

Mary Craig Ministries, Inc.

Series: "The Kingdom of God"



Message: "The Mystery of the Kingdom"

[Click/tap to hear the live recording](#)

Dr. Mary Craig

Live Tele-service, April 11, 2021

Mark 4 along with Matthew 13 set forth a group of parables. A parable is a story drawn from everyday experience in people's lives with the intent to illustrate a central truth. This central truth is called "the mystery" of the kingdom.

Now a mystery in the Biblical sense is not something mysterious or deep or dark or profound or difficult. We use the word "mystery" like that in our modern English. In Scripture, "mystery" is something which has been kept secret through times eternal but is now disclosed. It is a divine purpose which God has designed from eternity but has kept hidden from people. In the course of His redemptive plan, God reveals this purpose and makes it known. "A mystery is a divine purpose, hidden in the counsels of God for long ages but finally disclosed in a new revelation of God's redemptive work." (George Eldon Ladd, p. 52) Romans 16:25, 26; Ephesians 3:1-13 e.g.

The parables set forth the mystery of the Kingdom—central truths about the KOG which were not revealed in the OT but which are now being disclosed by Jesus. The OT perspective was that the prophets were looking forward to a glorious day when God's Kingdom would come, when God would set up His reign on the earth. In the day when God would set up HIS reign, it would displace all other reigns, all other kingdoms and authorities. It would break pride and the sovereignty of man manifested in the rule of the nations which dominate earthly history. God's reign, God's Kingdom, God's rule will come and sweep away every opposing rule and God alone will be King in those days.

In the OT perspective the coming of God's Kingdom is a single great event: a mighty manifestation of God's power sweeping away wicked kingdoms and filling the earth with righteousness.

Enter Jesus into human history with John the Baptist as forerunner. According to John, the Coming One would bring a twofold baptism: some would be baptized with the Holy Spirit and experience Messianic salvation of the KOG, while others would be baptized with the fire of the final judgment (Matthew 3:11). Messiah's work would involve sifting and separating people just like the farmer threshes and winnows his harvest, preserving the good grain and discarding the chaff. Messiah comes and will cleanse His threshing floor, gathering the grain into His barn (salvation for the righteous) but sending the wicked into the fiery judgment (Matthew 3:12).

Later John sends messengers to Jesus to ask if He is really the Coming One or if they were to look for another. John was not doubting like some reed shaken by the wind. He was seeing the fact that Jesus was not acting like the Messiah whom John had announced. Where was the baptism of the Spirit? Where was this judgment of the wicked?

Jesus replied that He was indeed the Bearer of the Kingdom and that the signs of the Messianic Age of prophecy were being manifested because Luke 4:18 was being fulfilled. But consider.

The prophecy of Daniel 2:31-35 didn't seem to be going anywhere. Herod Antipas ruled in Galilee. Roman legions marched through Jerusalem. Pilate had the authority and Rome ruled the world. How was Jesus supposed to be the Bearer of the KOG so long as sin and sinful institutions remained unpunished?

Jesus answered, **“Blessed is the one who takes no offence at Me.”** Matthew 11:6. He was saying in effect, “Hey. The KOG is here but there’s a mystery—a new revelation about the Kingdom. The KOG is here; but instead of making changes in the external, political order of things, it is making changes in the spiritual order of things and internally in the lives of men and women, boys and girls.”

And the big one: God’s Kingdom is to work among people in two different stages. First the Kingdom comes in grace and then the Kingdom will come in power. The KOG is here, working, but in an unexpected way. The KOG has come quietly, unobtrusively, secretly. It can work among people and never be recognized by the crowds. It’s working in the spirit realm, delivering people from the power of Satan and sin so as to offer the blessings of God’s rule. The KOG is a gift, something the Father is pleased to give to His children. The KOG is an offer; you must be born again to see it and to enter it and you must receive and accept it in order to inherit it. The KOG is here now with persuasion.

<p>So in Matthew 13 Jesus gives parables to illustrate that the KOG which is yet to come in power and great glory is actually now present in advance in an unexpected form, in grace, to bring to people in this present evil Age the blessings of The Age to Come.</p>

Jesus talks about four kinds of soil. A sower sows and scatters the seed. Some fell upon the path that ran through the field. This seed did not take root but is soon picked up by the birds because it is lying there exposed. Other seed fell on rocky ground in shallow earth. It sprouts and starts to grow but when the weather turns hot and the ground dries out, the sprouts die. Other seed fell in thorny places so that the seed sprouted, but the thorns also grow and choke the growth of the seed so the seed never comes to maturity. Only some seed fell upon good ground where it was able to mature and ripen and produce a harvest.

