

"The Gospel of the Kingdom"

Dallas Willard, Wheaton College Chapel - October, 2001 [26:11]

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7uC29QgkExI>



Scribe's Comments - *The session was typed from the YouTube (audio only) with good-faith effort but it is not verbatim. **Bold** and underlining added by the scribe.*

[One of Willard's most succinct presentations of the Gospel of the Kingdom]

What really is the gospel? Gospels of Sin Management and Gospels of Light
Central issue - What is the message that naturally leads one to become an apprentice of Jesus Christ?

What is the good news?

A common assumption: There are two gospels in the New Testament.

1) The Gospel Jesus Preached - The Kingdom of God

Generally speaking when people hear that phrase they think the Gospel of the Millennium. There will come a day when God will rule on Earth alone. That day was at hand when when Jesus came but He was rejected and that went away. That is called Dispensational Hermeneutics.

We talked about that... [Sermon on the Mount summary.]

All those things on the interpretation of Jesus' gospel about the millennium are set aside.

#2) The Gospel Paul Preached - the Forgiveness of Sins [3:18]

"Gospels of "Sin Management"

The central & only essential issue is forgiveness of sins.

Witness approach - *What would happen to you if you die tonight?*

I think there is only one Gospel, not two.

If we are going to deal with life through apprenticeship or discipleship, we have to have a message that creates disciples.

Does the gospel I preach or what I believe have a natural tendency to produce disciples of Jesus in the Kingdom of the Heavens or only consumers of religious goods & services including the death of Christ on the Cross for forgiveness"? Or do I teach something about life?

Jesus' Gospel - *"Repent, the Kingdom of God is now available to you."*

John 3 - Not about forgiveness of sins but life from above.

The new birth is about seeing & entering the Kingdom of God.

What is the Kingdom of God? The Kingdom of God is God in action - where what God wants done is done.

"Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven."

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We are praying that the Kingdom of God will take over our lives, all that is done in us. The only place that God's will is not done is in persons who are rebellious to God.

"...on earth as it is in Heaven." How is it done in heaven? Pretty good.

That's the path of discipleship: A disciple is not someone who has it all made. It is someone who has apprenticed themselves to Jesus to learn from Him how to do the things He would do if He were us.

A disciple can have a long way to go. The mark of my discipleship - Am I learning to do what Jesus would do, how to live in the Kingdom?

Repent - "think about how you are living - think about your thinking."

The essence - *"I've been on the wrong path, especially in light of the fact that now that Jesus is present and I can trust him, enter in His kingdom, and learn from him and I don't have to live on my own."*

The gospel is very simple - Jesus has come to town and now you can trust him. The Master is here and I can learn from him. The master of life and of death. He deals with sin. That is dealt with by you putting your trust in Him.

It is not dealt with by accepting one theory of atonement.

What is preached as the gospel is one theory of the atonement.

*"Blessed Cross, Blessed Sepulcher,
Blessed rather be the man who there was put to death for me."*

John Bunyan

Our confidence is not in the death of Jesus - it is in Jesus.

Our confidence is not in the teaching of Jesus. The more liberal wing of the church preaching the gospel of liberation - structural evils.

Our confidence is in Jesus.

That man has risen and Jesus is now the King of the Kings of Earth now. He is supervising human history.

In days like these, that's a good thing to remember.

Jesus preaches the gospel of the Kingdom of God. The problem is people don't understand it. You have to his life, death and resurrection and His presence now on Earth and bring that all together.

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Book of Acts

[11:40]

1:3 - Jesus - 40 days teaching the Kingdom of God
Phillip in Samaria - gospel of the Kingdom of God and name of Jesus
Paul in Ephesus - preaches the Kingdom of God
Paul in Rome - Acts 28 - preaches the gospel of the Kingdom of God

If you have that, you have the message that allows you to step in the Kingdom of God now and live there. Your life is transformed because now there is a life in you that is not of you.

