


JESUS AND THE NEW COVENANT

UNIT TWO: JESUS FULFILS HIS MISSION

Lessons 1

A King Announces His Kingdom

CONTENT:

1. Jesus came to proclaim the Kingdom of God on earth: a kingdom of love and peace. His coming showed that Satan's reign of sin, sorrow and death was coming to an end.
2. The Kingdom of God consists, not of land or riches, but of people, or the 'family of God' gathered around Jesus the King. Everyone is invited to enter the kingdom. It belongs especially to the poor and humble. Jesus came to rescue sinners and those in bondage.
3. How did Jesus proclaim his kingdom?
 - By his word (especially through his parables, by which he invited and challenged people);
 - Through signs and wonders, which made people believe in him;
 - By sending out his disciples;
 - Most of all by his death and resurrection.
4. What must we do to enter the kingdom? Scripture tells us what we must repent and  believe in Christ; we must become like little children; we must show 'active love' towards the poor and needy.

REFERENCES: Matthew 5:3; 13:34; 18:1-4; 25:31-36; 28:19. Mark 6:7. John 12:31,32. Acts 2:22. 1Timothy 1:15. Luke 4:16-21. CCC 541-550.

MATERIALS NEEDED: Bibles; handouts, blackboard.

I. STARTER:

- Have you heard of the term 'word association'? It is a method used to discover what is in your mind, and what connection your mind has made with different words. It can be used by a psychiatrist to help you remember things from your childhood, or by a detective to get clues of a crime you may have witnessed.
- Today we will use 'word association' to find out what you know about a certain topic. When I say a word, immediately write down the first word that comes to mind, even if you don't think it is very appropriate. For example if I say 'TREE' the word you write may be GREEN, SHADE, MANGO, COOL, SKY, HOUSE, or even PAPA or some other person's name.

[When the students are ready with pens and paper, say: WATER, SONG, KING and KINGDOM, with a short pause between each word. Allow a few students to share their words for WATER and SONG. Focus more on the last 2 words, writing them on the blackboard. Bring out the following, referring to the words students have given:]

The topics we are looking at today are 'kings' and 'kingdoms'. What have we found out about them?

- A king is someone with power, wealth, and authority.
 - He makes laws and sees that they are followed.
 - He normally has an army which he uses to guard his kingdom from other powers who want to take over. He may also go out to conquer new lands and enlarge his kingdom.
 - If a king is strong and a good ruler, the people live in peace and prosperity.
- Today we hear about Jesus, who announced that the kingdom of God had come near. What did he mean by this? Didn't everything belong to God anyway? Though everything does belong to God, human beings chose to disobey him and allowed the Enemy into their lives. Ever since this happened, we have suffered division, enmity, sorrow and death.

Jesus, who is the true King, came to announce the kingdom of God on earth. He didn't come to take over land or castles, but to win us back to God. He came to gather people and make them 'God's family'. Those who enter this kingdom experience peace, freedom and life.

II. DEVELOPMENT:

Let us discover what the Kingdom of God is all about.

[Give out handouts. Allow students to work in pairs and do the first exercise [1]. They look up the references in their Bibles. The answers are to be circled in the grid and then written. After about 15 minutes students give the answers.]

WHO BELONGS TO THE KINGDOM OF GOD?

1. Whom did Jesus come for? The POOR, CAPTIVES, BLIND, OPPRESSED.
2. Whom did Jesus come to save? SINNERS
3. Jesus said that the Kingdom of God belongs to the POOR IN SPIRIT. [NB. The Good News Bible says, 'Those who know they are spiritually poor']
4. Who is invited to this Kingdom? ALL PEOPLES.

HOW DID JESUS PROCLAIM THE KINGDOM?

1. By teaching them through PARABLES. (Jesus mostly used parables to bring across the truths about God.)
2. By MIRACLES & WONDERS.
3. By sending out his DISCIPLES.
4. Most of all by his DEATH and RESURRECTION. (When Jesus said "When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all people to myself." He was talking about his death and his resurrection.)

WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

1. Whom must we become like to enter the Kingdom of God? A CHILD.
2. When Jesus announced the kingdom, he asked people to do 2 things. What were they? REPENT and BELIEVE (One word for 'turn away from your sins' is 'repent')
3. Jesus described the time when he would come as king to judge the world. Who must we care for if we want to possess the kingdom?
The HUNGRY, THIRSTY, STRANGERS, NAKED, SICK and PRISONERS.

[The remaining exercises [2]and [3]are done in pairs. Students search in their Bibles for one example each of an exorcism performed by Jesus and a parable that challenges. Allow them to share after they have done both.] E.g. of parables and their challenges:

The Unforgiving servant: 'Forgive others freely as God has forgiven you!'

Salt and light: 'Be like Jesus and make a difference in the world.'

Two house builders: 'Don't just hear God's word, but start acting on it. Make Christ the foundation of your life.'

- We see from all these Bible readings that Jesus' kingdom is very different from that of the kings of the world. It is not a kingdom of worldly riches and power. In fact it is just the opposite: Those who are humble, poor and loving have first place in his kingdom.
- His kingdom has come, and yet it is not yet come completely. It will finally 'take over' when Christ the King comes at the end of time to judge the world. Then everything will fall into place.

III. REFLECTION & PRAYER:

Christ came to invite you to be a part of his kingdom. He offers you his lasting joy and peace. Look again at the section 'WHAT SHOULD WE DO?' Ask yourself, 'Am I doing what Christ asked me to do?' Let's spend some time in silence to think and pray. [Students reflect in silence]