

The title for today's message is: **The Master Has Come Proclaiming God's Kingdom**

Jesus said: **“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”**

Grace and peace to you from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

It happened that Jesus came down from Nazareth to the Jordan River where John, the baptizer, was preaching.

And, along with many other people, Jesus was baptized there by John the Baptizer. It was then, that the spirit of God descended upon Jesus like a dove.

Then suddenly, a voice came from heaven, saying: **“You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.”**

Jesus then left the Jordan, and went to the wilderness for forty days, for a time of retreat, thought, and prayer, as well as a time to strategize.

He would also be tested, by having the evil one, Satan, to tempt Him. After this time, Jesus would go into Galilee and begin His ministry.

God's Son was now fulfilling what the Old Testament prophets had proclaimed many years earlier.

But, why did Jesus preach? Instead of simply writing a book, or organize an army, or maybe run for public office

Well, the answer is this; Jesus came to be the pro-claimer, a teller, or a talker, and a teacher, proclaiming the truths of God's kingdom.

He came to tell all people what God was doing, and what He was about to do, even what He would do in the future.

Jesus said: **“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”**

Jesus didn't come to be an organizer, or a general, or a doctor. Nor did He come to do wonders, or to be a miracle worker.

Nor a performer of signs, or to be a celebrity. Jesus came to do one thing, and that was to proclaim God's kingdom, and the promise of salvation.

Now, the theme of His preaching, and teaching, was the Kingdom of God is at hand. Miss that, and you won't understand anything about Jesus.

At the beginning of Marks Gospel, we hear Jesus proclaiming the Kingdom of God, and we can sense the urgency of His message.

And today, there should be the same sense of urgency, regarding the coming of the Master, and what it means to us today.

Now, there are three things we need to do. First, we need to recognize the “urgent moment” Jesus produced.

Mark records the message of Jesus, as beginning with this statement: **“The time is fulfilled.”**

The word time here, refers to that urgent moment toward which, the prophets had spoke of.

That is, the historic moment, when God would break into the history of the world.

Look, Jesus knew, that in leaving the carpenter's shop in Nazareth, and going down to the Jordan River.

He would bring about a magnificent moment. The hour had struck 12. It was now time to begin His long awaited ministry, it was an urgent matter.

But, for many of us these days, there's no sense of urgency, certainly not about our religion, our faith, our church nor, of God Himself.

Our urgent moments are produced by other things. Things we see as being more important, its those things we consider "urgent matters."

Of course, some of us have a sense of urgency, but our sense of urgency is caused by the way we live, not by the things we should be living for.

Our sense of urgency comes by our priorities, and not the things which should be our priorities. Or by things which cause us stress, and not the things we should be stressing.

There's a short story I read about a man who went to see his doctor. He said, "My work absorbs me so much, that I can't sleep at night.

He said; I'm living on the ragged edge of my nerves." The doctor told him he needed to learn to relax.

He said, "Go to the circus. See the great Grim-al-di. Laugh, and have fun. You'll soon be a new man." And the man replied, "But Doc, I am the great Grim-al-di."

Today there are many people who are wondering what could be wrong with their lives.

These folks are living in shallows, and in miseries, they have simply forgotten that Jesus said, **"The time is fulfilled."**

Now, there's a second thing we need to do. We need to realize the "urgent announcement" Jesus proclaimed.

Now, Jesus didn't hesitate to make this urgent announcement, He said, **"The kingdom of God is at hand."**

Jesus was ushering into history, the new age of God's Kingdom, something entirely different.

It made everything new, and different, from that time on. The Kingdom of God, is the rule of God, in the lives of all people who believe.

Jesus went to great measures to have everyone understand His message. He used many parables to teach what the Kingdom of God is.

For example, He said the Kingdom of God is like a man who will sell all he has, in order to purchase a pearl of great price.

He also said its like a seed growing secretly, no one knows its there, but it grows up, and becomes something which bears much fruit.

Or, that its like a grain of mustard seed. Which is the smallest of all seed, but becomes the greatest of all shrubs.

Another words, the Kingdom of God, is a kingdom within us, all around us, in the world, and beyond.

He said it knows no boundaries, that it offers freedom, and has moral, and ethical implications.

Which by the way, is a force for living right, and calls us not only to be citizens of the Kingdom, but also to be ambassadors, of the Kingdom.

But its easy for us to let our citizenship in His kingdom get pushed down toward the bottom, of a long list of priorities.

We lose sight of it because we turn away from it. I read about one pastor who grew up in England. He tells how as a boy he was walking around his parents' estate one day.

And, one of the tenants' little girls saw him coming. And as he walked past her, she held out to him some flowers.

He said he turned snobbishly away from her, and left her in tears. He said, "That was the first time I ever rejected the Kingdom of God."

How easy it is for us, to do that. And when we do, life gets out of kilter. Its not right, something is wrong, and we know it.

Were not happy, and we seem to have a lot of bad luck, everything we try to do seems to be the wrong thing. Were frustrated.

A well respected pastor wrote a book titled "Why Does Jesus Make Me Nervous?"

In the book, he told of going to see his friend, and telling him he was thinking of leaving the ministry.

When asked why, he replied that he was unhappy. The friend said, "Well then, you ought to quit!"

He continued saying, whoever told you that you had a right to be happy? The ministry is a place for the pursuit, of the Kingdom of God!"

My friends, the Christian life is a call to make the Kingdom of God a reality in our lives.

Too many Christians are worshiping the gods of happiness. The Christian life is a call to pursue the Kingdom of God, and to realize it in our living.

A third thing we need to do is respond to the "urgent Gospel" Jesus preached. Jesus said: **"Repent, and believe in the Gospel."**

Now, the word "repent" means, to turn around, to turn toward God, to travel in another direction, to begin a new life. And, the word "Gospel" means, Good News.

And the good news is, the coming of the Kingdom of God. Its a message which calls for a response.

We either reject it, or accept it. There's no neutral ground. We cannot say, "I'll wait and see, or maybe sometime ill choose.

There's just no option. We must respond now. Its urgent, that we let God's Kingdom, be Good News for us?

Sure, sometimes we think its bad news for us, because we don't really want it. We say we believe in it, but were not ready for it.

We say we're for it, but only as long as it doesn't interfere with some special interest, which is close to our hearts, or our pocketbooks.

We mostly reject it, and we try to ignore Jesus at times, and dress Him up in our clothing, and we even put our words in His mouth.

We also interpret His message according to what we want to hear, but Jesus still says to us, **"Repent, and believe in the Gospel."**

The Gospel? Good News about what? Good News about God's Kingdom, which calls us away from special-interest, and economic considerations.

And it calls us away from what is popular, what the neighbors will think, or how I can get ahead.

"In this world of continual change, there's one unchanging person, and that one unchanging person is, Jesus Christ?

So, what have we discovered? We discovered two absolutes, one, God's Kingdom is an unshakable kingdom.

And second, that Jesus is an unchanging person, who has come to usher in, the Kingdom of God.

Amen.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all. Amen.