YOUR KINGDOM COME YOUR WILL BE DONE
LUKE 17:20-37

Main Idea
God’s kingdom is on the move and is constantly inviting people to enter.

1. THE KINGDOM HAS ALREADY COME (20-21)
   With the first coming of Jesus, god established His kingdom on earth.
   A. NOT WHEN BUT HOW
   B. NOT VISIBLE BUT INVISIBLE
   C. NOT BY WORKS BUT BY FAITH

2. THE KINGDOM WILL COME (22-25)
   With the second coming of Jesus, God will judge the world.
   A. REASON FOR JUDGMENT (22 & 25)
   B. NO CONFUSION (23-24)

3. LIVING IN THE ALREADY BUT NOT YET (26-33)
   There is still time to enter God’s kingdom.
   A. ESTABLISHING PRIORITIES FOR LIVING (26-29)
   B. THERE IS AN END TO THE OFFER (30)
   C. DON’T CHOOSE POORLY (31-33)

4. THE END (34-37)
   There will come a time for judgment.
   A. THE PROMISE TO BELIEVERS
   B. THE PROMISE TO UNBELIEVERS
When we study a passage of Scripture, one of the most important points is that we study it in context. That means we need to pay attention to what comes directly before it and after it. I like to preach through entire books of the Bible because we are always in the context of what immediately precedes the text and we also have the context flavor of the whole book. It's especially important to pay attention to the immediate context of the passage we study in the Gospels because we know for sure that all the Gospels are not in chronological order because they differ. However, we can see that some of the order of the passages are arranged theologically.

Let me relate that to the passage we are studying this morning. Last week we studied through the passage where Jesus healed 10 lepers and only one returned to thank Him. This morning’s text talks about the Kingdom of God. One of the questions we ought to ask is how these two texts relate to one another. If the two texts are placed together because one incident simply happened after the other, there may be no particular significance. However, if Luke chose to place these two incidents together as he wrote, then we want to find out why he placed them together. As we study through the passage, I think we may conclude that Luke intentionally placed these passages together. We will study that later.

I titled this sermon “Your Kingdom Come Your Will Be Done.” I’m sure you recognize that as part of the Lord’s Prayer. Maybe you have recited this prayer using King James English, “Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done.” I have always taken that phrase simply to mean that Jesus was praying that God use Him in accomplishing His will in His life. When we pray that prayer we are simply asking God to accomplish His will in our individual lives. I’m sure that’s part of it. However, as I studied through this morning’s text, Jesus described His Kingdom as both present and future. For example, if we are saved then we already part of God’s Kingdom. However, there is a time that we look forward to when God’s Kingdom will come, destroy evil, and reign in peace forever and ever.

In this text, Jesus reminds us that intentionally choosing to enter His Kingdom is the most important decision we will make in life. He will use Lot’s wife as a negative example. One Sunday morning in Sunday school, in the junior high class, the teacher explained how Lot’s wife sinned and ended up turning into a pillar of salt. As God was destroying Sodom and Gomorrah, the angels were escorting Lot’s family out of the city. They were warned not to look back but Lot’s wife did and was turned into a pillar of salt. During the discussion period, one of the kids asked another kid, “Do you really believe that story about Lot’s wife turning into a pillar of salt?”

“Sure I believe it,” said the other kid. “We were out driving with my mother the other day. She looked back … and turned into a telephone pole.”
One of the points Jesus makes throughout the Gospels is that if we want to enter God’s kingdom, there is no looking back. The main idea of this morning’s text is this. GOD’S KINGDOM IS ON THE MOVE AND IS CONSTANTLY INVITING PEOPLE TO ENTER.

I have often wondered how the religious leaders of Jesus’ day failed to recognize Him as the Messiah. However, even though it is clear to me that Jesus is the Messiah, I can see where the confusion came from. We look forward to a time when Jesus will return and set up His earthly Kingdom. In that day, He will destroy evil and set up a godly and just world. Basically, that’s what the Jewish expectation of Messiah was. They expected God to set up His Kingdom on earth with Messiah as its head. They failed to understand that Messiah had two destinies to fulfill. The one role was as Isaiah’s Suffering Servant; the other as the King of kings and Lord of lords. To be fair to the religious leaders, the disciples never seemed to fully get it either.

