

Chapter 6



The Message of The Ekklesia

What message should the home congregation preach to the world? To put it simply and briefly, it should be the same message Jesus preached and the message he told the disciples to preach. Let's look and see what Jesus preached. What did He preach and what did He tell his disciples to preach?

There are quite a few scriptures that I will mention in this chapter. Please write them down or highlight them. You are going to need them to do this chapter's application and activation. Please follow along as we dive in here to discover from the Bible, what the message of the Ekklesia is.

Before we look at what the message of the Ekklesia is, we need to look first at what Jesus' message is not. There are a lot of things we preach today that Jesus never preached. This might be disturbing to some of you. It might be provocative

to some of you, but I encourage you to search the matter out and see whether what I am telling you is true or not.

There are a lot of things we preach today that Jesus never preached. For example, do you know that Jesus never preached a sermon on deliverance? He just demonstrated deliverance to the disciples, but he didn't preach sermons about it. He didn't preach a sermon on healing either. I looked and

couldn't find any sermons on healing preached by Jesus. He didn't preach on healing, He just healed people. Everywhere he went he healed people. He was demonstrating the power of God to the disciples so that they could do the same thing.

He never preached a sermon on worship. He had a conversation about worship once with a woman by a well but it wasn't a sermon. He never preached on worship. He never preached the message, one that I've spent many years preaching, that you must be born again. That message is in the Bible but it wasn't a sermon that was preached. Jesus had a conversation with a man, who actually was a religious man. This took place in private in the middle of the night, maybe like 2:00 a.m. It really wasn't a sermon. It was a discussion. If you look at the passage, the man is asking questions and Jesus is answering them. Jesus never preached one sermon on being born again.

What Jesus' Message Was NOT?



Many things we preach, He did NOT:

Deliverance

Healing

Worship

You Must Be Born Again

He NEVER preached about himself!

He never told us to preach about HIM!

In fact, it may be a surprise to all of you, but Jesus never preached a sermon about himself. Beyond that, he never told us to preach a sermon about him. Yet most of our preaching is about him.

What has the church been preaching? I preached the church message from the year 1972 up to the year 2000. When I received the baptism of the Holy Spirit in the year 2000, everything changed for me. These are the things I preached when I started preaching in church. This is how I know that all of these things are preached in the churches today.

The church preaches about the virgin birth and the sinless life of Christ. It preaches about his vicarious atonement and how Jesus died on the cross for the

sins of the entire world. The church preaches about Jesus' resurrection to new life. The church preaches about Jesus' divinity and humanity. It preaches about how Jesus is fully God in his Divinity and how He is fully man in his humanity.

The church preaches about

What's The Church's Message?



- Virgin Birth & Sinless Life
- Vicarious Atonement
- His Resurrection
- His Divinity & His Humanity
- His miracles, Parables, Love, Grace, Compassion, Mercy,
- Victorious Return
- You must be Born Again

Jesus' miracles. Everywhere he went, he performed miracles—amazing miracles. The church preaches that He taught in parables. I preached many times on the parables of Christ. I preached about his love, his grace, his compassion and his mercy. The church preaches all of these things. Let's not forget that the church preaches his victorious return. He's coming back as the King of kings and Lord of lords to rule the earth and to rule the Kingdom of Heaven here on earth.

The church has preached and still preaches these things. The church preaches that you must be born again. That was probably one of the main messages that I preached. You have to realize that all of these things are merely the entrance point into the Kingdom of God and to knowing Jesus. Jesus said, "I am the door. I am the Way." What he meant was he was the door into the kingdom. He said, "I am the gate. The sheep enter in through me." He's the gate and we must be born again. I'm not saying don't preach these things. I'm saying that it is not the complete message that Jesus preached and not what he told us to preach. These things are necessary to enter into the Kingdom, but they are not the complete picture of life in the Kingdom of God.

So when we look at the church today and ask the question, "What is preached in most churches?" I can tell you the answer to that question. Right after people are born again, they are encouraged to attend a baptism class where they will learn about the significance of baptism and the basics of the Christian faith. Then they are encouraged to attend a membership class. Upon the completion of that class, they will be encouraged to come up before the congregation and commit themselves to membership of that church. The congregation will be asked to receive these folks into the membership of this church and then they will vote on it. They shake hands, give them the right hand of fellowship and welcome them into the membership of the church. Then they are encouraged to become a good member of the church and find their place of service in that church.

