

Kingdom of God Part 14
The Mysteries of the Kingdom of God

1. Review of Fear and its incompatibility with Kingdom Living.
 - a. **Is there fear in heaven?** No, only awe of the Presence of God.
 - b. **What is fear?** Fear is the opposite of faith, fear is faith in the devil's lies.
 - i. Fear is a God-given emotion to INFORM us, but not to CONTROL us.
 - ii. Almost all fear is based upon the lie that God will not meet a need.
 - iii. Therefore, fear affects what we ultimately worship.
 - iv. And whatever we fear losing the most is what we tend to value most.
 - c. **Fear stinks:** Not just because it ruins our lives, robs our joy and freezes our faith, but because it emits a smell, not only in the natural (animals smell fear), but in the supernatural (Baalzebub, lord of the flies) where it attracts the devil's attention.
 - d. Fear Not...for the Lord your God is with you. When fear comes, don't wrestle, nestle in the arms of God!

SERMON:

2. Do you like a good mystery? I recall Perry Mason when I was a child and watching it with my parents on television. The clues would slowly unravel and the real culprits would be unmasked in the course of the hour. That was good mystery. Now days, they tell you who-done-it (CSI) and then go about explaining the clues. That really takes the mystery out of the equation.
 - a. A good mystery gets you thinking, it engages you, it captivates your attention and has you weighing each piece of evidence. That is good stuff!
3. Jesus talked about a mystery...actually, he spoke about several mysteries, but he described the Mystery of the Kingdom of God and told his disciples that they were being **given** the mystery.
 - a. Mark 4:10-11 *"As soon as He was alone, His followers, along with the twelve, began asking Him about the parables. And He was saying to them, "To you has been given the mystery of the kingdom of God, but those who are outside get everything in parables,"*
 - b. Jesus told his disciples that "those who are outside get everything in parables" but that the disciples were given the mystery of the Kingdom. I want to cover the two aspects of this sentence, 1) Parables and 2) The mystery of the Kingdom of God.
4. Why did Jesus speak in parables?
 - a. **Why speak in parables?**
 - i. **To enlighten the hungry heart.**
 1. **The word heart (by coincidence) starts with the word hear.**
 - a. The good heart hears God's word and understands it.
 - b. People of a good heart long to know more about what the kingdom of heaven is like.
 - c. They are seekers for the knowledge of God's will. In the parables they could find what they were looking for.
 2. Jesus was not begging people to believe in him or to understand his message.
 3. I believe he masked the meaning so that only those who were pursuing the truth would find it.
 4. **What is your heart like? Are you hungry for God?**
 - ii. **To make people think.**
 1. Proverbs 25:2 *"It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, But the glory of kings is to search out a matter."*

2. God desires you and I to search out, dig deep. It is why Jesus spoke in parables. He would say things that would have so many levels of truth in them that his hearers would go away thinking about it.
 3. Illustration: If I hide Easter eggs from a 2 year old, do I hide them in impossible places or do I make it so they can experience the joy of finding them? How about if I hide Easter eggs from a 4th grader? I will hide them well, making them seek them out and giving them greater delight in finding them! How many 4th graders would find hunting Easter eggs left out in plain sight as fun? Not many.
 4. Likewise, I believe God knows that the new Christian needs to gain access to truth easily, but the mature needs to dig deeper.
 5. Deuteronomy 29:29 says, "*The secret things belong to the Lord.*"
 - a. God has concealed from us those things that are beyond us – if only because we are not ready or not capable of receiving them, or would not be good stewards of the truth should He show it to us prematurely.
 - b. God is ready to give us revelation, but only if we are ready to receive it. Those who are willing to believe and do the will of God will know the revelation (John 7:17)
 6. Job 33:14 "*For God does speak-now one way, now another- though man may not perceive it.*"
 - a. God is a God of self-revelation, He is about revealing Himself, but we either aren't listening or we have grown lazy and have stopped digging for the truths of God.
- iii. **To divide the believer from the un-believer.** (un = refusal to believe).
1. The enemies of Jesus were always waiting for him to say something for which they might accuse or persecute him (Luke 11:53-54). By speaking in parables, Jesus was making it very hard for them to use his words against him. He could hardly be arrested for telling homely stories!
 2. The parables were evocative not provocative.
 - a. By couching his teaching in parables, Jesus made certain points much clearer to true-hearted people than even plain language could have made them. At the same time, he was speaking indirectly and figuratively so that lawyers had nothing concrete with which to make a case against him. At times when it would have been counterproductive to speak plainly in public, Jesus spoke in parables --a prudent teaching strategy.
 3. Matthew 11:25-26 "*At that time Jesus said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure."*"
 - a. It might sound strange, but Jesus was actually concealing the truths of the Kingdom from those who thought they knew it all. Only those with simple faith would be able to understand it. His disciples were "childlike" in their faith.
 - i. I think it is marvelous, but his disciples were unschooled, literally, they were Talmud dropouts. They couldn't cut the mustard for rabbinical school, so they followed their father's professions. Yet it was these that Jesus called to be his disciples.
 - ii. If you think you aren't smart enough to understand the bible, you don't have to be. You only need to have a heart that says, "I'm hungry for You God" – and God will teach you in terms you can understand.
 - b. Truth is only understood when it is perceived through spiritual eyes. (I Cor. 2:14-16) Unless a person has a personal relationship with Jesus Christ

