

8 The King

This is the eighth talk outline in The God Story Sermon Series. The related chapters in The God Story book are Chapter 8, *The King*. The books in the Bible this chapter corresponds with are Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

Teaching Outline

Key aims

To explore the theme of the Kingdom of God, how Jesus' announced, described and demonstrated the kingdom and to emphasise the paradoxical of the Kingdom of God.

The God Story storytelling method

The God Story Storyteller understands that to teach The God Story effectively a dual teaching method is required. This is the art of teaching in a way that both **unfolds the eternal purposes of God through history and also releases them into personal encounter**. Practically this will mean prayerfully considering in each talk outline what parts you want to 'go deeper' in and what parts you want to mention at a headline level. We trust the Spirit will inspire and guide you to find the right cadence as you aim to give a passionate sweep of the unfolding narrative while also narrowing the focus in certain places to emphasise personal application and encounter.

Key Bible passages

You may want to read a short passage of scripture before you begin your talk. The passages below are the ones we believe are most relevant to this particular talk.

We recommend you choose one of these:

Luke 4:1-29 (Isa 61)

Matthew 5:1-9

Matthew 16:13-28

Matthew 22:34-40

Teaching notes

The notes provided will equip you to understand more of the context and more of the story as you prepare your talk. Generally speaking the talk outline follows the structure of the corresponding chapter in The God Story book. We feel the key sections in the Talk Outline below relate to the main flow of the unfolding scriptural narrative and so we have included key Biblical passages and quotes from The God Story to assist you in this. We recommend using these sections to shape your talk but please choose the parts which you feel are most helpful for your context.

[Continue to the sermon](#) ✓

Introduction

Recap of previous session(s)

Israel had suffered many years of exile, both in foreign lands and then for many years under foreign control within their own land. After 400 years of silence, the pregnancy of heaven came full term and in the back streets of Bethlehem God's son was born to a young couple, Mary and Joseph. The name given to this baby boy was Jesus because He would save His people from their sins. The Word had well and truly become flesh. God had taken on a human face and this changed everything. After Jesus' birth, little is said about the first 30 years of Jesus' life. We are left to imagine Jesus revelling in creation and rejoicing in His Father's love. These 30 years of maturing sonship were sealed as Jesus was baptised into belovedness - the Spirit rested on Jesus body and the Father spoke loving words of affection over His Son.

Talk overview

After 30 years maturing in sonship Jesus was ready for ministry. First of all however Jesus must pass through the wilderness, enduring the temptations of the enemy and ultimately overcoming where Israel had failed. Returning from the wilderness in the power of the Spirit, Jesus declares He is the Messianic King the prophets had spoken of and at this point Jesus' kingdom mission began. The key theme of Jesus' ministry was 'the kingdom of God' and in particular the 'good news' that in Jesus this kingdom was now accessible in a whole new way. Jesus revealed at the heart of the kingdom of God was a family, and so He chose disciples, men and women who would not just be about His work with Him but who would model to the world what the kingdom family looked like. The disciples watched Jesus announce the good news that the kingdom of God had come near, describe the kingdom of God in parables and sermons and demonstrate the kingdom in miraculous signs and wonders, acts of celebration and forgiveness. Everything Jesus did captivated the disciples but also confused them - no king of Israel had ever come to his throne the servant-hearted way this One was revealing.

1 The wilderness (Matthew 4:1-11, Luke 4:1-13)

Explain after Jesus' baptism, he was not sent to the bright lights of the city but the inhospitable reality of the wilderness. Remember the biblical theme of 'wilderness' - the painful gift which reveals the true source of our identity.