Romans 8:14 - *"As many who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God."*

The mark of a person who is a child of God is a life in them that is not of them. That's what the new birth is about. We are invited to learn to know what that is in our day to day life.

How do I do that?

[13:40]

By living in dependence upon a power that is not natural.

Prayer - An act of interaction with the greatest force. Prayer touches the power which underlies all the other powers. When I pray, I am working with that.

What's going on in my life - I am training for reigning.

* Prayer, work, family life are a part of that.

* As an Undergraduate, I remember how frightening it was to think about the future. Knowledge that I was alive in the Kingdom of God learning to act with a power that was beyond myself is the one thing that allowed me to be stable and go forward and find out what God had for me even though I had no idea what that was.

Death - If you're alive in the Kingdom of God you'll never die.

John 8:51-52 - *"Those who keep my word, will never taste death."*

Most people live with the anticipation that this awful thing might happen to them at anytime. When you are alive in the Kingdom of God you are living a life which will be continuous. You will never experience death. You are living a life that is greater than death. You now have the deathless life of the risen Christ in you and you are learning to walk and live with that.

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The gospel of the Kingdom brings you to a knowledge of who you are and why you are here. That's why it is such good news and why it swept the world when it came into the world and why it is the only hope of the world today.

Jesus comes and invites us to live in His kingdom by putting our trust in Him and do that now. The learning begins there.

[How to live this life we were now given.]

We have a gospel that has a natural progression in to apprenticeship.

It deals with forgiveness of sins but that is not the whole thing. That mistake has led us to displace the doctrine of regeneration and try to treat salvation entirely in terms of justification.

Jesus brings us new life and invites us. There is only one gospel - to put your confidence in Jesus. You have to know what that means - You're now invited to live in the eternal kingdom of God with Jesus Christ.

Colossians 3 - If you been risen with Christ.

Once you read Paul carefully you won't find anything new in the Gospels except for the historical details. If you read Colossians 3 carefully, there won't be a thing in the Sermon on the Mount that will look strange to you in terms of obedience. When you read the Sermon on the Mount you will say, "This not for the future, this is for me now." This is what grace means now.

Grace is unmerited favor but it is not just for the forgiveness of sins.

We would have needed the grace of God if we had never sinned.

You have a teaching of grace that deals only with guilt. No. Grace deals with much more than guilt, it deals with life. We live by grace through the power of the Word, through the Holy Spirit, through companion with Jesus Christ...all of that is grace.

The saint is the one who consumes grace, not the sinner, with everything he or she does.

Colossians 3:17 - *If you are going to..."Do all things, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ."*

We have to have grace all the time.

Grace is in the Trinity. Is there subordination in the Trinity? The Trinity won't put up with it. What you have to do is look at the graciousness of grace in the Trinity.

Grace is the element of life in the Kingdom of God and it gives us a life which is deathless.

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Who are you?

[21:45]

Show your driver's license, say where you are from, your parents, your DNA...

"I am a never ceasing spiritual being with an eternal destiny in God's great universe."

You are spiritual in substance,
...never ceasing in duration, and
...ruling or creative in governance or destiny.

Eternal life that you should know Jesus Christ, You should know God - knowledge always refers to this interactive relationship.

Now is your "*Training for Reigning*". You are destined to reign forever.

Revelation 22:5 - "*They shall reign for ever and ever.*"

That's for your future for the ages of the ages.

God's intention for each of us is that we should grow to the point that He can empower us to do what we want.

Didn't you mean what "He" wants?

What He wants is this. That's why our "*Training for Reigning*" leads us to transformation where it is perfectly safe for us to do what we want because it will always be what God wants, but now instead of standing over us, it will be the Law of God written in our hearts.

Naturally there comes out of us the things that God wants. He not only creates, He creates creators and His plan for them is to rule with Him forever and ever.

Have you heard any better news than that?

Benediction

[25:45]

Now may the grace of God in Jesus Christ richly accompany us to teach us and form us in Christlikeness by the power of His Spirit and bring to pass to us the love of God. In the name of Jesus we pray, amen.

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