

LESSON 14

Foundations Curriculum

The Gospel of the Kingdom of God

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Introduction

The Gospel of the Kingdom of God

In this fourteenth lesson, we will begin the second cycle of the teaching of Jesus. Up to this chapter, we have studied the deity and humanity of Jesus, the evidence that He is the Messiah awaited by Israel. We studied how Jesus pleased the Father with a perfect and blameless life, and how He was used with power and anointing of the Holy Spirit to accomplish His redemptive work, with signs and miracles.

In the previous chapter, we studied how Jesus devoted Himself to a close relationship of proximity with the twelve men who walked with Him, in order to form them in the purpose of God the Father. Jesus worked by levels to form His disciples, and this was essential for fulfilling His work.

1) The Gospel That Jesus Preached and Commanded to Be Preached

What gospel is this?

In Mark 16:15 it is written: “And He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.’”

The gospel preached by Jesus is a gospel capable of producing disciples who are willing to keep ALL THE THINGS that He commanded, as it is also written in Matthew.

“And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.’”

Matthew 28:18–19 (NKJV)

If someone claims to be “converted” and is not willing to obey Jesus in all things, his conversion is false! Unfortunately, there are many “Christians” like this. They profess faith, but do not live according to the faith they claim to have.

The preaching of a false gospel has produced false converts who will not enter the Kingdom of God.

Other “gospels” were preached in former times and are also preached in our day. For this reason, we must pay attention to what is sincere and true.

*“Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’
And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’”*

Matthew 7:22–23 (NKJV)

We all need to ask ourselves and examine ourselves in this regard: will we be called “blessed of My Father,” or will we hear “I never knew you”?

Have you considered that you may be among those who will be surprised on that day?

There are “other gospels,” and the apostles spoke about this:

*“I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.
As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.”*

Galatians 1:6–9 (NKJV)

Galatians 1:6–9, 2 Peter 2:1–3, and Jude 4 warn us: a deformed gospel produces a deformed faith — a fruit different from the one Jesus wants to produce.

The illustration of the seed:

→ If the seed is good, the fruit will be good!

→ If the seed is bad, the fruit will be bad!

Jesus compared the preaching of the gospel to a sowing. In Matthew 13:3, 18–19 and Mark 8:11, they indicate that the seed — or the preaching — is the Word of the Kingdom of God!

We must not “adulterate” this blessed seed!

Jesus qualified the preaching of the Word of the Kingdom by calling it the Gospel of the Kingdom of God.

Gospel = Good News!

So the preaching of Jesus consisted in proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom of God!

Jesus spoke many times of the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven, and of the nearness and coming of this kingdom:

In Matthew 4:17 → “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand”;

In Matthew 6:10 → “Your kingdom come”;

In Matthew 10:7 → “...preach, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand’”;

In Matthew 12:28 → “...the kingdom of God has come upon you”;

In Matthew 13:24, 31–33 → “The kingdom of heaven is like...”

In John 3:5 → “...unless one is born again he cannot enter the Kingdom of God”

In Acts 1:3 → “...speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God”

2) Jesus Was Also Explicit in Speaking of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God

This same Gospel of the Kingdom must be preached until the end of time

In Matthew 4:23, 9:35, and 24:14, this same Gospel of the Kingdom must be preached until the end of time.

“When it was day, He departed and went into a deserted place.

And the crowd sought Him and came to Him, and tried to keep Him from leaving them; but He said to them, ‘I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent.’”

Luke 4:42–43 (NKJV)

In Luke 8:1 and 16:16, there is no other gospel to be preached but this one.

→ A kingdom presupposes government!

→ Every kingdom has a king!

→ In the Kingdom of God, Jesus is the King and He governs!

→ If Jesus does not govern you, if He does not rule your life, then you do not belong to His kingdom!

→ If you do not belong to His kingdom, you will not be saved!

Let us consider what Jesus said:

“And if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world.

He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him — the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.”

John 12:47–48 (NKJV)

- We will not be judged by “theological currents,” but by what Jesus said!
- What a tremendous reality that should bring us fear!
- Do not put your eternity at risk for a theological “whim”!

3) How Jesus Applied the Preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom in the Lives of Those Who Wanted to Follow Him

How would you respond to the words of the Lord Jesus?

As you read the following texts, do an exercise and try to put yourself in the place of the people who were listening to Jesus, and think about how you would respond to the words of the Lord.

Read and meditate on the story of the **“Rich Young Ruler”** as recorded in Mark:

“Now as He was going out on the road, one came running, knelt before Him, and asked Him, ‘Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?’ So Jesus said to him, ‘Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God.

You know the commandments: “Do not commit adultery,” “Do not murder,” “Do not steal,” “Do not bear false witness,” “Do not defraud,” “Honor your father and your mother.” And he answered and said to Him, ‘Teacher, all these things I have kept from my youth.’ Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, ‘One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me.’ But he was sad at this word, and went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.”

Mark 10:17–22 (NKJV)

The young man had some characteristics that showed he believed in Jesus:

- He was thirsty: he was seeking eternal life!
- He was sincere: he humbled himself, kneeling in the middle of the road!
- He was serious: he kept the commandments! He was more serious than many who today call themselves Christians and disciples of Jesus!
- He had faith in Jesus: he called Jesus “Good Teacher,” recognizing Him as the Messiah — for the Jew, only Jehovah is good!

However, at the end of the biblical narrative, it is clear that the man was lost: he did not surrender himself to Jesus to be governed by Him!

The summary of the story is: ***“If I cannot govern you, I cannot save you!”***

Having faith is not enough; being thirsty and being serious is also not enough.

The Multitudes (Example 1)

The Gospel of Luke records:

“Now great multitudes went with Him. And He turned and said to them, ‘If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.’ So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.”