- + Emphasise Jesus' 30 years of maturing in sonship had equipped him for 40 days of fasting in the wilderness. Jesus may have been fasting but He was actually feasting on the words of beloved sonship His Father had spoken over Him.
- + Explain how the enemy came for Jesus in the wilderness three separate times, his tactics the same as they were in the Garden of Eden - to deceive Jesus, luring Him to find identity outside of the Father's love.
 - **First temptation:** to find pleasure and provision outside of the presence of God
 - **Second temptation:** to strive for prestige and performance outside God's will for your life
 - **Third temptation:** to seize power and position outside of beloved sonship
- + Emphasise Jesus' victory over the enemy, pushing him back with the word of God and in the power of confident sonship

≡ Key quote

*"The enemy leaves the wilderness with his tail between his legs. Jesus had been tempted in every way a human being can be but as a new Adam and a true Israelite he stood his ground and resisted the demonic assault. He overcomes where both Adam (in the garden) and Israel (in the wilderness) had failed. The foretold serpent-crushing liberator promised from the Garden of Eden had come into the world as a confident, beloved Son."*¹

2 The Nazareth manifesto: (Luke 4:14–30)

Explain when Jesus came back from the wilderness 'in the power of the Spirit' He went back home first (!) - to Nazareth. On a typical Sabbath day He attended the local synagogue. Emphasise the divine synchronicity of this event as Jesus was given a passage from the prophet Isaiah to read.

- + Read Luke 4:16-21: Explain how we should understand this as Jesus' inaugural speech - the manifesto of the kingdom of God, which Jesus, the true King, had come to announce was now coming in a whole new way.

≡ Key quote

*"Jesus' unveiling of His true identity may not have been a typical coronation moment in worldly terms. The synagogue in this little Galilean village was certainly no Lincoln Memorial or Westminster Abbey. Nonetheless, this was a crowning moment for Jesus. His style was calm and self-effacing but His claim was audacious. 'Today the scriptures are being fulfilled,' a modest way of saying, 'I am Israel's Messiah, the fulfillment of over 300 prophecies from God's holy prophets, and I am bringing about the reign of God.' Isaiah, the perfect speech-writer for such an occasion, had provided the words that would serve as Jesus' manifesto for the days ahead. Good news was coming for the poor. Freedom would come for the oppressed. The blind would see. Justice and liberation would be unleashed in all sorts of directions."*²

- + Encourage people to imagine the holy suspense as Jesus read 'His own bio', how "the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed up on him" (v.20).
- + Teach into the connection between the word 'Spirit' and 'anointing' that Jesus quoted in Luke 4:18 and how the thread of kingship in The God Story plotline is now being fulfilled in Jesus.

≡ Key quote

*"Jesus the Son was now being marked out, through the Spirit's anointing, as Jesus the King. The word for anointing in Greek is chrio, the term from which we get Christ, or Messiah in Hebrew. 'Christ' therefore is not Jesus' last name but the title that marked him as the Spirit-filled Messiah who had come to bring about God's rule."*³

3 The kingdom of God (Matt 4:12-17)

Take a moment to explain why the main substance of the Gospel accounts focuses on Jesus' kingdom mission and the theme of the kingdom of God - the authors want us to know how God (through Jesus) is becoming King of His people again. Plan A is being reinstated!

≡ Key quote

*"As we learned in Chapter 4 at a crucial hinge-point in The God Story, Israel under Samuel's leadership had rejected the Lordship of Yahweh. They wanted a human king like the other nations. God had agonizingly granted their request but it was never Plan A....against this backdrop, the Gospels present Jesus announcing the re-establishing of God's reign on the earth. Plan A was being reinstated. The world was about to be flipped right side up again, turned on an axis of self-giving love, and Jesus called this new reality 'the kingdom of God'. It was Jesus' favourite thing to talk about."*⁴

- + Define the Kingdom of God: "Defined simply, the kingdom of God is the place where God is acknowledged as King; where God's will and God's ways are realized. Or another way to put it is, the kingdom of God will always look like King Jesus."

» Application opportunity

Encourage people to imagine what it would look like if God's will and God's ways became a reality in their family, community, and the world at large.

4 The kingdom family (Matt 4:18-22; John 1:35-51)

If Jesus was going to reproduce on earth what was in heaven it would begin with a circle of friends, and establish them into a family. Explain the first moves of Jesus' kingdom mission were to invite a circle of men and women (disciples) to join Him. Jesus' hope was twofold:

- + Firstly that they would become like Him. This is what being a disciple really means - becoming like Jesus in all of life. Therefore Jesus gave the disciples a 'back-stage pass' to His life.
- + Secondly, Jesus wanted to model what the Kingdom Family really looked like on earth - this was the Eternal Family's dream from the beginning.