1. THE KINGDOM HAS ALREADY COME (20-21)

In verses 20-21 Jesus demonstrated that the Kingdom has already come. WITH THE FIRST COMING OF JESUS, GOD ESTABLISHED HIS KINGDOM ON EARTH. Luke starts off this passage by informing us that the Pharisees asked Jesus when the Kingdom of God would come. In other words, they were asking when the Messiah would come and set up this worldwide political, military, and religious kingdom.

Jesus reformulated the question to not when but how the Kingdom of God would come. Let me just comment here that even though the Pharisees often tried to trap Jesus, this was a legitimate question that they asked the priests, rabbis, and one another. The atmosphere in Israel during the time of Jesus was electric. They sensed the time was right for Messiah and eagerly awaited His arrival. They couldn’t wait to kick Rome out of their land and rule the world with the Messiah. Historically they had seen the Babylonians rule the world, then the Medes and Persians, followed by the Greeks, and now the Romans. Surely it was the time of the Jews. The entire nation of Israel was ready for this.

The time was the present. Jesus, the Promised Messiah, was standing there, right before them. The question was how the Kingdom of God had manifested itself on earth. Let’s take some time to think about how Jesus brought the Kingdom of God to earth. At the beginning of Luke’s Gospel, he recorded Jesus saying this about His Messianic mission:

> “18The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, 19to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor” (Luke 4:18-19 / NIV).

Jesus made it clear that He came to set up God’s Kingdom on earth. When there was a controversy about His casting out a demon, Jesus said this:

> “20But if I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you” (Luke 11:20 / TNIV).
By His very presence, Jesus brought with Him the Kingdom of God to earth. The problem was for the religious leaders that Jesus did not bring with Him the Kingdom they had expected. They had their own vision of what the Kingdom of God would be like.

But Jesus made it clear that the Kingdom at this time was not visible but invisible. He informed the Pharisees that the Kingdom of God is not something that can be observed. The word observed (paratērēsis) is used only once in the New Testament. In classical Greek it described the way a physician looked for symptoms. It could be used in a military sense in looking for signs. For us, we could perhaps equate the word with scientific observation. So for example, there will be no geographic signs or verifiable supernatural signs. The point is there were geographic signs. The Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem. There were supernatural signs. A star miraculously appeared and led the wise men from the east to come and find Jesus. It was the Person of Jesus Who came as the King and brought His Kingdom with Him. There was no geopolitical manifestation of Jesus’ Kingdom. But He exercised power over illness, demons, nature, and death.

And now here is where the story of the lepers comes in. We enter the Kingdom of God not by works but by faith. Before I get to that, let me remind us that not only was the Kingdom of God in operation; but Jesus gave the keys of the Kingdom to Peter. Listen to what Jesus told Peter:

“18... I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of death will not overcome it. 19I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven” (Matthew 16:18-19 / TNIV).

We learn from the rest of the New Testament writings that the Apostles preached the Gospel and invited people to give their lives to Jesus in faith. People entered God’s Kingdom by placing their faith in Jesus. Further, the apostles healed the sick, cast out demons, and even raised the dead. The Kingdom of God is about making people whole and right with God.

Last week we saw Jesus come across 10 lepers. They were outcasts: prevented from entering the temple to worship, alienated from their family and friends, and forbidden to come into contact with healthy human beings. They were alienated from God and alienated from human community. They had heard about Jesus and His power to heal and His declarations to forgive sin. They cried out to Him and Jesus did not disappoint them. He healed all 10 of them. Here is where it got interesting. Even though all 10 had the faith to be cleansed from their leprosy, not all of them came to know Jesus personally as their Lord and Savior. Only one leper returned. He received spiritual insight, came back, fell at Jesus’ feet, and praised God in thanksgiving. He entered the Kingdom of God. Jesus pronounced Him saved. This man who entered the Kingdom of God was not a Jew. He was an outsider. He was a hated Samaritan. He never went to the temple at Jerusalem to offer up sacrifices. He never participated in the Passover celebration in Jerusalem. He never did any religious stuff but he was now accepted into God’s Kingdom because of His faith in and submission to Jesus. Here is the important key to that incident and why Jesus doesn’t want anyone to get all caught up in sings. 9 lepers received deliverance but only 1 leper came to know, love,
and worship the Deliverer. The apostles would welcome many non Jews into God’s Kingdom along with the Jews who had given their lives to Jesus in faith.

