
One Theme—the Kingdom, One Lord—Jesus Christ

By Pastor Hector Pardo

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For years, I understood the kingdom of God as one of the topics of the Bible. But as time went by, I understood how wrong I was. The kingdom of God is not one topic of the Bible. The kingdom of God is the subject of the whole Bible. We cannot speak about the kingdom of God as if it were one of the multiple themes in the Bible. Everything in the Bible, for all eternity, centers around the kingdom of God.

God's kingdom has a special center, a focal point which relates to the great commission. The great commission has two principle axes. One axis is Mark 16:15, "*And he said to them, 'Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.'*" We are commanded to preach the gospel to every creature. We can refer to this as the apostolic kerygma (the gospel proclamation). But the apostolic kerygma—that is, the gospel—is not the gospel of salvation.

Often when I talk with other pastors, I say, *Jesus never spoke about salvation or the gospel of salvation.* I encourage them to show me one text in the Bible where Jesus spoke about the gospel of salvation. Of course they can't. So I ask, *What was the gospel that Jesus preached?* Eventually they realize the answer: *Jesus preached the gospel of the kingdom of God.*

That is the fact of the matter. This was the gospel preached by Jesus. He taught it, he proclaimed it, he did it. He taught it to the twelve. When he sent the twelve, he sent them to preach the gospel of the kingdom. Then he chose 70 and instructed them to preach the gospel of the kingdom.

After he was raised from the dead, he spent 40 days with his disciples. What was he preaching? Suppose a disciple had said, *Lord, for three and a half years you have been teaching the same thing. Now that you have been resurrected, perhaps you can talk to us about*

another theme. Jesus no doubt would have replied, *I do not have another theme.* For 40 days he was announcing the kingdom of God.

The apostle Paul was preaching the gospel of the kingdom. In Acts 28, when we come to the end of Paul's life, he is finishing by preaching the gospel of the kingdom.

I understand that in the first centuries the followers of Christ were always preaching the kingdom of God. Somehow along the way, they forgot the gospel of the kingdom. And we departed from this message.

I met the Lord 53 years ago in Latin America. They were not talking about the kingdom of God then. Or when they did, they taught that the kingdom of God was something in the past. And something in the future, the time of the millennium. In the meantime, we have to preach the gospel of salvation.

But thank God, the Lord has brought me more light. Over and over, the Bible says that that we are to preach the gospel of the kingdom of God. It says that the kingdom of God has a heart, a center. It is not a doctrine. It is not a concept. It is not a philosophy. It is a person and this person is Jesus Christ.

Several years ago I was attending a meeting that included some of the most influential people on the earth. Among them was the king of Jordan. He is Muslim, of course. He was with his wife and some other people from Jordan and Saudi Arabia. They were Muslims.

The famous singer, Bono, was leading this meeting. Bono said, *Tonight we will give praise to the one who died on the cross of Calvary!* I was staring at him and looking at others to see their faces. And Bono kept talking: *Not only did he die on the cross of Calvary but he was buried. On the third day, he was resurrected from the dead.* I again looked at the king of Jordan and he was really attentive. Bono kept talking: *When Jesus came back to the right hand of the Father, the Father proclaimed him over everything and he gave him a name that is over all names. That in the name of Jesus, every knee will bow, and each tongue will proclaim that Jesus is the Lord ...* I could see that the king of Jordan was attentively listening. And Bono said, *Let us sing to that King of kings, to the Lord of lords.* He began singing "How Great Thou Art."

The room had many giant screens. The words to How Great Thou Art were put on the screens. I thought, *Surely now this king of Jordan will leave this room. He's not going to be able to stay here.* We were all sitting down and suddenly the king stands up and I thought, *He's leaving now.* But he didn't. Instead, he raised his hands! His wife also stood up and

raised her hands, and all of the others with him raised their hands and began singing to Jesus, the Lord of lords. It was a very special moment. Those giant TV screens were showing the king of Jordan with his hands up praising Jesus!

The voice of Jesus came to my heart. The voice of the Father came to my heart, *Do you know something? The problem that you have and that those who follow my son have is that you're exalting your denomination, you're exalting your churches, you're exalting your doctrine, you're exalting your philosophy. But, when Jesus my son is exalted, he draws everything to himself.*

It was a very special experience. Then I had to return to Colombia. I had a meeting with the leaders of the church on the island of San Andreas. This is what I said to the sisters and brothers: *Something has happened in my life. First, I want to be sure not to be misunderstood. I love the evangelical church. I believe that the Bible is the word of God. I believe that Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life. I mentioned some aspects that are basic in our faith. And then I continued, But I have discovered a truth. God is not an evangelical.*

The room was totally silent. We were Baptists, Presbyterians, Mennonites, Pentecostals, Foursquares. And all was silence.

God is not evangelical. I don't know if I am evangelical but I know that the Father has a name in his heart and it's the name of his son, Jesus Christ. He proclaimed him Lord. We need to be followers of the King of kings and Lord of lords and live only for him.

We talk about the great commission. We talk about discipling nations. The nation is only going to be disciplined by men and women that recognize Christ as the Lord of their lives. (Of course, you have to talk a lot about the word of God.)

We Spanish speakers have a problem that our English-speaking brothers and sisters don't have. I understand that English has three words that are similar but different: "sir," "mister," and "lord." In Spanish we have only "señor." When English speakers talk to God, they don't say, "mister." They don't say, "sir." They say, "Lord." But in Spanish, we only have one word. So we end up addressing Jesus as *Señor*.

Here's what I have been telling the sisters and brothers in the community where I pastor. *When we talk to Jesus we call him "Señor" (Lord). But you would call a thief "señor." Or a corrupted person. Whoever you talk to you call señor. I want to challenge you to change that expression. From now on, when you talk to the Lord don't call him "Señor." Let's call him Kyrios. That is the original (Greek) word (for lord or master).*

In the days of Jesus Christ the people thought there was only one Kyrios and that was Caesar, the Roman emperor. This produced a conflict for the Christians. For many, it led to their death. My brothers and sisters, Christians were not burned in the fire because they were known as Christians. They did not face wild beasts in the Roman coliseum because they belonged to a religion. But when a Jesus follower encountered a Roman citizen who said, *Caesar is Kyrios*, the Christian responded, *No, Christ is Kyrios*. They knew there could not be two Kyrios. They would not submit to Caesar as Kyrios. So they were burned because they rebelled.

Christians were proclaiming that Jesus was the Kyrios. He was the lord of their life, the love of their life. They lived for him. They lived to please him. They lived to do his will.

If Caesar spoke against what Jesus said, they didn't obey. They were faithful to the Kyrios Christ. This is our greatest challenge today. When the governments, presidents, or courts contradict the principles of the Kyrios Jesus, our faithfulness has to be love for the teacher. It has to be to Kyrios, Jesus. And we have to live for him.



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