

III. The People with a Kingdom Imagination

A. Acts 2:42-47 shows a community whose lives are shaped and formed by an imagination immersed in Jesus' teaching about the kingdom of God and how things work in this kingdom.

- i. They had to keep re-imagining how this glorious kingdom teaching would be put into practice. (Acts 5, 6)
- ii. So do we!

B. What is our goal?

Kavin 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."

LIVE THE STORY

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

- Why do you think Luke records so much about the kingdom of God in the first 11 verses of Acts?
- What kind of economics does Jesus as King teach for His kingdom?
- Does the prophetic vision of Christ's kingdom shape how you imagine life? How might we allow it to shape our imaginations so that it can shape how we live?
- Why is it true that Jesus' teaching about the kingdom is about much more than what we do with our money, but not about less than that? What are some other aspects of our lives that it is about?
- If Jesus is the nobleman who is on a journey and returning, what are you banking on while He is away? His success or failure? Do you hedge your bets? How might our lives reveal the answer?
- Why does 'trying to figure out the date of his return' not count as faith in His return?
- Why must we, as a Community Group and church, imagine together a life shaped by Jesus' cruciform way of doing business?

The Church: A Faithful Gospel Witness

What is Our Prophetic Vision?

Jerry Cisar — January 10, 2020

Text: Acts 1:1-11

Introduction

A. "Where there is no prophetic vision the people cast off restraint, but blessed is he who keeps the law." (Prov. 29:18 ESV)

- i. The point of the proverb is that worldly vision leads to death!
- ii. Worldly vision is about expediency and self-interest. Prophetic vision is about God's ways and God's interests.
- iii. "Prophetic vision" comes through a message that communicates God's *perspective*. It enables hearers to imagine a way of life that conforms to how God created us to live.

B. The early church was able to imagine a new way of life conformed to how God created us to live. Such prophetic vision must drive the church in every age.

- i. Acts 2:42-47
- ii. God's vision must reshape our imaginations (our vision of what we think possible) so that it can reshape our living.

I. The Pressing Message about the Kingdom

A. What is Jesus' pressing message?

- i. What is the kingdom of God?
- ii. What did Jesus say about the Kingdom for 40 days?
 - a) What Jesus said about the Kingdom in those 40 days shaped the apostles' message and must shape ours too.

b) This message about the *kingdom* drives the church forward in Acts.

iii. The message about the Kingdom in Luke

a) Luke 1:32-33, 35

b) Luke 1:52-53)

c) Luke 4:43

B. The disciples are focused on the wrong thing. (Acts 1:6-8)

i. Jesus focuses them on two key things.

a) The restoration of the Kingdom requires the empowering of the Holy Spirit.

b) The restoration of the Kingdom happens *as* we testify about the king and why we live the way we do!

ii. The disciples still struggle to understand.

a) Two angels say: “Why do you stand here gazing up into the heavens?”

b) The restoration of the kingdom began on Pentecost but will occur as a mystery until Christ returns!

C. What is the Holy Spirit empowering us to do? What message about the kingdom of God needs to shape our imaginations so that we can imagine a new way of life?

II. That Parable of the Returning King (Luke 19:11-27)

A. The connection between this parable and Acts 1 should not be missed (11-12).

i. The timing of the kingdom

ii. Leaving and returning

B. “While they were listening to this...”

i. Remember Zacchaeus? (11:1-10).

ii. When the kingdom manifests itself, those who receive it not only *imagine* a new way of living, they also begin to *live* it!

C. Understanding parables requires discernment because they never work the same as in our earthly way of thinking.

i. Do business while I am away.

a) Conditions will be hostile to their doing so.

b) Those other subjects are banking on this nobleman’s mission to fail.

ii. The background to the parable

iii. This parable is about *living as if* Jesus is king.

a) Luke 6:27-36

b) *Whatever kind of king Jesus is*, it is one whose economics are utterly different than those of worldly kingdoms.

Preaching this prophetic vision of Jesus’ kingdom reshapes our imaginations, our ways of thinking about life, so we can reshape how we live. The community’s job is to allow the Spirit to empower them to live this new way of doing life!

D. The Nobleman Returns as King

i. Those who were living by faith in his success, using the “monies” they had been given as intended, doing business according to the new economy of their king, are rewarded.

ii. *What are we banking on?*