There are multitudes of ways to serve in a local church and people are encouraged to get involved. They will hear that it's time to get involved and learn how to serve Christ in the church. They might be recruited to be on a worship team or a committee that arranges the flowers on the platform. They might be invited to become a deacon or to learn more about the care of the building and the grounds and the maintenance of things. They might be taught how to serve on a board, be an usher or rise up to leadership in the men's ministry or serve singing in the choir. There are lessons, seminars and classes on how to sing and how to be a member of the worship team. There are seminars on how to teach Sunday school class, or a weekend retreat, or seminar on how to be a youth leader. All of these things are teaching people,

once they have been born again, how to serve *inside* the church. It's almost like a funnel that is entered by being born again.

Come into the building and learn how to serve inside the box. Inside the box is where many Christians are taught

serve Christ. All of these things that I mentioned are taught inside the box to learn how to be a good church member.

What's The Church's Message?



Attend "Baptism Class"

Attend "Membership Class"

Become a "Member" of our Church

Learn how to serve:

On a committee, become a deacon

On a board, be an usher, men's ministry

In the choir, On the Worship Team, Teach Sunday School Class, or Youth


Are these the things that Jesus taught? Is that what he said? What did Jesus preach? What was his message? You know, right after Jesus was baptized and he came up out of the River Jordan, He went into the wilderness and he was tempted for forty days. In one of the temptations, the devil showed him all of the kingdoms of the world and offered them to Him. Satan said, "Just bow down and worship me, and I will give you all the kingdoms of the world." They were his to give. Satan tempted Jesus with two more temptations as well, but Jesus refused to bow down. The Bible says an angel came and ministered to Jesus and Satan left him for a while.

After that baptism and temptation, Jesus started preaching. What was his message? The first verbal message that He preached is found in Matthew 4:17. "From that time Jesus began to preach, saying Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." This is the first recording of the first message that Jesus preached.

"Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." What does "at hand" mean? It means the kingdom is here. The kingdom of God has arrived. The gate is open. The door is open. The way is open. He said the kingdom is now. It's not something you have to wait for until you die. It's now. It's not far off in the distance. Things that are off in the future, you can't appropriate now. He wanted us to appropriate the kingdom now.

I love the way the Passion translation says this very same verse in Matthew 4:17 "From that time on, Jesus began to proclaim His message with these words, 'Keep turning away from your sins and come back to God for His kingdom realm is now accessible.'" Isn't that wonderful? Isn't that powerful? I just love that. The heaven's kingdom realm is now accessible. This was his message from his baptism throughout his entire ministry.

What Was Jesus' Message?



Immediately after Baptism & Temptation

Matthew 4:17 (NKJV) From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the [kingdom of heaven is at hand](#)."

"at hand" = is HERE! has arrived!

From that time on Jesus began to proclaim his message with these words: "Keep turning away from your sins and come back to God, for [heaven's kingdom realm is now accessible](#)." Matt 4:17 TPT

The Bible says that his first sermon was the Sermon on the Mount. He went up on the top of a mountain. A bunch of people gathered around him and he began to preach. In that sermon there's a passage of Scripture that we call the Beatitudes. It starts with Mat-

What Was Jesus' Message?



His first sermon: "The Sermon on the Mount"

Matthew 5:3 (NKJV) "Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is [the kingdom of heaven](#)."

Matthew 5:10 (NKJV) Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is [the kingdom of heaven](#)."

thew 5:3, "Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." The Beatitudes end with Matthew 5:10, "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness

sake for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." It's almost like Jesus created a sandwich here of the kingdom of heaven, and in between the sandwich he put the key ingredients for the blessed life. That's what blessed means. The blessed life of the kingdom of God—he sandwiched it in with these two Beatitudes and presented to them what kingdom life is like in that Sermon on the Mount.

Also in part of the Sermon on the Mount, he told us how to pray. He said, "In this manner, therefore, pray, 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.'" He taught us to pray that the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of God, would come

down here and that our communities, neighborhoods and cities would begin to look more like heaven and less like hell on earth. That's what we are to be praying—that his kingdom would come here and now. He went to every city and town. Everywhere he went, he did not change his message. Everywhere Jesus went he preached the kingdom.

What Was Jesus' Message?



His first sermon: "The Sermon on the Mount"

Matthew 6:9-10 (NKJV) In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. [Your kingdom come](#). Your will be done [On earth as it is in heaven](#)."