- + Emphasise the 'ordinary' nature of Jesus' disciples and the real-life issues they possessed. Highlight their differences and the tensions which arose and the fact that Jesus made room for women despite the cultural taboos. But despite the 'underwhelming nature' of the candidates, this was Jesus' way of showing the world what the Kingdom Family really looked like.

5 The kingdom of God

Explain how we could say Jesus' revelation of the kingdom of God was expressed in three main ways - the kingdom announced, the kingdom described, the kingdom demonstrated - we will explore each in turn.

6 The kingdom announced

Jesus began announcing the kingdom through one of His favourite phrases - 'Repent, for the kingdom of God has come near. (Matt 4:17. Mark 1:15)

- + **Important context:** in the same way a royal subject would herald the victory of their King in the cities which had now come under their rule, Jesus came announcing the 'good news' that God's loving and just rule (kingdom) had come to the earth in a whole new and unprecedented way.
- + Jesus called this message 'good news' meaning 'gospel' because he was coming to reveal the love of the Father and to destroy the works of darkness.

≡ Key quote

*"Everything humanity was powerless to conquer, Jesus had come to defeat; and everything humanity was truly longing for, Jesus had come to complete."*⁵

- + Reemphasise the principle of repentance, and how Jesus built upon John the Baptist's preaching: *"Only an act of 'giving yourself up' and turning your whole life around (metanoia) would position you to receive this kingdom."*⁶
- + Focus on how this message essentially challenged where a person's primary allegiance lay. *"Within this context Jesus' 'good news' naturally challenged people's allegiance to other kingdoms. Jesus was calling people not only to repent from sinful behaviour but to relinquish their allegiance to opposing kingdoms to enable them to embrace the rule of his kingdom."*⁷

7 The kingdom described

Explain how Jesus not only announced the kingdom of God but took time to describe it.

- + *“Through the use of parables, stories and conversations sometimes delivered in the synagogues but often shared around tables and on boats, Jesus articulated the culture of the kingdom of God.....His accessible metaphors of water, bread, seeds, children, business and money naturally hooked his hearers’ attention. He drew them into another world and all the possibilities of deeper and more meaningful life in the kingdom of God.”*⁸
- + Emphasise Jesus' description of the kingdom of God was best captured in the Sermon on the Mount - *a new law on another mountain for a new humanity* (Matthew 5-9).
- + Read Matthew 5:3-12 (Beatitudes)

≡ Key quote

*“The Beatitudes are not to be understood as a list of entry requirements, addressed to a bunch of isolated individuals. Rather they are revolutionary hope-filled words declaring the ‘good news’ that those who have formerly felt ‘outside’ of the kingdom of God are actually the ones best positioned to receive it.”*⁹

- + Emphasise Jesus' teachings described nothing less than God's vision for a new human society and how this was a fulfilment (not a contradiction) of what the Torah had always been pointing towards (Matt 5:17).
- + In particular, explain Jesus' reinterpretation of Torah through his response to the Pharisees question, *“Which is the greatest commandment?”* (Matthew 22:34-40)

≡ Key quote

*“Jesus took all the Old Testament, all 613 rules plus all the Hebraic prophetic tradition, and summed it up in two commandments. Love God. Love your neighbour. It is impossible to overstate how revolutionary this moment was for those listening. Jesus left no room for any more speculative theology – the goal of Torah and the central moral category of his kingdom was sacrificial love. Vertical love (love for God) is inseparable from horizontal love (love for one’s fellow human being). This reinterpretation of Torah would lead to a reordering of the whole world. The kingdom of God is against everything that hinders love.”*¹⁰

8 The kingdom demonstrated (Matt 7:28–9:34)

Explain everything Jesus said, he lived. He was not just announcing and describing the kingdom, he demonstrated it i.e. the effects of the kingdom were tangible. Describe some of the effects - *“bodies, minds, hearts, bones, creation itself came into alignment with God’s original design.”*¹¹

- + Emphasise all of Jesus’ miracles were a revelation of the Father’s love.