(as the disciples did) they will consider the talk about the kingdom of God as foolishness.

iv. **To fulfill prophesy:** *"Jesus spoke to the multitudes in parables, and he was not speaking to them without a parable, so that what was spoken by through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, 'I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things hidden since the foundation of the world'" (Mtt 13:34-35, Psa 78:1-4).*

v. **To reveal (uncover) mystery.**

1. Mark 4:10-11 *"As soon as He was alone, His followers, along with the twelve, began asking Him about the parables. And He was saying to them, "To you has been given the mystery of the kingdom of God, but those who are outside get everything in parables,"*
2. MYSTERY – unknown, hidden things of God. the passage from Psalm 78.1-4 *"utter things HIDDEN since the FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD"* gives us a hint of the mysterious nature of the Kingdom of God.

5. Colossians 2:2-3 *"My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, 3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."* *But as it is written, "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him."* *But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.* (1 Corinthians 2:9-10)

i. God conceals certain matters from us, but then He invites us to search them out.

6. Colossians 1:25-26 *"that I might fully carry out the preaching of the word of God, that is, the mystery which has been hidden from the past ages and generations, but has now been manifested to His saints, to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory."*

a. The common teaching that I've been struggling with says that "God comes to present the individual with a gift of power, and the individual is then supposed to go out and manifest that power."

i. There is a subtle error in that teaching.

ii. The Holy Spirit is not a cosmic energy force you harness for the sake of producing miraculous results.

iii. **God comes to present you with HIMSELF** – (not just to do stuff for you). The mystery hidden for all the ages is *"Christ in YOU, the hope of glory"*. That is a picture of supernatural intimacy with God.

iv. What would a group of people look like and accomplish if they were so filled with supernatural love and compassion that they were fearless?

v. We don't create formulas to "make God work."

1. Pray on your knees, pray on your face, fast twice on Sunday, pray scripture, bind demons, say the right words, use the right formula, do the special prayer....

2. Folks, the Christian life not about formulas.

a. We don't control God. We don't say certain things and like an obedient Genie, God comes and does what we say. That isn't what the bible means by "Christ in you, the Hope of glory."

vi. What this does mean is that the Presence of God manifests God's love and character in a situation.

1. We simply invite God to work, we make declarations of what His known will is, because He told us to. **And then God does HIS stuff.**

2. He will not be controlled by man. That is sovereignty. Yet, He desires to show His love to people who need it or are hungry for Him.

3. God waits for us to pray, to invite Him into a situation. And then He shows up, and wherever God is, is good. God does good things. Because God is good.
- vii. Christ in me means that God works through me, but my mind must be renewed, so that I am on God's page and not the other way around.

Folks, the kingdom of God is here. But everyone of us has our own kingdom, our own domain, our own little realm we are building and protecting. If we desire to have and experience the kingdom of God, we must first relinquish our own domains, our own little kingdoms and let the King of Kings and Lord of Lords come reign in our hearts and lives. We surrender all. We give it all to Him.

Unless God is your all in all, He is not your King.