Here’s the mystery. The KOG is here, but it is not like a stone grinding an image to powder. It is not now fully destroying wickedness. It’s going forth as a Gospel, the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, a message, a Word. Some hear that word but it never enters their hearts. Some hear but they don’t get it because Satan comes and snatches it away. No root, no life. Others hear and seem to receive it; they make a response. But there is no depth. There is no real life. When trouble arises, there’s nothing substantial enough within them to deliver them from evil and so when they meet persecution and evil for the very reason that they have received the message, they wither and die because there is no life. They professed but didn’t possess.

Still others are like thorny ground. They seem to receive the word of the Kingdom and appear to believe and to evidence life; but they are not prepared to accept the humble form of God’s Kingdom. They don’t enter the culture of the Kingdom nor do they want to follow the laws of the Kingdom. So the cares of the age, the love of riches, the ambition, the ostentation, the pressure of conformity to This Age in which they still live choke the Word and there is not fruitfulness.

So as to the Gospel of the Kingdom, it has come but people can reject it. Not everyone is going to like the message of the KOG. This is a time of grace. You can see the Kingdom, enter the

Kingdom, but maybe you refuse to live a life of repentance and truly live the life of the Kingdom and so do not inherit the Kingdom.

When Jesus comes again, He will come in power and no one will resist or withstand God. God will come to purge the earth of wickedness, sin, and evil; but not now. God's Kingdom is working, but God will not compel people to bow before His rule. People must receive it and the response must come from a willing heart and a submissive will.

Thus the motto of MCM is to implore...

Our Mission

To implore the broken, wounded, and lost of a fallen world
to accept restoration and healing in the atonement of Jesus Christ,
that His own might terminate their hostility toward God
and become what God has declared them to be
through the transforming power of God's Word and the Holy Spirit
with love, compassion and grace.

We implore people to open their hearts to the Word of God, to the word of God's Kingdom so that it may grow in good soil and bear fruit, the fruit of righteousness in the KOG. But people can reject that, spurn it, and scorn the preacher who preaches the Gospel of the Kingdom.

Today there are wheat and tares growing up together until the harvest. There is coming a time when a separation will take place, but until that time, the weeds and wheat must grow together. So we have a visible church and an invisible church. Jesus said that the field is the world. The sons of the kingdom and the sons of the evil one are both in the world until the close of the age. (Mt 13:38, 39) At the end of This Age, the holy angels come and separate the wheat from the tares, or weeds.

This mystery, this unforeseen character of the coming of the Kingdom is also illustrated in the parables of the mustard seed and the leaven. The mustard seed was a proverbial symbol for a tiny and insignificant seed which grew into a very large shrub so that it becomes like a tree in which the birds of the air come and make nests in the branches. (Mt 13:31, 32) The KOG has come with the coming of Jesus, but for now it is something tiny and something which appears to be insignificant; but it is still the KOG. Don't be fooled. This parable is not about growth but about the truth that the KOG which one day will fill the earth is here now but in a form which was never before expected. It is like a tiny insignificant seed and even though it is tiny, it is not to be despised, because it IS the KOG.

The leaven parable teaches the same truth. The KOG now is almost unobservable so that one is hardly aware of its presence. It's like leaven; it can scarcely be seen. The KOG has come in One who is meek and lowly, One who will be crucified and who has only a handful of disciples. Even today, most of the world ignores Jesus and His message. Roman historians hardly mention Jesus; He's a byword. But don't be deceived. The day of glory is coming.

Parables are incidents drawn from daily experience which contain details which do not convey spiritual truth but the overall aspect of the parable teaches a truth. So the parable of the Good Samaritan answers the question, "Who is my neighbor?" by asking another question, "Are you neighborly?" "Do you show compassion, mercy, love, and graciousness to others?" Etc.

The parable of the unrighteous steward in Luke 16 is not teaching that the end justifies the means, but rather that people should be wise in the use of their substance. They should invest it so that it will help them in the day of spiritual need (v. 9).