I’d like to point out one more thing about this Kingdom of God. It is on the move and it cannot be stopped. Jesus said that even the gates of hell could not withstand the advance of this Kingdom. Jesus started it and invited all who desired to enter it. This Kingdom of God is on the move adding new citizens every day. WITH THE FIRST COMING OF JESUS, GOD ESTABLISHED HIS KINGDOM ON EARTH.

2. THE KINGDOM WILL COME (22-25)

So in one sense, the Kingdom has already come. If you have given your life to Jesus in faith, then you belong to the Kingdom already. However, there is a future fulfillment and manifestation of this Kingdom. In verses 22-25, Jesus reminds us that the Kingdom will come in the future. WITH THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS, GOD WILL JUDGE THE WORLD. This will look more like the Kingdom of God the Jews of Jesus’ day were looking for. At this point, Jesus shifts His attention to His followers. What will keep us on track is to thank God for all the blessings and things we receive; but we must keep our focus on the Giver; the One Who is the source of all we receive.

In verse 22 and verse 25 Jesus lays out the reason for judgment. Throughout all of history, God’s people have been persecuted and have suffered a great deal at the hands of people under the control of Satan. Let’s look at verse 25 first. Jesus made it clear to the disciples that He was the Promised Messiah of Israel and He came to earth with His Kingdom in hand. He made it clear that He would return with a Kingdom that would destroy evil once and for all. However, so there would be no confusion on His followers’ part, He made it clear that He would have to suffer many things and be rejected by many people. That has not changed throughout history. Even today, the Name of Jesus is beaten up badly in the public arena. We have seen how social and political organizations have gone out of their way to remove Jesus and Christianity from the public arena. Islam, Native American religions, Eastern religions and all sorts of other spiritualities are shown a great deal of respect while Christianity and Judaism are portrayed as defective expressions of spirituality. They have banished Christ from public schools and public discourse. We have just come through the Christmas season. Happy holidays have replaced Merry Christmas. There is clearly a negative sentiment in our culture towards Christianity and Judaism.

In verse 22, Jesus gave a bit of information to the disciples that I’m pretty sure they weren’t so happy to receive. Not only was Jesus going to suffer but so were they. Jesus seemed to tell them they were about to suffer so badly, they would long for the Son of Man coming in glory; but they too would have to suffer for their faith in Christ. There are many places around the world where Christians today are suffering for their faith. Christians in Muslim countries have been beheaded for their faith and evangelizing. Christians are arrested and jailed regularly in China for their faith. In the United States and other Western countries, we face some ridicule; but for the most part, we cannot say we have been persecuted for our faith. If the day comes however, we should not be surprised and we should face the suffering with patience, courage and love.
For this reason, God will judge the unbelieving world. We rail against all the immoral behavior in our culture but understand this. People will not go to hell because they have committed adultery, because they engage in homosexual behavior, because they act out immorally as heterosexuals, or any other individual sin. People will go to hell for rejecting Christ. Jesus came to earth to establish His Kingdom. We enter that Kingdom by placing our faith in Jesus Christ and submitting our lives to Him. The most notable gift we receive as we enter God’s Kingdom is eternal life. So those who reject Jesus reject life. That will be the reason for judgment.

Jesus makes it crystal clear that there will be no confusion as He outlines the Second Coming in verses 23-24. In Matthew’s description of the end times, Jesus laid out some general signs. However, Luke makes it clear that we are not to get all crazy about signs of the end times. Jesus almost always connects suffering of His people with His Second Coming. In other words, it seems to me that Jesus wants us to focus on Him during our times of suffering. There will come a time when He rights all the wrongs and wipes every tear away from our eyes. There will come a time when our sorrow is turned to joy and our mourning is turned to celebration. The thought of Jesus’ Second Coming is meant to comfort us during times of suffering.

However, we are not to focus on these signs. Look what Jesus said in verse 23, “People will tell you, ‘There He is!’ or ‘Here He is!’ Do not go running off after them.”