Luke 14:25–27, 33 (NKJV)

In this context, the term “hate” means “love less.” That is:

If you do not hate (love less) your father and mother, your wife and children, brothers and sisters, and your own life — YOU CANNOT BE MY DISCIPLE!

If you do not take up your own cross and follow Me — you cannot be My disciple.

If you do not forsake all that you have — you cannot be My disciple.

What is taking up the cross? It is renouncing everything to follow Him! What is renouncing everything? It is placing Him at the center of your life and heart.

The summary of Jesus’ message is: ***“If you do not place Me above everything and everyone, I do not accept you and you cannot be My disciple; possessions, family, and your own life are more at the center of your life!”***

The Multitudes (Example 2)

In Mark 8:34–37, Jesus gives a serious warning:

→ Are you willing to lose your life for the sake of Jesus and the gospel, or is that only for the “consecrated believers,” for missionaries, and for Christians in communist and Muslim countries?

→ How much is your soul worth, and what are you willing to give in exchange for it?

→ What are you willing to renounce/lose in order to have salvation?

The summary of this word is: ***“If you cannot lose your life for My sake (Jesus) and the gospel’s, you will lose your soul!”***

This is the gospel that is the power of God for everyone who believes! (Romans 1:16)

True faith in Jesus implies absolute subjection to Him and to His teaching! (Hebrews 5:9)

“And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him.”

Hebrews 5:9 (NKJV)

→ Jesus is the Lord. In both English and Greek, the word “lord” can refer to God the Sovereign, can be a title of respect, and can also mean the master of a slave. Some Roman emperors such as Nero and Caligula adopted the title of Lord for themselves. The Church has always proclaimed the phrase: Jesus Christ is Lord — this is considered the oldest Christian creed, the most ancient catechesis.

→ Jesus is the Lord of all, owner of all things, and with authority to let live or put to death!

→ If we are not His property, we do not belong to His kingdom and we will not be saved!

Therefore, we must compare the gospel we have heard with the gospel that Jesus preached, and “measure” our lives against what Jesus taught and commanded.

We must ask ourselves:

→ Do I truly belong to Christ?

→ Will I be saved by Him?

4) The Apostles Also Preached the Kingdom of God

The summarized content of the apostles’ preaching

In Acts 2:32 and 10:38, we see aspects of the character of Jesus. Speaking about the supernatural life of Jesus, His death and resurrection, was part of the apostles’ preaching. And Jesus as Lord of all and Judge of the living and the dead.

See the texts: Acts 8:12, Acts 19:8, Acts 20:25, and Acts 28:23, 30–31.

The supernatural life of Jesus: His power and authority in the Holy Spirit:

→ Acts 2:22: “...a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs...”

→ Acts 10:38: “...healing all who were oppressed by the devil...”

The death and resurrection of Jesus:

→ Acts 2:23: “...by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death”

→ Acts 2:24: “...God raised up, having loosed the pains of death”

→ Acts 2:32: “...God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses”

→ Acts 10:40: “Him God raised up on the third day...”

Jesus as Lord of all and Judge of the living and the dead:

→ Acts 2:36: “...God has made this Jesus...both Lord and Christ”

→ Acts 10:42: "...He was ordained by God to be Judge of the living and the dead"

A compelling appeal to repentance, conversion, and total abandonment of sin:

→ Acts 2:38: "Repent..."

→ Acts 2:40: "Be saved from this perverse generation"

→ Acts 3:19: "Repent therefore and be converted..."

→ Acts 3:26: "...to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities"

5) The Adulteration of the Gospel

What we have seen in our day

If this was the preaching of Jesus and the apostles, where did the deceptive appeal of "accept Jesus as your only and sufficient Savior" come from — without saying anything about the Lordship of Jesus?

If this ingredient was not present in the preaching of Jesus and the apostles, why would it be in ours?

The gospel has been "preached" in a wrong, adulterated way!

Where did this cheap "gospel" come from that has been preached everywhere, offering nothing but offers and promises without any demand?

A "gospel" has been preached that does not require the renunciation of one's own life and absolute subjection to Jesus. This is an adulterated "gospel" designed to please men and deceive them with a false promise of salvation that will not be fulfilled!

This "gospel" mutilates the Word of Christ and promises "relief for the soul" without subjection to the yoke of Jesus! (Matthew 11:28–29)

It is a false "gospel" that does not form disciples for Jesus, but merely religious people.

What is a disciple:

→ When Jesus commanded that the gospel be preached and disciples be made, He was thinking of the gospel that He preached and the quality of disciples that He made!

→ A true believer is a true convert; he is someone who believes and is totally committed to everything Jesus taught and who obeys everything Jesus commanded!

That is a disciple!

CONCLUSION

In this fourteenth lesson of the Foundations Curriculum, we spoke about the gospel that Jesus preached, which involved the message of repentance, faith, and renunciation in order to follow Him. The gospel preached by Jesus and by the apostles was not embellished to please the ears of the multitude but was applied with clarity and a demand for renunciation in order to follow Him. And whoever is not willing to serve and keep the commandments and principles of Jesus will not enter the Kingdom of God. Whoever has been living a gospel that permits everything may be surprised on that day.

CONSIDER CAREFULLY

- 01** What gospel did Jesus and the apostles preach? Can you demonstrate this from the Holy Scriptures?
- 02** How do you define a disciple of Jesus? Do you consider yourself and live as a disciple of Jesus?
- 03** Will someone who is not a disciple of Jesus enter the Kingdom of God?
- 04** Point out some differences between the Gospel of the Kingdom of God and other “gospels.”

*having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets,
Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone.*

Ephesians 2:20 (NKJV)