



I. INTRO

- A. Up there down here

Matthew 6:10 (NIV) your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

- B. The Kingdom is HERE

Matthew 3:1-3 (NIV) In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah: "A voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.'"

- John was a forerunner, whose mission was to prepare the way of the Lord

Matthew 4:17 (NIV) From that time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."

- Repent: Turn – about face, change direction
 - Turn from your value system to God's
 - Turn from the way you think, and think like God

Matthew 6:33 (NIRV) But put God's kingdom first. Do what he wants you to do. Then all those things will also be given to you.

- C. There are two kingdoms

Colossians 1:13-14 (NLT) For he has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of his dear Son, who purchased our freedom and forgave our sins.

A Kingdom is: The governing influence of a king over His territory impacting it with His personal will, purpose and intent, producing a culture, values, morals and lifestyle that reflect the king's desires and nature for His citizens.

Luke 4:43 (NKJV) 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."

- D. Jesus taught in Parables to help us understand the Kingdom

II. NOT FAIR

- A. A familiar story

Matthew 20:1 (NKJV) "For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard.

- B. There are two sides to fair
- We only complain when fair works against us
- C. The cross of Christ and His resurrection remind us that God's Kingdom isn't fair
- The Kingdom of God isn't fair in the sense that everyone gets what they deserve



III. WHAT DOES FAIR LOOK LIKE?

A. Stephen

- Known for his faith and wisdom, but he also made some enemies
- He was a faithful servant in the early church

Acts 6:10 (NKJV) And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke.

- He's charged and sentenced to death

Acts 7:60 (NKJV) Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not charge them with this sin." And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

B. The death of Stephen opens a door of persecution against the church

Acts 8:1, 3 (NKJV) Now Saul was consenting to his death. At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles... As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing *them* to prison.

- Saul eventually encounters Jesus

1 Timothy 1:13 (NIV) Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief.

- Paul is eventually martyred in Rome

C. One more story from Calvary

Luke 23:39-41 (NKJV) Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, "If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us." But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, "Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong."

Luke 23:42-43 (NKJV) Then he said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom." And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."

D. Fair doesn't come without a price

- The Kingdom of God isn't reserved for only good people, it's for people that are forgiven
- The Kingdom of God isn't fair on our terms, it's fair on God's terms

John 3:16-17 (NKJV) For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.