

THE CHURCH: WHO? WHAT? WHY? HOW? - Who Is Calvary?

Sept. 24, 2017 – Pastor Randy

We are in the middle of a sermon series about the church. Today I want to begin discussing who we are as a church. Who is Calvary Church? What are we supposed to do? Why are we supposed to do what we do? How are we supposed to do what we do?

Our Beliefs about WHAT is true, inform...

Our Values about WHAT is important.

Our Mission - WHAT we do - is motivated by our beliefs and values.

(Our beliefs and values communicate the "WHY" behind the mission)

Our Vision of WHAT we will become and accomplish inspires the mission.

Our Strategy communicates HOW we will accomplish our mission.

On our website you will find our mission statement. It reads,

Our Mission: Learning, Living, and Sharing the Good News of Jesus.

We are going to start at the end of our mission statement and work our way back. Our mission statement reveals that we are a community of people centered around GOOD NEWS!

How many of you like good news? How many of you could use some good news? How many of you think our world needs some good news?

Mark 1:1-3; 14-15

This is the Good News about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God. It began just as the prophet Isaiah had written: "Look, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, and he will prepare your way. He is a voice shouting in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the Lord's coming! Clear the road for him!'"

Later on, after John was arrested, Jesus went into Galilee, where **he preached God's Good News.** "The time promised by God has come at last!" he announced. "The Kingdom of God is near! Repent of your sins and **believe the Good News!**"

1. This GOOD NEWS is to be believed; to be trusted.

Calvary Church is a local community united by BELIEF/TRUST.

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Look at Mark 1:14,15 again. Jesus preached good news. His news was about the arrival of God's Kingdom and He called people to a response of faith.

The Good News is truth to be believed. In Ephesians 1: 13 Paul Wrote, *And now you Gentiles have also heard **the truth, the Good News** that God saves you. And when **you believed** in Christ, he identified you as his own by giving you the Holy Spirit..."*

This might seem basic but it is important. We are not a community united by politics, personal interests, or professional pursuits, but by our faith and trust in a person who is establishing God's kingdom: The person of Jesus Christ.

2. This GOOD NEWS we believe in is GOOD NEWS about Jesus.

To believe in Jesus entails believing certain things about who He is based on what he said and did. It is not enough to ask, "Do you believe in Jesus?" We must ask, "What do you believe about Jesus?"

"The term "gospel" refers to the "good news" about who Jesus is, what He has done, what He is doing, and what He will do. In other words, it is news about the past, the present, and about the future

A. We believe the GOOD NEWS about who Jesus is. Jesus is "Christ" Jesus (Messiah Jesus), meaning he is King Jesus! Jesus is the promised messiah; the one who would reign as King, eradicating all evil that would come against God's people from the outside as well as all evil and injustice from within the nation. His rule would establish righteousness, justice and peace.

Mark adds that Jesus is the Son of God. The title "Son of God" was another way to refer to a person who was sent by God and represented God. It did not necessarily indicate that Jesus was God come in the flesh, but as Robert Gundry wrote, "...as this Gospel progresses, no doubt will remain that Mark means us to understand that as God's Son, Jesus is indeed divine."

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Mark went on to point to Jesus divine nature by quoting the words of the prophet Isaiah. In Mark's interpretation of Isaiah, he identified John the Baptist as the messenger who prepares the way for the Lord's coming. By doing so, he identified the "Lord God" of the OT as the "Lord Jesus".

B. We believe the GOOD NEWS about what Jesus has done.

When Jews heard the term "gospel" or "good news" it would draw their thoughts to the promise of [Isaiah 52:7](#),

*How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of the messenger who brings **good news, the good news of peace and salvation, the news that the God of Israel reigns!***

To announce the news that "God reigns" is to announce that the King has come to establish His kingdom. This is what Mark 1:14-15 are referring to when it says, *"The time promised by God has come at last!" he announced. "The Kingdom of God is near! Repent of your sins and believe the Good News!"*

On two separate occasions in Matthew's Gospel we read that Jesus went about *"proclaiming the **gospel of the kingdom** and healing every disease and every affliction among the people."*

The good news about Jesus is not limited to his death and resurrection. Before Jesus died, He lived...and His 33 years of life mattered! The death and resurrection of Jesus is GOOD NEWS, but his life prior to His death and resurrection was GOOD NEWS as well. The GOOD NEWS that King Jesus has come to establish God's kingdom was BAD NEWS for evil, whether it be of demonic or human origin.

