

Renewed Household of Faith

Mark 3:20-35

Mark 3:27: "In fact, no one can enter a strong man's house without first tying him up. Then he can plunder the strong man's house."

Verse 27, about tying up the strong man and plundering his house, sits at the heart of all that's to come this morning.

From the moment Jesus speaks in Mark's gospel, he's proclaiming the coming of the Kingdom of God.

As the Kingdom comes in Jesus, people are astounded and amazed by Him.

- Some believe,
- some are healed,
- set are free from demonic influence,
- the blind see,
- the deaf hear,
- the mute speak...
- and still others reject Him and are gearing up and plotting to kill Jesus.

You see, Luther rightly taught that when you and I pray '**Your Kingdom come**' in the Lord's Prayer, corporately or privately –

- we're not praying for a crust of bread,
- we're not rattling off three small insignificant words,
- we're praying and asking for an eternal immeasurable treasure.

How infinitely valuable, powerful and transformative is eternal, immeasurable treasure?

Not a crust of bread we toss to the chooks...

So in his Small Catechism, Luther asks the question ***When does this happen?***

The eternal immeasurable treasure of God's kingdom comes to you when our Heavenly Father gives you His Holy Spirit, so that by His grace we believe His Word (there's repentance and faith) and live in a beautiful faith union with Christ today here on Earth and forever with Him in Heaven.

You're baptised into the eternal, immeasurable treasure!

Baptism isn't a mere ritual, it's a change of Kingdoms and of citizenship where you're adopted and received into the very life and family of God.

While the Kingdom of God comes even without our prayer, we pray, '**Your Kingdom come**' in the sense that it may come to us... [Again and again and again] with every resource and gift we need to journey through even the most difficult life and faith transitions we experience.



In other words without the gift of the Spirit, you won't see, recognise or perceive either the Kingdom or the King.

- Christianity (without the gift of the Spirit) will seem like a delusion,
- a straight jacket,
- something that stands in the way of you getting what you want,
- joy in suffering won't make sense to you
- in the current world climate, you might think why would I risk my safety or even a death sentence for being a Christian?

More than that, without the renewing work of the Spirit placing all the treasure of the Kingdom in your hands - all the deepest commitments of your heart remain tied up with:

- yourself,
- the world and the things of this world –
- to the point where they become ultimate things that occupy your heart to the exclusion of all others.

That's why Jesus' family think He's gone insane. Seriously, they thought he was out of it – out of His mind crazy. Why?

- Because they didn't believe Jesus was the Messiah.
- They couldn't perceive what Jesus was saying about Himself.
- They couldn't get their minds around His ministry and what was happening.
- It was all viewed through the eyes of human reason and logic.
- They were trying to understand the will and works of God which can only be perceived by faith.

That's why some of you will have family or friends who think you're out of your mind because of your generosity to the fellowship.

- Some of you are desperately praying
- for friends,
- work colleagues
- For the things going on in this country and the world
- or a beloved person in your family.

And their lack of response breaks your heart and you pray, ***'O Lord give them eyes that see with faith that they would know you the only true God!'***

Take heart.

There is great hope - God does hear the cries of your heart.

If there's one thing you can have supreme confidence in, it's the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Remember Jesus' own family literally thought he was going insane.

In John 7 it says, *'...for even his own brothers did not believe in Him.'*

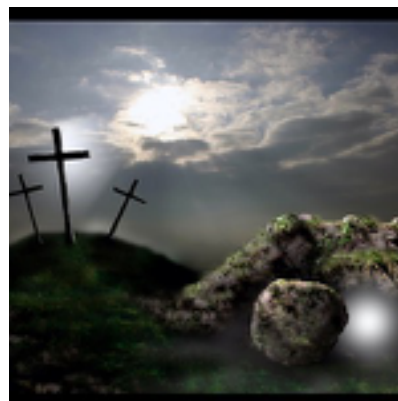
Something happened, though, because his brothers changed.



Acts 1:14 says, '14 They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, **and with his brothers.**'

What happened between John 7 and Acts 1:14 for Jesus' brothers?