The Bible says in Matthew 4:23 and Luke 4:43, Jesus went about all of Galilee teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing all kinds of sickness and disease among the people. But he said to them, "I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also because for this purpose I have been

sent." What did Jesus say he must do? Preach the kingdom of God. Why did Jesus say he was sent here to earth? To preach the kingdom of God. He brought it with him. You know the three wise men figured that out didn't they? They brought gifts and laid them at the feet of the one who was born a king.

What did Jesus say to his disciples when he taught them in Matthew 13? This will be part of your study in the application and activation to go back and look at Matthew 13. Because six different times Jesus says "the kingdom of

What Was Jesus' Message?



In every City & Town

Matthew 4:23 NKJV And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, [preaching the gospel of the kingdom](#), and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.

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."

heaven is like..." and then He illustrates it with a story from their life. Such as, the kingdom of heaven is like a man who found a pearl. The kingdom of heaven is like all these things that he explained in detail. The blessings and the benefit of Kingdom life.

Then in Matthew 13:10 and 11 Jesus disciples came up to him and asked him why he spoke

to them in parables. He answered and said to them, "Because it's been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven." But to those who are outside, those who are still asleep, those who have not been awakened yet, they don't understand. They don't get it. They don't understand what life in the kingdom is like. But those who are believers. Those who are part of the Ekklesia and who are members and citizens of the kingdom of heaven, they know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. These mysteries have been revealed to the Ekklesia.

What Was Jesus' Message?



To His Disciples

Six times in Matthew 13 He says, ["The Kingdom of Heaven is like..."](#)

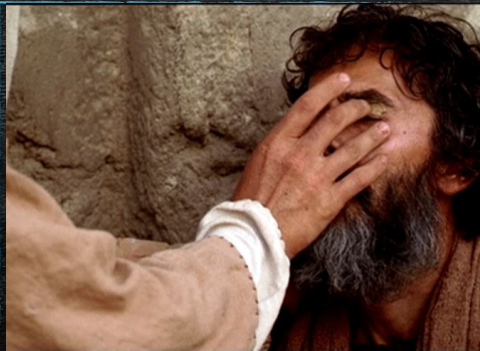
Matthew 13:10-11 NKJV And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?" He answered and said to them, "Because it has been given to you to [know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven](#), but to them it has not been given.

Jesus message of the kingdom was always a demonstration of the power of God. Wherever the kingdom of God was preached, there was a demonstration of the power of God. Matthew 12:28 says, "But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you." When he was casting out demons he was giving proof. This is evidence, that the kingdom has arrived because the demons are leaving. This is proof that the kingdom has come upon you. In Luke 11:20 he says, "But if I cast out demons with the finger of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you."

One of the reasons we don't see much of the power of God in the church today is because the church has cut the head off of the body of Christ. The church has made the government or Baal the head of the church. In this day, the headship of Christ is being restored to the Ekklesia through the ministry of home congregations. We will see more of the power of God being restored to the believers in their life and ministry in the home congregations.

Everywhere Jesus went, from one town and village to another He was proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. Twelve were with him and also some women. The disciples heard him day and night preaching, The kingdom of

What Was Jesus' Message?




With Demonstrations of Power

Matthew 12:28 NKJV But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely [the kingdom of God has come upon you.](#)

Luke 11:20 NKJV But if I cast out demons with the finger of God, [surely the kingdom of God has come upon you.](#)

What Was Jesus' Message?



Everywhere He went

Luke 8:1-2 NIV After this, Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming [the good news of the kingdom of God.](#) The Twelve were with him, ² and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases:

God has come. The kingdom of God is here. The kingdom of God has arrived. The twelve heard this. They witnessed what he was doing as they traveled with him.

Even the Pharisees who tried to criticize Jesus were asking him, When is this kingdom going to come? You've been preaching about it. When is it going to arrive? Jesus said, The kingdom can't be detected by visible signs. You won't be able to say here it is or over there it is, For the kingdom of God is already among you. In one of the other translations it says, "The kingdom of God is within you." It's here.

What Was Jesus' Message?



Even To His Critics

One day the Pharisees asked Jesus, "When will the Kingdom of God come?" Jesus replied, "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 17:20-21 NLT

It's now. We're in it. We're living in that kingdom.

