

Signs of the Kingdom Coming

Sunday, April 16/23 --- Matthew 11:1 – 19

Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

Ephesians 6:11 – 12

Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 1:13

Truly I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force.

Matthew 11:11 – 12

This kingdom suffers violence. It is a metaphor from a town or castle that holds out in war and is not taken but by storm. So the kingdom of heaven will not be taken without violence...the earth is inherited by the meek (Mt.5:5). Heaven is inherited by the violent. Our life is military. Christ is our captain, the gospel is the banner, the graces are our spiritual artillery and heaven is only taken in a forcible way.

Thomas Watson (1620 – 1686)

Sermon Outline: The Kingdom of Heaven Comes:

1. Centered on Christ the King and on His deeds that rights all wrongs (11:1 – 6).
2. Through the holy boldness of messengers who prepare the way for the Lord (11:7 – 15).
3. As a counter-cultural presence in a world that misunderstands Christ-followers (11:16 – 19).

Discussion Questions:

When I was young, I remember something my Mom would say from time to time. You might have heard it. It goes like this – *Only one life, Twill soon be past; Only what's done for Christ will last.* Even as a child that idea of just one life was sobering, but to think that there is only one way to make that life count was doubly-sobering.

The Scripture we have looked at calls for holy sobriety that results in offering a holy violence to our discipleship. We have not learned Christ this way, and it sounds foreign to our ears. So, let's explore it and discuss it together.

1. *What stands out to you in the response that Jesus gave John the Baptist in verses 2 – 5? Why did Jesus add in verse 6 – 'Blessed is the one who is not offended by Me'?*
2. *Why does Jesus hold up John the Baptist as an example of greatness in the kingdom? How would you like to be more like John? (cf. 11:7 – 15) In what areas of your own discipleship could you demonstrate more holy violence?*
3. *How do you feel misunderstood in our culture? Do you think that to be true to Jesus, that Christians will appear counter-cultural? Give some examples (cf. 11:16 – 19).*

Application:

Pray for yourself and others close to you, that you might grow in the holy intentionality needed to live out the kingdom of heaven here on earth. Be as specific as you can be.