

# HOW JESUS REVEALED THE KINGDOM OF GOD

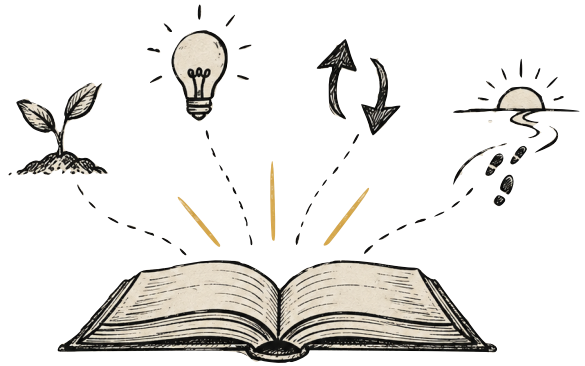
## Parables, Principles, Paradoxes, and Patterns

Jesus talked about the Kingdom of God constantly.

But pay attention to how He talked about it.

He told stories about farmers scattering seed, women searching for lost coins, merchants discovering pearls, workers waiting in vineyards, fathers welcoming sons home, and tiny seeds growing into something unexpectedly large.

He made short statements people could remember long after the conversation ended. He said things that seemed to contradict the way the world worked. And He lived in such a way that people could watch the Kingdom before they fully understood it.



Jesus did more than explain the Kingdom.

He revealed it.

And He revealed a Kingdom that operated according to a radically different paradigm.

The greatest becomes the servant. The first becomes last. Enemies are loved. The overlooked are valued. Losing becomes finding. Giving becomes receiving. A tiny seed becomes something enormous. A little yeast changes the entire batch.

The Kingdom challenged the assumptions people had learned from the kingdoms surrounding them.

So how do you communicate an entirely different paradigm to people who have no framework for understanding it?

Jesus rarely began with an explanation.

Instead, He invited people to discover it.

Again and again, Jesus revealed the Paradigm of the Kingdom through four remarkably simple forms:

Parables.  
Principles.  
Paradoxes.  
Patterns.

Each revealed the Kingdom differently. Parables engaged the imagination. Principles gave people memorable language. Paradoxes disrupted assumptions. Patterns made the Kingdom visible in everyday life.

Together, they helped people see a reality they might otherwise have missed. And we are still talking about them 2000 years later.

## **PARABLES: Revealing the Kingdom Through Story**

Jesus constantly reached into the ordinary world around Him and pulled out something that revealed the Kingdom.

Seeds. Soil. Bread. Coins. Sheep. Vineyards. Weddings. Fishing nets. Mustard plants.

These were not religious objects. They were ordinary things people already understood. Jesus used them as windows into something they could not yet see.

“The Kingdom of heaven is like...”

Those words invited imagination. Suddenly something familiar became a doorway into something greater.

A farmer scattering seed was no longer only a farmer scattering seed. A woman searching her house for a coin became a glimpse into the heart of God. A tiny mustard seed became a picture of a Kingdom whose beginnings might easily be overlooked.

Jesus revealed the invisible through the familiar.

Parables did not simply transfer information. They invited discovery. The listener had to enter the story, recognize something, wrestle with its meaning, and sometimes continue thinking about it long after Jesus stopped talking.

That possibility still surrounds us. Our world is filled with stories, experiences, objects, relationships, disappointments, celebrations, workplaces, meals, movies, music, technology, and ordinary moments that may become windows into the Kingdom.

The Kingdom may be closer to everyday life than we have learned to notice.

## **PRINCIPLES: Revealing the Kingdom Through Simplicity**

Jesus had an extraordinary ability to put enormous truths into remarkably small sentences.

*“Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”*

*“You cannot serve both God and money.”*

*“Do to others as you would have them do to you.”*

These were truths someone could carry with them.

Kingdom principles gave people language for a different way of seeing and living. They reached beneath surface behavior and exposed what was happening in the heart.

Treasure reveals the heart. Greatness looks like serving. Love extends even toward enemies.

Jesus did not need an hour to communicate something that might take a lifetime to live.

His simplicity was not shallow. It was concentrated.

A simple Kingdom principle could enter an ordinary conversation and remain there, waiting to be remembered when life presented an opportunity to live it.

## **PARADOX: Revealing the Kingdom Through Tension**

Then there were the things Jesus said that seemed completely backward.

*The first will be last.*

*Lose your life to find it.*

*The greatest must become the servant.*

*The meek inherit the earth.*

These were not clever contradictions. They exposed the collision between two different paradigms.

