to pray for tonight?

Question 2: How can we pray for you tonight?