We have talked about this before. There are people out there teaching all about the end times and get people all excited about them. Please don’t waste your time. Jesus made it clear that there will be no confusion and no doubt when He comes. Everybody will know He has arrived with His Kingdom. It will be like sulfur and lightning flashing across the sky from one end to the other. We will know when it happens.

Instead of getting all cranked up about signs and prophecies we ought to be living in expectation that today could be the day. We are to be living patient and faithful lives even during the big and little trials of life. We must be thankful that we are saved and part of God’s Kingdom already. WITH THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS, GOD WILL JUDGE THE WORLD.

3. LIVING IN THE ALREADY BUT NOT YET (26-33)

This next section illustrates the continuity of God’s Kingdom. The final judgment will simply reveal to which kingdom people belong. When Jesus comes again, those already in His Kingdom will be saved and those who are not in His kingdom will be judged and destroyed. It’s as if God’s Kingdom rolls on and finally physically manifests itself. In verses 26-33 we get some idea of what it means to live in the already but not yet. The point here is that THERE IS STILL TIME TO ENTER GOD’S KINGDOM. I think we will do much better to focus on these sorts of things when studying the end times rather than fixating on signs and timetables.
Jesus instructs us that establishing priorities for living is the first order of business in verses 26-33. This has a double significance for us. Jesus brought the Kingdom of God to earth. The Kingdom rolls on picking up new citizens on the way. There will come a time when this Kingdom becomes visible and devours all other kingdoms. No one knows when that day will come but we do know that whatever state of faith we are in at that time will be the state we spend eternity in. Either we will be in the Kingdom of God for eternity or we won’t. There will be no time to change.

The second point goes hand in hand with this. It has to do with what we value in life. Jesus used the people of Noah’s day as the first example. It took Noah about 100 years to build the ark. During that time, he was focused on God while his neighbors ridiculed him. While Noah was focused on his relationship with God, his neighbors went about their everyday lives as if God did not exist. They focused on the normal, everyday activities of life without regard to what God wanted from them. All that time they ignored the message of God. Noah was building the ark. That was clearly a sign that God was going to judge the world for sin. They simply went about enjoying the things of this world. They ate, drank, celebrated marriage, and the other good things in life. They enjoyed their children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren. They spent time with family and friends; enjoying life together. Here is the point Jesus was making. There is nothing wrong with these things. In fact, God commanded Adam and Eve to marry and have children. Not only is food and drink necessary to sustain life, God gave these as gifts for us to enjoy.

However, all these things are to take second place to our relationship with God. God demands first place in our lives. God was speaking to them loudly and clearly. They had ignored their relationship with God. They replaced God with their own desires and their own agendas. The ark stood there; so big, so out of place, and so bizarre that it demanded their attention. It got their attention; but in a negative way. Instead of repenting, they mocked Noah, they rejected God’s message, they rejected God, and worshiped their own desires.

They went about their lives as usual and then one day it started to rain. The way it is described in Genesis, these floods came all at once. Water came down from heaven and water gushed up from inside the earth. All of a sudden they were killed; but I’m sure they had a few moments before death when they realized what was happening but it was too late. That’s the way it will be when Christ comes the Second time. People may realize what they are in for; but it will be too late.

You and I must constantly evaluate our priorities in life. There are many things for us to enjoy in life. God gives them to us as blessings. However, we must constantly remember that there is only One God. He demands that we put Him first in our lives and that He is first in all that we do. As long as God is first in our lives; we are free to enjoy all these blessings. However, if some of these blessings start to become first in our lives, then they have become idols that we worship and God will not tolerate that.

Secondly, He used Lot’s wife as an example that we should never follow. Here again, Jesus reminds us that no one in Sodom or Gomorrah was thinking about serving and loving God. They went on with business as usual right up to the very end. By the time God started
raining down fire and sulfur from heaven on them; there may have been a moment where they realized what was happening; but it was too late to change.

Jesus told us many times in the Gospels that we are not to turn back from following Him. There will be difficult times and there will be times when following Him means that we may suffer; but in order to live in God’s Kingdom, we must have already rejected the world and we must continue to reject the things of this world. Lot’s wife turned back. Her heart was in Sodom and so she perished with Sodom. Jesus said where our hearts are; there also lies our treasure. The first priority in our lives is to serve and love our Lord Jesus Christ.