The KOG is like treasure and like a costly pearl. This is along the same line as the mustard seed and the leaven. The KOG is of inestimable value even though it is come in a humble form. So it's like a treasure whose value transcends every other possession; and it is like a pearl of great price whose acquisition merits the loss of all other goods. The Kingdom is a gift and not a reward. It is something that the Father is pleased to give; and yet it is costly. It may cost someone his earthly possessions (Mark 10:21), or his friends or the affections of family or even his very life (Luke 14:26). Whatever the cost, however, it is worth it to inherit the KOG.

And don't be fooled, says Jesus in the parable of the drag-net. Even though the KOG comes now in an unexpected manner of meekness, grace, quietness, and with only a handful of followers, it will nevertheless issue in the Final Judgment and the separation of the good from the wicked and the destruction of evil. The society of the world with its wickedness will be displaced by the society of those who have submitted themselves to God's rule who will then enjoy the fullness of the divine blessings freed from all evil.

The true sons of the Kingdom and also evil people for now will both be caught up by the activity of God's Kingdom, but the Day of Judgment and the day of separation is coming when the Kingdom comes in power. The drag-net thus has a narrower reference than the parable of the wheat and the weeds in the world. This parable talks about the people who are influenced by the activity of God's Kingdom in the person of Christ. Evil people will find their way into that fellowship, just as Judas hung out among Jesus' disciples. (cf Acts 20:29, 30). Thus in the midst of every Christian fellowship people may be found who turn out to be alien to the KOG.

The parable of the seed growing by itself in Mark 4:26-29 is not about growth, but about a single basic truth: "the earth bears fruit of itself." This refers to the fact that the KOG is like a seed in that a seed contains the principle of life within itself. A farmer cannot make a seed grow; he cannot cause it to produce life. He can only sow the seed and plant it. The life has to reside in the seed and then the powers resident in the earth assert themselves and produce fruit.

The point is that the KOG is a miracle. It is the act of God. It is supernatural. The Kingdom is God's Kingdom to build, God's Kingdom to rule over. God has only entrusted to people to proclaim the Gospel of the Kingdom. I like to say, "I am just the messenger." The actual working of the Kingdom is God's working. The fruit produced is not by human effort but by the life of the Kingdom itself. It is God's work.

Jesus came first in grace. He came humbly, barely noticed, to a small plot of land on the planet. He didn't travel the world over like I have as God has sent me now to 86 nations. He came into Galilee. He went throughout the cities of the region. He healed the sick, cast out demons, and forgave sin. He didn't come in a blaze of glory, rending mountains or setting off fireworks. Nevertheless, the KOG has come, now. And this same Kingdom will come at the end of the age in power and great glory purging all sin and evil from the earth. This is the mystery; this is the message.

Bibliography:

Ladd, George Eldon. The Gospel of the Kingdom. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1959.

Mary Craig, D. Min.

© 2021 Mary Craig Ministries, Inc. All rights reserved. www.marycraig.org www.mcmtffr.org



Thank you for giving to MCM! Donate: Mary Craig Ministries, Inc., P. O. Box 4610, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33338-4610 or through PayPal® online at www.marycraig.org. Go to marycraig.org for the latest articles and words received. Take a look and see all that God is doing through this ministry, in world missions, in evangelism, the Barnabas Project, Craighouse® Christian Fellowship, home visitation, Kinetic Koinonia, media, and more. Worship with us 4:30 p.m. Sundays via teleconference. Reach MCM at 954-491-7270. Send in your prayer requests. Follow MCM Bible teachings and Rev. Jim Craig's sermons; go to www.marycraig.org and click on "Audio Bible Studies" or "*Divine Appointment*" radio ministry; or go to www.mcmtffr.org for audio sermons and teachings and Friday night handout sheets. Free. Go to www.marycraigverses.org for "Enjoying God for Life," daily encouragement and growing in your faith. Go to www.marycraig.smugmug.com for some pictures of MCM world missions.

See our new Mary Craig Ministries YouTube Channel here:
www.youtube.com/channel/UCs4c-InXmh2HKF36huJQTOA. Subscribe for free.

Mary Craig Ministries, Inc. is a USA 501 (C) (3) nonprofit corporation founded in 1993. Federal ID 65-0429517.