From chapter one on, Mark's account of Jesus' life demonstrates Jesus' power and authority as the coming King to establish God's rule over his people and over all creation.

1. The angels act as Jesus servants as he is being tempted in the wilderness.

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2. Jesus called the disciples to himself with such authority that they immediately left their vocations and family members to follow Jesus.
3. Jesus taught with an authority unlike anything the Jews had heard before.
4. Jesus exercised authority and power over all kinds of disease and demons.
5. Jesus acted with the authority to forgive sin
6. Jesus acted as one with authority over the OT Law
7. Jesus exercised authority and power over the created order.
8. He exercised power and authority over death by raising the dead.
9. Jesus ultimate demonstration of power was His own resurrection.

Mark's gospel, his "good news", is the testimony that Jesus, through his life, death, and resurrection, has overcome evil in all its forms; Satan, sin, sickness, and death. This is the climactic turning point in all of human history. In doing so, Jesus has opened the door to God's kingdom for all who believe.

Paul wrote in **Colossians 1:13**, "**He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.**"

We celebrate the good news that we have been forgiven and set free. He has already granted us citizenship in His kingdom!

The Good News of the Kingdom is also the news of what Jesus is doing and will do. The Kingdom is both our future inheritance, which we long for and our present reality which we live in.

C. We believe the GOOD NEWS about what Jesus will do.

The Kingdom Yet to Come

"Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power." 1 Cor. 15:24

Most of the NT references to the Kingdom of God refer to the future kingdom, where God through Christ reigns over all creation.

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Jesus life, death, resurrection and ascension have guaranteed a future kingdom where Satan, sin, sickness, suffering, sorrow and death will be fully, utterly, completely, demolished and abolished; obliterated and eradicated.

In the future kingdom the whole material world is freed from corruption. We will live in the new heavens and new earth without hurricanes or earthquakes. Paul reminds us in 1 Corinthians 15:50-53 that our present physical bodies cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. But that's ok, because at the final resurrection we will receive immortal and incorruptible bodies. The final future kingdom will be free from all moral corruption (2 Peter 3:13): No more betrayal; no more violence; no more hatred; no more exploitation; no more racism; no more perversion; no more letters from Equifax about your identity being stolen. Better yet, no more ICBM's flying over head, and no more fear of terrorism.

We have GOOD NEWS! The King is coming! Our future is bright and glorious! It is an inheritance that cannot be defiled, cannot perish, cannot be stolen from us. But there is also a sense in which the Kingdom is already present.

D. We believe the GOOD NEWS about what Jesus is doing!

The Kingdom is Present

Jesus said, "The Kingdom of God can't be detected by visible signs. You won't be able to say, 'Here it is!' or 'It's over there!' For the Kingdom of God is already among you."

- Luke 17:21

Earlier we saw that we have already been transferred into God's Kingdom. The Kingdom of God is wherever God is reigning. It is not primarily a location, but a realm where God's will is done. Jesus has begun to exercise His kingdom rule by sending His Spirit to dwell within individuals, making them new creations, and among the church, the community of these individuals. As we submit to the Lordship of Jesus, motivated and influenced by the Holy Spirit, God's kingdom will be evident among us. The church, the people of God, has

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the power of the Spirit available to them to experience Jesus authority and power over sin, sickness and the demonic realm. We must remember that these victories will be limited and partial until the final Kingdom. It is only when Jesus returns that Satan, sin, sickness and death will be overcome fully. Paul summed up the benefits of the Kingdom that are ours now with these words:

"For the Kingdom of God is not a matter of what we eat or drink, but of living a life of goodness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." – Romans 14:17

Close: Mankind has been broken by sin. Spiritually, psychologically, physically, emotionally, and socially. We are like Humpty-Dumpty. You know the nursery rhyme:

"Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall, humpty-dumpty had a great fall, all the king's horses and all the king's men couldn't put humpty dumpty back together again."

You know what Humpty's problem was, don't you? He had all the king's horses and all the king's men, but he didn't have the KING!

But I have good news! We have the King! The King has come! The King is among us! The Kingdom has begun! The fullness of the kingdom is coming!

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