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The King and the Kingdom – Luke 9:1-26

Introduction – We now move into a section of this gospel where Luke describes the expanding revelation of the Person of Jesus and the kingdom of God into a more public view. The heralding of the kingdom is not to be done primarily by Jesus Himself, but through His chosen disciples. At the same time, Jesus continues to hold complete sovereignty over who understands who He is and what it means that His kingdom has come. Providing for our needs as we seek to serve Him and His kingdom, Jesus also demands of us our total allegiance to Him over everything else.

Heralding the Kingdom (vv1-6) – Having preached the kingdom and healed many of demons and diseases, Jesus now gives the same authority to His New Israel, the twelve. Their mission is not to preach Jesus *per se*, but rather they are heralds of the new kingdom. But as they go, He commands them to go totally dependent upon Him and how He will provide for them. They are to see His sovereign hand as He opens and closes households (vv4-5). Like Jesus, they are to rely on the generosity of those who receive them, and they are to symbolically place a sign of judgment upon those cities that do not receive them. This is hard for rugged, individualistic Americans to understand completely. God deals with entities bigger than just individuals, just as any king would.

Another King (vv7-9) – Reading the account in Mark (6:14-29) we can get many more details about Herod. Suffice it to say that this rival-king is aware of the heralding of a new kingdom in his domain. The kingdom of God will manifest opposition to and from the kingdom of man. Herod had been interested in the teachings of John the Baptist, and he now is interested and somewhat guilt-ridden over whom Jesus is. But his lustful pleasures, first in marrying a woman whom he could not lawfully marry, and then in lusting after her daughter, lead him to behead John, and join in the conspiracy to crucify Jesus. But this king will learn that he never could thwart the true king of Israel (Acts 4:24-28), and will die at the hand of this King Himself (Acts 12:20-24).

The King and His Subjects (vv10-17) – The Twelve return and Jesus takes them off into a deserted place (usually this was for rest and prayer), but they are quickly mobbed by multitudes. Jesus continues to teach the crowd and His disciples in this instance. Jesus instructs the disciples to feed a crowd of 5,000 men. The disciples admit they are far from adequate for the task, but Jesus shows them that this is His point. He tells them to bring Him what they have, which is almost nothing. Jesus takes what these twelve empty, tired disciples have, looks up to heaven, blesses the food, broke the bread, and gave it back to his disciples to distribute. Another miracle takes place. Twelve emptied disciples each carry away a basket full of bread.

At the King's Table – Here is the capstone of the ministry for the disciples: to bring hungry sinners to the Table of the Lord. The account in John 6 makes this clear. We are not to look to Jesus simply to make our lives better here (John 6:26-27) but ultimately He is the Bread that we need for life (vv 32-35). Jesus teaches His disciples by sending them without sufficient resources for their ministry and commanding them to feed people without sufficient food. But He has everything for eternal life, and for heralding and distributing this life to the world.

Conference with the King (vv18-22) – While praying (and we should stop and note this again), the disciples come to join Him and He questions them as to His identity. Peter speaks on behalf of the disciples that they know He is the Messiah of God. But Jesus must now warn them not to herald this in their journey, for the people (even the disciples) do not yet understand that this King will usher in His kingdom by His rejection, His death, and His resurrection. It is hard for us on this side of the cross to understand how it is that the disciples did not understand. And yet, we find it hard to understand the words that follow (vv 23-26).

The Cross of the King (vv23-26) – Defining what the King must do also defines what His subjects must do, for the disciple is not above his Master. If Jesus is going to Jerusalem to suffer and die, then his disciples must also deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow Him. Here is the first mention of the cross, but it is not Jesus' cross, it is ours, the disciples of this King.

A Daily Cross – This is a hard saying, and we need to understand the impact it must have had the first time it was heard. A

cross was a Roman instrument of execution for rebels who committed crimes against the Roman state – political criminals who challenged the Caesar of the world. This is who Jesus was (Luke 2:1-14). But the cross also pointed to how He was to come into this position. It would be through His sacrificial death to purchase His people.

We are His followers. We are called upon to be willing to daily account our life as over. We are called upon to have zero expectations for today, to live as condemned men in the eyes of the unbelieving world. We are servants of the King and we are called to reign with Him, to herald His good news, to live as the New Israel, the new humanity, in the new heavens and earth. But it is not about ruling first. It is about dying first, and every day. And those who have ears to hear know that there are countless examples for our own personal application from this message even today, even right now.

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