The Journey to Jerusalem

(2) God’s kingdom has come  Luke 11:14-26; Psalm 133

1. Two very different kingdoms (Luke 11:14-26)

Mark begins this passage by saying that Jesus’s own family thought he was “out of his mind” (Mk.3:21). And even Christians can be tempted to dismiss as crazy any talk about demons and Satan. Yet Jesus clearly understood his mission as the in-breaking of God’s kingdom that will overcome the kingdom of the devil (cf.Lk.4:1-13). His casting out of demons demonstrated that, prompting his opponents to claim that Jesus himself must be possessed by Beelzebul/Satan (15). But, said Jesus, it’s impossible for Satan to fight against himself, as a divided kingdom is doomed (17-19). Rather his driving out of demons by God’s Spirit is a sign that “the kingdom of God has come to you” (20; Mt.12:28. “the finger of God” refers to God’s power cf. Ex.8:19). Satan is strong, but Jesus is stronger, and through Jesus the kingdom of darkness was already giving way to the kingdom of light (21-22; Col.1:12-14; Acts 26:18). In regard to these two kingdoms, everyone is either on one side or the other – there can be no neutrality (23).

2. There the Lord commands his blessing (Psalm 133)

“A house divided against itself will fall” (Lk.11:17) is a general saying, equally applicable to the Church. God’s will has always been for his people to be united. Our unity is established in Christ (Gal.3:26-28) and this Psalm declares the beauty and the blessing of living out that unity in practice. It’s like both the anointing oil that ran down Aaron’s head (Ex.29:7) from top to bottom and to the copious dew of Mount Hermon, which flowed down its slopes giving fruitfulness.

Unity flows down to us from God, bestowed rather than contrived. With it comes the great blessing of spiritual life both for us and for others (Dt.30:19-20; Jn.17:21,23) – living in brotherly love brings fruitfulness. Togetherness, literally “with one mind”, was a feature of the early church (Acts 1:14; 2:46; 4:24; 5:12). “We can dispense with uniformity if we possess unity: oneness in Christ Jesus” (Spurgeon).

Discussion 1 – Two very different kingdoms

Jesus makes the claim that his miracles are visual signs of the presence of God’s victorious rule. Can you think of a time when you ‘saw’ the presence of God’s kingdom demonstrated in some way?

Jesus’s miracles are “a portrait of... God’s good will to restore creation and triumph over evil” (Daniel Bock). Through our faith in Jesus how can we work with God to restore creation and triumph over evil?

Discussion 2 – There the Lord commands his blessing

In your own words, what is “the beauty and the blessing of living out unity in practice”?

“Our unity is established in Christ (Gal.3:26-28)”. How can we live it out better?

Reflection:

What has particularly struck you out of today’s study and discussion?

How might that help you to be a better follower of Jesus?

Throughout this coming week, reflect further on these thoughts and continue the journey through Luke’s Gospel with these daily readings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thu 5</th>
<th>Fri 6</th>
<th>Sat 7</th>
<th>Sun 8</th>
<th>Mon 9</th>
<th>Tues 10</th>
<th>Wed 11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

If you have internet access, you can read a daily short blog with comment on these verses www.skelonbrotton.wixsite.com/christians