≡ Key quote

*“All of Jesus’ supernatural demonstrations of the kingdom were an expression of his Father’s heart. Jesus had confirmed to his curious disciples that when they had seen him they had seen the Father. No wonder every miracle was motivated by mercy. For Jesus’ zeal to renew and restore individuals was an embodied expression of the tender heart of the Father for his broken but beloved creation.”*¹²

- + Explain how these demonstrations could be summarised in four main ways. Consider telling one story relating to each:

- Healing (the leper, woman with an issue of blood)

≡ Key quote

*“Every miraculous ‘sign’ of healing was a ‘signpost’ towards a vision of God’s reign where sickness is conquered and death is defeated.”*¹³

- Deliverance (two men in Gadarenes, little boy thrown into the fire)

≡ Key quote

*“Jesus launched a full-frontal assault on the oppressive lies the enemy had bound people up in for far too long. Dark, oppressive spirits causing agonising torment in the minds of the ones Jesus loved were driven out by the liberating light of his words, releasing them into glorious freedom and perfect peace.”*¹⁴

- Forgiveness (woman caught in adultery, a paralytic man lowered through the roof)

≡ Key quote

*“The kingdom of God was a condemnation-free zone. Weary souls, weighed down by a lifetime of guilt, offence and relational pain, were released into the intoxicating freedom of God’s forgiveness.”*¹⁵

- Celebration (Matthew and tax collectors, prodigal son)

≡ Key quote

“Jesus’ demonstration of the kingdom also came in his joyful reception of every individual he encountered. Those labelled worthless by the world were seen and celebrated. Jesus sat at their tables to help them know they had a place at his. He developed a reputation for partying as much as he prayed because he was unashamed to confirm heaven rejoices over those who have been passed by.”¹⁶

9 Conclusion: The kingdom and a cross (Matt 16:13–28)

In light of all Jesus did (described above), everyone wanted a king like Jesus. But explain the strongly paradoxical nature of how Jesus expressed his kingship which was so difficult for his disciples to understand.

- + Retell the story of Jesus’ conversation with the disciples at Caesarea Philippi. First, emphasise Peter’s profound revelation and confession (‘you are the Christ.’), resulting in Jesus’ affirmation of Peter’s identity and calling (‘you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church’). Yet focus on how straight after this he completely misses the way in which Jesus was going to establish his kingdom and return to his Father’s glory:
 - *“The rock on which Jesus would build his church had just become a stumbling-block to God’s eternal purpose”¹⁷*

» Application opportunity

What are some of the ways we miss this paradoxical nature of Jesus’ Kingdom power?

10 Helpful summary

- + Reemphasising the paradoxical nature of Jesus Kingdom will set up the next chapter, The Passion.

≡ Key quote

*"No one has ever really thought the prophetic words about a coming deliverer would be combined with others about a suffering servant...No one really imagined that the kingdom of God would come through a Roman cross."*¹⁸

Questions for Reflection or Further Application

Jesus revealed the heart of the Father! Why is it so crucial we understand this? At the heart of Jesus' ministry was his commitment to discipling those closest to him. Who are the people God has called you to disciple? Who is discipling you?

Three Sacred Themes

The closing page of each chapter in The God Story book includes a summary shaped around three sacred themes which we believe helps knit the overarching storyline together. Feel free to use this as an extra resource to The God Story Sermon Series if you feel this would be helpful to summarise each talk. You will find this for *The King* on p.154.

End of sermon

- 1 Alain Emerson and Adam Cox, *The God Story; Encountering unfailing love in the unfolding narrative of scripture*; (London, Form SPCK Group 2024), p.136
- 2 Ibid, p.136
- 3 Ibid, p.139
- 4 Ibid, p.140
- 5 Ibid, p.143
- 6 Ibid, p.143
- 7 Ibid, p.143
- 8 Ibid, p.144
- 9 Ibid, p.145
- 10 Ibid, p.148
- 11 Ibid, p.148
- 12 Ibid, p.149
- 13 Ibid, p.149-150
- 14 Ibid, p.150
- 15 Ibid, p.150
- 16 Ibid, p.150
- 17 Ibid, p.152
- 18 Ibid, p.152-153

***All Bible passages quoted are taken from NIV unless stated.**