

Near The Kingdom

Mark 12:28-37

Introduction:

If you have your Bibles with you, please turn with me to Mark 12. Mark chapter 12, beginning in verse 28.

What does it mean to be NEAR the kingdom of God? About 2 months ago, the Lord opened a door for my wife to counsel the teenage daughter of one of our neighbours. She had a traumatic experience a few years back and was seeking professional help. Now, Bethany and I had been praying for an opportunity to share about Jesus with this family – and so immediately we began praising God! Thank you Lord for this chance to minister to her EMOTIONAL BROKENNESS, and even more importantly, her SPIRITUAL BROKENNESS!

But when the girl arrived for her counselling session, and Bethany began speaking, something was off. The prayer we THOUGHT was answered – seemed to be UNANSWERED. The daughter was DISINTERESTED in hearing how Jesus could HELP HER through her trauma. The more Bethany talked about Jesus, the more walls went up, and the more disengaged she became.

In that moment, Bethany began to question, “I thought this was supposed to be an answer to prayer, Lord! You’ve clearly brought this girl here to hear the gospel, but why haven’t you prepared her heart to RECEIVE it?”

Well, all of a sudden, in the counselling session, Bethany looked over to the girl’s mom who was sitting beside her. And her mom was FIXATED on Bethany. She was hanging off her every word, soaking up all she had to say, and she was ENGAGING with further questions. As her daughter was closing off, she was opening up! The more Bethany shared about Jesus, the more receptive and responsive the mom became! And after 2-hours of counselling, the mom was in tears thanking Bethany, asking to meet up again. This was not even the mom’s counselling session! It

was her daughter's! But the Lord knew who really needed counselling that day, and prepared her heart to agree with it.

Have you ever been in a situation like that? Where you can say the SAME THING and it lands on 2 sets of ears COMPLETELY DIFFERENTLY?

In the Bible we are familiar with the categories of SAVED and PERISHING. 1 Corinthians 1:18 says,

¹⁸ For the word of the cross is foolishness **to those who ^{are} perishing**, but to us who ^{are} being saved it is the power of God.

In other words, when we share the gospel, it's an aroma that goes out and smells differently depending upon the kind of hear it lands on. To those who are being saved, it smells SWEET like honey, but to those perishing, it smells like STINKING trash. We're familiar with those categories of BEING SAVED and PERISHING.

But what if I told you there was a 3rd category in the New Testament that Jesus calls, "NEAR THE KINGDOM." These people have not ENTERED the kingdom of God (they're not saved)! But they are beginning to show signs of RECEPTIVITY and AGREEMENT with the words of Christ! Like the mom Bethany counselled, they've not entered the narrow gate, they've not yet humbled themselves in brokenness over their sins; they've not yet TRUSTED IN CHRIST. But they do have a profound openness to the gospel and softness to the words of Christ. God is in the process of "tilling the soil" of their hearts, but they've not yet received the seed of the Word. They're standing at the GATES of the KINGDOM, as it were, but they have not yet ENTERED IN.

In the text we're going to read today, we're going to meet a scribe who AGREES with Jesus' teaching. Miraculously, his heart is the OPPOSITE of his contemporary pharisees who hardened themselves against the Lord. This guy demonstrates profound openness to the words of Christ.

He seems to have a soft heart to AGREE WITH the living and implanted word. But although he is an ADMIRER of the GOSPEL, he's not a RECIPIENT. Like a hesitant patient who is handed medicine from their doctor: he agrees that his prescription WORKS, he affirms that this pill is the real deal that will cure his disease, but he hasn't yet INGESTED the medication – he hasn't received it into himself. The Lord has granted the scribe enough light to see, that Jesus' message is true, but he has not yet ENTERED IN. He is NEAR THE KINGDOM, at it's very gates. Jesus says to him, "you are NOT FAR from the kingdom of God."

At our church plant in Elizabethtown KY, these are the people that God has primarily given us to reach. E-town is a major hub of "cultural Christianity" – which masks a lot of hidden lostness in our area; it is full of men and women like this scribe. Many have heard the name of Jesus, and even agree with some of his words, but VERY FEW of them have entered God's kingdom. They like some of the stuff Jesus says, but they have TRUSTED in other places to secure their salvation. Most believe they are saved because they are politically conservative (they're not like those liberals over there!) or because they're "moral" people; they don't smoke, they don't chew, and they don't hang out with those who do. But these folks are separated from God. In the words of one southern preacher, "they're as lost as a martin in hailstorm." They may be NEAR the kingdom, but they are still OUTSIDE THE KINGDOM – and if they die, they will be lost in outerdarkness forever and ever, like any other lost person around the globe. And like this scribe, they are loved by Jesus, and Jesus calls us to love them like he did.

Today, we're going to discover what it means to be NEAR the kingdom. That's what this text is about, so let's dig in together.