The last sermon that Jesus preached was up on top of the Mount of Olives. He took the disciples up there and they looked down over the city of Jerusalem. He started to prophesy and to preach. He told them that not one stone would be left

standing together in that temple. There would come terrible days of persecution and the love of many would grow cold. He gave them all kinds of signs and indicators of what it will be like before he returns. But the bottom line of his message is what

What Was Jesus' Message?



His Last Sermon: "The Olivet Discourse"

Matthew 24:14 NKJV And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.

must take place before Jesus returns—in fact, it's like the watershed mark when Jesus will return. He said in that sermon that "This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations and then the end will come." I believe God has chosen America as the launching pad for the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom to the entire world.

Jesus didn't ascend to heaven immediately. He hung around for forty more days teaching the disciples. Imagine what that school was like. In Acts 1:2-3 the word says, "He, through the Holy Spirit, had given commandments to the apostles whom he had chosen, to whom he had presented himself alive after suffering by many infallible proofs being seen by them during 40 days." What was he doing? He was speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. After he rose from the dead, he hung around with the disciples for another 40 days just to make sure they got it. He says boys, I'm going to be leaving you soon and I want to make sure you have this straight. I want to make sure you have it right and don't change it. For the next 40 days we're going to go over the message

What Was Jesus' Message?

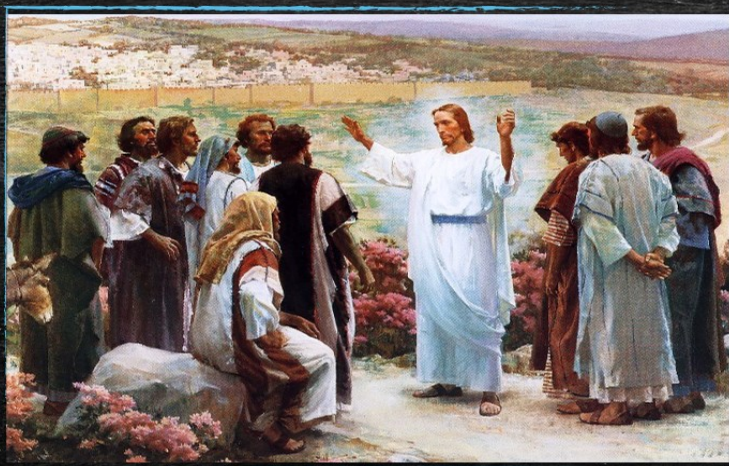


After His Resurrection

Acts 1:2-3 NKJV He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to [the kingdom of God](#).

of the kingdom. What did I preach? What did I tell you guys to preach?—the kingdom of God. He said to the 12 when he sent them out, "As you go, preach, saying the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, and cast out demons. Freely you have received. Freely give." Those verses are the theme for our local ministry here in the little town where I live in northeast Indiana. This is our mission. What did he say to the seventy when he sent them out two by two in Luke chapter 10? He said, "Heal the sick, and say to them," "The kingdom of God has come near you."

What Did HE Say?



To the Seventy

Luke 10:9 NKJV And heal the sick there, and say to them, '[The kingdom of God has come near to you.](#)'

What Did HE Say?



To Us

Matthew 28:19-20 NKJV Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age." Amen

What is he saying to to us when he sends us out? The things we included in the last chapter, the Great Commission, which he has not changed. He said that we are to be teaching them to observe all the things that I have commanded you.

I think that it should be indelibly clear today that what Jesus preached and what he taught them was to observe and to teach others about the kingdom of God. The message of the kingdom is what he told us to tell others. So what was the Ekklesia message in the New Testament at the beginning of the book of Acts when Jesus ascended to heaven and the disciples started preaching? What was their message? What did they preach?

What Was The Ekklesia Message?



To The End

Then Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him, ³¹ preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him. Acts 28:30-31 NKJV

Paul preached the kingdom message in Acts 19:8 when he was at Ephesus. He went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the kingdom of God. Then they departed and they went into another place called Tyrannus Hall.

What Was The Ekklesia Message?