Verse 30 reminds us that there is an end to the offer. Right now, at this very moment in time, citizenship in God’s Kingdom is open to all who will receive Him. In other words, if you are hearing this message, there is still time to enter God’s Kingdom. We do this by rejecting the way we have been living. We confess all our sins to God and ask Him for forgiveness. We ask Jesus to come into our hearts. We give Him control of our lives as we surrender to Him in faith. This grants us access to God’s Kingdom and Jesus grants us citizenship. Don’t forget the first blessing we receive as citizens of God’s Kingdom is eternal life. We will be connected to Jesus forever.

However, just like the people around Noah, just like the citizens of Sodom and Gomorrah, and just like Lot’s wife, there will come a sudden end of the world as we know it. When Jesus comes the Second time, it will be too late. When Jesus appears, the offer of eternal life will no longer be offered. At that time, our destiny will be sealed. If we are already in God’s Kingdom, then we will be with Jesus forever. If we are not part of God’s Kingdom when Jesus appears, we will spend eternity separated from God in hell with no hope of change.

Verses 31-33 warn us not to choose poorly. Today, right now we have the opportunity to receive eternal life. We need to take time to assess where we are in our relationship with God. Since Jesus could return at any time, we need to be ready to meet Him. In my opinion, that’s what the study of the end times should be. Am I ready to meet Jesus right here and right now? There is no more urgent question to answer. Nothing else matters in life if that question has not been answered in the affirmative. If we are believers, then let’s live up to our calling as citizens of God’s Kingdom. Let us not look back at the world as if it has anything appealing. The world has nothing to offer God’s children. We must die to this world because we have life and citizenship in God’s Kingdom. If you are not a believer, please don’t wait another minute. When that lightning flashes, it will be too late. THERE IS STILL TIME TO ENTER GOD’S KINGDOM.

4. THE END (34-37)

There is no doubt about Jesus point about the end in verses 34-37. THERE WILL COME A TIME FOR JUDGMENT. There is no doubt. The Kingdom exists now and there will be a point in time where the Kingdom will become visible and will judge evil. Everyone who does not have citizenship in God’s kingdom will be judged.
Jesus took time to lay out the promise to believers. In this day, Jesus is going to rapture the believers out of this world before He judges it. Now please watch this. People will be going about their everyday lives and all of a sudden, Christians will disappear from this world. God and the angels will just yank us up out of this world. We will be doing things in life just like unbelievers. The difference is that we will have our priorities right. We will be doing everyday stuff but our hearts and minds will be dedicated to Christ. The promise to believers is that we will not suffer the wrath and judgment of God.

The promise Jesus makes to the unbelievers is not so good. They will be left behind. The way the passage is written, it seems as if Jesus will rapture the Christians and then right away rain down judgment. Again it will be that sick “Uh Oh” moment when the unbelievers will realize that judgment is about to overtake them. Jesus promised that THERE WILL COME A TIME FOR JUDGMENT.

Let’s do a quick review. Jesus came to earth about 2,000 years ago and established His Kingdom. His Kingdom rolls on and everyone who submits to Jesus in faith enters the Kingdom and is given instant citizenship which means they have eternal life guaranteed with Jesus. Right now, the offer is open to anyone who wants to enter. However, there will come a day when it will be too late. At that time, Jesus will come again. He will rapture His children out of the world and then judge the unbelievers. Here is where we are right now: GOD’S KINGDOM IS ON THE MOVE AND IS CONSTANTLY INVITING PEOPLE TO ENTER.

It may be good for us to begin and end our day thinking about the end. There is a lot at stake. Listen to how the Apostle John described the end in Revelation:

“11Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. The earth and the heavens fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. 12And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. 13The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and everyone was judged according to what they had done. 14Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. 15All whose names were not found written in the book of life were thrown into the lake of fire” (Revelation 20:11-15 / TNIV).

There is only one way for us to have our names written in the book of life. The number one priority we must focus on in life is to love and serve our Lord Jesus Christ. Knowing that Jesus will come; knowing that Jesus will save His children; and knowing that Jesus will judge and punish unbelievers; ought to be what we focus on in our study of the end times. That’s all we really need to know.