The kingdoms around us teach us to climb. Jesus talked about descending. We learn to accumulate. Jesus talked about giving. We learn to protect ourselves. Jesus talked about surrender. We learn that greatness means being above others. Jesus knelt down and washed feet.

Paradox creates tension because the Kingdom frequently operates differently from the systems we have learned to trust.

And Jesus did not always resolve that tension. He allowed people to wrestle with it.

Something didn't fit. An assumption was disturbed. A question appeared. Curiosity began..

We often feel pressure to resolve every question, fill every silence, and explain every apparent contradiction. Jesus seemed remarkably comfortable allowing truth to sit with someone.

Sometimes curiosity needs room. Sometimes a Kingdom truth does its deepest work after the conversation has ended.

## **PATTERNS: Revealing the Kingdom Through a Life**

Jesus did not reveal the Kingdom only through what He said.

He showed people what it looked like.

They watched Him move toward those others avoided. They watched Him touch people considered untouchable. They watched Him withdraw to pray. They watched Him welcome children. They watched Him eat with people whose reputations made religious leaders uncomfortable.

They watched Him forgive. They watched Him serve. They watched Him respond to interruptions. They watched Him give people value before they had done anything to earn it.

Before His followers could explain everything Jesus was teaching, they had already spent years watching what it looked like.

The Kingdom had patterns, and those patterns could be seen in Him.

This may be one of the most powerful ways the Kingdom is revealed in the harvest.

Someone may never listen to a sermon about grace, but they may experience grace through a relationship. They may never study a theology of hospitality, but they know what it feels like to be welcomed around a table. They may not understand what Christians mean when they talk about the Kingdom of God, but they recognize when someone consistently treats them as though they have extraordinary value.

Long before someone has language for the Kingdom, they may begin recognizing its patterns.

## **Revealing a Different Paradigm**

Parables.  
Principles.  
Paradoxes.  
Patterns.

Each revealed something about the Paradigm of the Kingdom of God.

And none required a stage.

Jesus revealed the Kingdom while walking roads, sitting at tables, standing beside lakes, entering homes, attending weddings, answering questions, noticing interruptions, and sharing meals.

That matters for those of us entering the harvest.

We do not have to bring people into a religious environment before they can encounter the Kingdom. We are already surrounded by the same kind of raw material Jesus so often used.

Stories, questions, relationships, tensions, meals, workplaces, losses, celebrations, and ordinary life.

Learning to recognize and use that raw material takes practice.

## **Learning to Reveal the Kingdom**

If we want to learn how Jesus revealed the Kingdom, one of the best places to begin is by observing Him.

As you read the Gospels, pay attention not only to what Jesus communicated, but how He communicated it.

Notice His parables. *What ordinary objects, experiences, and stories did He use to reveal something greater?*

Notice His principles. *When did He take something enormous and express it with remarkable simplicity?*

Notice His paradoxes. *Where did He say something that disrupted conventional wisdom and forced the listener to wrestle with a different way of seeing?*

Notice His patterns. *What did people learn about the Kingdom simply by watching the way Jesus lived?*

Then begin learning to see those same possibilities around you.

Listen for stories that contain glimpses of something greater.

Notice ordinary experiences that might become windows into the Kingdom.

Look for simple truths worth putting into memorable language.

Pay attention to tensions that expose the difference between the way our world operates and the way the Kingdom operates.

Become aware of the patterns in your own life that reveal what you actually believe.

Then practice.

- Practice telling a story instead of immediately giving an explanation.
- Practice expressing a Kingdom truth simply enough that someone will remember it tomorrow.
- Practice allowing a paradox to create curiosity without rushing to resolve the tension.
- And practice living in such a way that someone might experience something of the Kingdom before they ever have language for it.

At first, it may feel unfamiliar. That is why we practice.

Over time, we begin developing different instincts. We become more attentive to stories, symbols, tensions, moments, and patterns already present in everyday life. We begin recognizing opportunities to reveal the invisible through the familiar.

We learn from Jesus by watching Jesus.

And then we practice what we see.

## Whoever Has Ears to Hear

There is one more thing worth noticing about the way Jesus revealed the Kingdom.

He often left the discovery with the listener.

*“Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear.”*

He did not always explain the parable. He did not always resolve the paradox. He did not always tell people what they were supposed to discover.

He allowed them to wrestle. To wonder. To become curious. To hear.

That may be one of the hardest parts for us to learn.

We do not have to explain everything. We do not have to close every loop. We do not have to turn every conversation into a presentation.

Sometimes we tell the parable without explanation.

Sometimes we offer the principle without commentary.

Sometimes we leave the paradox unresolved.

Sometimes we simply live the pattern.

And then we trust Jesus with what happens next, because the Kingdom is near.