Paul preached the Kingdom Message

"And he went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the [kingdom of God](#)." Acts 19:8 NKJV

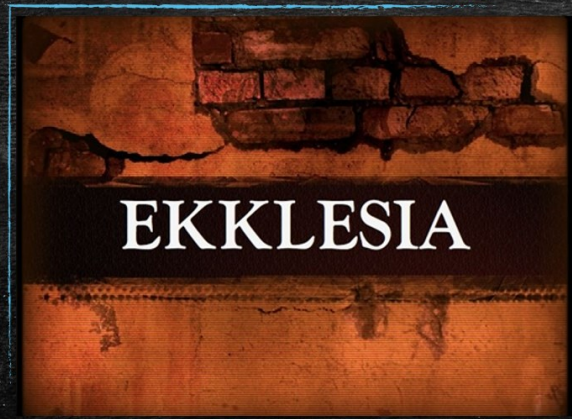
Paul stayed in a rented hall something like a library room. We'll deal with that in a later chapter, but he stayed and he taught them. We see the nucleus of apostolic training centers here in Ephesus and Tyrannus Hall. Paul preached the message

even after he had been taken prisoner to Rome all the way to the end of his life. He had been given a rented house to live in and people came there to visit him. He received all who came to him, preaching the gospel of the kingdom and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence. No one was forbidding him. He preached with authority about the kingdom of God.

We can see that the message of the Ekklesia today should be the same as what

Jesus preached. It should be what he told his disciples to preach, and it should be what the disciples did preach. That's what we should be preaching and the theme of all of our preaching. It should be the same message as the New Testament Ekklesia. The message of the home congregations should be the same message that was in the book of Acts and that Jesus told his disciples to preach. It should never have been changed.

The Message Of The Ekklesia?



It should be the same message as the New Testament Ekklesia

We should have never changed it!

Matthew 10:7-8 (TPT) And as you go, preach this message: 'Heaven's kingdom realm is accessible, close enough to touch.'⁸ You must continually bring healing to lepers and to those who are sick, and make it your habit to break off the demonic presence from people, and raise the dead back to life. Freely you have received *the power of the kingdom*, so freely release it to others.

Somewhere around 325 AD, the believers went off the rails. The church was formed, and it's not gotten back yet, but it's coming back. A restoration movement is going on to restore the original message and how they functioned and met in the New Testament. In the book of Acts, they met in home congregations.

In Matthew 10:7-8, from the Passion translation, Jesus said, "As you go, preach this message, 'Heaven's Kingdom realm is accessible, close enough to touch.' You must continually bring healing to lepers and those who are sick and make it your habit to break off the demonic presence of people. Raise the dead back to life. Freely you have received the kingdom's power, so freely release it to others." We're to be releasing the kingdom out of us. Do you know

Application & Activation



Study The Word

Get together with a couple friends or neighbors

Study the Gospels and the Book of Acts

Look up in a good Concordance or Study Bible, "[Gospel of the Kingdom](#)."

Discuss and share with one another your insights

Bring to Class next week your findings

that little chorus, "I've got a river of life flowing out of me"? It's the kingdom of God and the power of the kingdom that is in us that we are to be released. The Bible says, "The kingdom is righteousness, peace, and joy, in the Holy Spirit." We should release the kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy everywhere. We are contagious carriers of the kingdom everywhere we go spreading the message that the kingdom of God is here. It's accessible.

That's it for the teaching part, but there's some homework. I have two parts to the task. Remember that if you do these applications and activations, we guarantee that you will see a home congregation rising in your community. You will see the home congregation that this study is about growing. But that's only if you do the homework, the applications, and the activations.

The first part of the application and activation is to study the Word. I'd like you to get together with a couple of friends. It could be neighbors or friends that you have gone to church with in the past. It can be friends and relatives, but get together with some and have them over for a little Bible study. I'd like you to study the gospels and the book of Acts on the subject of the gospel of the kingdom. You can use all the references that I gave you in this chapter. Share them and ask questions. What did Jesus preach? What did he tell us to preach? What does the church preach today? Discuss them and share your insights as you have the Bible study.

There's another part to the application, though: "Go!" Once again, "Go!" Christ's commission to the disciples included the message to go. We are asking you to go and find someone who needs healing. You won't have to go very far. Probably not further than the Wal-Mart, your grocery store, or even the gas station. But find someone who needs healing. There are sick and hurting people all around you. Find someone and ask if you can pray for them. Tell them you believe Jesus heals people today, and you'd like to lay your hands on them and pray that they'd be healed. Explain to them that the kingdom realm is now accessible and that the kingdom of God is within you. Then when you lay your hands on them, the kingdom of God and the power of God will touch their lives. They can experience the kingdom and power of God.