- The crucifixion of the Son of God for the forgiveness of their sins – once for all!
- The resurrection of Jesus with eternal immeasurable treasure forever - through faith in Him!
- The ascension of Jesus happened and He now/ presently reigns– and is King over your circumstances and concerns!
- The ascension led to the outpouring of the Spirit who has called you through the Gospel and is calling us all today...



So friends, you have a few possibilities before your eyes this morning.

- Jesus is either insane, evil and in cahoots with Satan... (like His family and the religious leaders were originally saying...)
- He's merely a teacher who might have some helpful things to show you...
- ***or He is who He says He is – the Son of God and Lord of all - who's come to heal, save and draw people into His eternal Kingdom.***

C.S. Lewis paints a beautiful picture of what today's Gospel is saying.

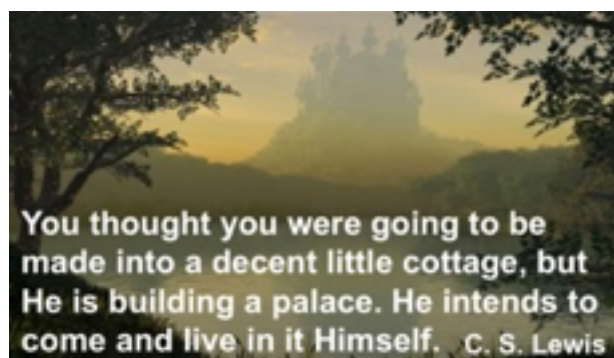
In *Mere Christianity* Lewis writes, 'Imagine yourself as a living house. God comes in to rebuild that house.' Not renovate – rebuild it from scratch!

What C.S .Lewis is saying is that you might think that you're in pretty good shape and that all you need from the Lord is a fix here and to stop a few leaks there [wouldn't that be nice??], but that's not the case.

'But presently God starts knocking the house about in a way that hurts abominably and does not seem to make any sense. What on earth is he up to?

The explanation is that He's building quite a different house from the one you thought of – throwing out a new wing here, putting on an extra floor there, running up towers, making courtyards.

You thought you were being made into a decent little cottage; but He is building a palace. He intends to come and live in it Himself.'



What's the picture getting at?

This is a renewing work of the Spirit – You are a new creation in Christ Jesus. The old has gone and the new is here!

You're a grand palace!

Before you had received grace you were without hope.

Paul puts it bluntly to say that you were dead in your sins.

In other words, the outer façade you portrayed may have looked ok, others may have thought well of you – you looked structurally sound, but your heart was not only broken, it was dead.

You had no treasure.

You were captivated by the ruler of the power of the air – and so was I!

And the Lord, in His great love,

- entered this world
- and on the cross and through the empty tomb Jesus plundered Satan's house.
- The strong man was bound by Jesus forever –
- and he could only watch and spit out accusations as Jesus tore the place to pieces and broke the chains that once held you imprisoned –
- and by sheer grace, before you even lifted up your face,
- He put a ring on your finger and a royal robe was wrapped around you and you were given an eternal inheritance in God's royal household forever.

Through the cross and the resurrection of Jesus you've received everything.

- All of Jesus' holiness and beauty, and keeping of God's commands, His righteousness, love and faithfulness, sonship –
- All that He has - Jesus gives to you in a beautiful exchange!
- He takes your deadness and sin, and you receive His beauty and holiness.
- The only way it comes to you is through a crucified and risen Saviour!

And as the Father looks at you He says, ***'O my child - You're radiant and beautiful like the noon day sun - and with you I am well pleased!'***

- *Is that what you saw when you looked in the mirror this morning?*
- *Did you look at your reflection and say, 'Oh my you're radiant and beautiful!'*
- *Or when you opened your eyes did it move you to prayer!*
- *'O Lord is this really what I look like in the morning?'*

Receive the truth this morning – that in Christ **you're the apple of your Heavenly Father's eye.**

The amazing thing about grace is that it's always amazing.

It's not about what you look like – we can't yet see the fullness of all that's ours as children of God.

But on the Day of the Lord you will see it with your eyes.

Receive the Word of the Lord and take confidence in the power of His might as you follow Jesus, as you rest in Him and as you invite others to come and look upon His beautiful face.

Amen.