Hear now the Word of the Lord in Mark 12, beginning in verse 28:

Scripture:

²⁸ One of the scribes came and heard them arguing, and recognizing that He had answered them well, asked Him, "What commandment is the ^[a]foremost of all?" ²⁹ Jesus answered, "The

foremost is, 'Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord;³⁰ and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.'³¹ The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."³² The scribe said to Him, "Right, Teacher; You have truly stated that He is One, and there is no one else besides Him;³³ and to love Him with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as himself, is much more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices."³⁴ When Jesus saw that he had answered intelligently, He said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." After that, no one would venture to ask Him any more questions.

³⁵ And Jesus began to say, as He taught in the temple, "How is it that the scribes say that ^{the} Christ is the son of David? ^{David} David himself said ⁱⁿ the Holy Spirit,

'The Lord said to my Lord,
"Sit at My right hand,
Until I put Your enemies beneath Your feet.'"

³⁷ David himself calls Him 'Lord'; so in what sense is He his son?" And the large crowd ^{enjoyed} listening to Him.

This is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

In this text we learn 3 things about those who are near the Kingdom: We learn that they 1) Grasp the BASICS of the KINGDOM, 2) They AGREE WITH the King's WORDS, but 3) They still need to RECEIVE the King.

Let's dig in together.

First, we see that those near the kingdom:

1) Grasp the BASICS of the Kingdom

We can see this in what the scribe SAYS to Jesus.

Now in context, so far in the Gospel of Mark, the pharisees have approached Jesus twice with hostile questioning, and now for a 3rd time the Sadducees are testing him. But as Jesus answers the Sadducees, one of the scribes eavesdrops in, he's impressed with what he hears. Jesus is answering biblically! He's quoting the Old Testament – and he's doing a good job! Instead of rejecting Jesus like his colleagues, this scribe is hungry for more! Apparently, even the scribes (the old testament professors of Israel) can see that Jesus speaks truth, when they're not motivated by hubris and jealousy. And so he trails Jesus after the conversation, to examine him further.

He says to Jesus in verse 28:

...“What commandment is the ^{iv}foremost of all?”²⁹ Jesus answered, “The foremost is, ‘Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord;³⁰ and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’³¹ The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”

And so, Jesus says, “Listen, If the entire law was a coat rack, it would have 2 coat hooks upon which everything hangs; 1) LOVE GOD and 2) LOVE NEIGHBOUR. Everything else depends upon those two FOUNDATIONAL COMMANDS.” Take the 10 commandments, for instance. You can't obey the first 4 without loving God, and you cant obey the last 6 without loving your neighbour. The first 4 are directed towards LOVING God: (1) you shall not have other gods before me, 2) you shall not make a graven image, 3) you shall not take the Lord's name in vain, 4) Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy (that is, to honor God who rested on the 7th day of creation). All 4 of those commands are directed at LOVING GOD.

And then the final 6 commandments are aimed at loving our neighbours: 5) honor your father and mother, 6) do not kill, 7) do not commit adultery, 8) Do not steal, 9) do not bear false witness, and 10) Do not covet someone else's stuff!

If you want to obey God's law, you have to LOVE both VERTICALLY and HORIZONTALLY; towards God and towards each other. That is the HEART and ESSENCE and CORE of the Old Testament Law. That is Judaism 101. Every Jewish person knew this. Every morning they woke up they'd chant the Shema from Deuteronomy 6:4, which was the HEART of their faith. Which says,

"Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one! ⁵ **You shall love the Lord your God** with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might."

And so, if you wanted to be a faithful orthodox Jew – if you wanted to score 100% on your Old Testament test – you'd have to know that the HEART of the law is Love of God. That's the basics.

And it just so happens that these basic tenets of the Old Testament law are also the basics of the KINGDOM Jesus proclaimed. This new covenant kingdom doesn't contradict the law; it FULFILLS the law. The rule and reign that Christ brings upon the earth fulfills all of the law's requirements, it upholds all of its messianic predictions, and it perpetuates the very HEART of the old covenant. Only now, under Christ's Kingdom are we empowered to love God and love our neighbours rightly from the heart. All the anticipations of the law land on King Jesus.

Because the heart of both the OLD and NEW COVENANTS is the same; we're called to love GOD and our NEIGHBOUR. That is the fundamental continuity between the law of Moses and the law of Christ.

And so, in terms of content, how does the scribe's interpretation of the law measure up against Jesus' teaching on the law? Does he grasp the basics? Let's see. Look down at verse 32:

³² The scribe said to Him, "Right, Teacher; You have truly stated that He is One, and there is no one else besides Him; ³³ and to love Him with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as himself, is much more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices."

And so, the answer is YES! The scribe understands the Basics. And as a result, Jesus tells him, "you are not far from the kingdom of God." Why? Because **those who are near the kingdom grasp the FOUNDATIONS of God's Word.** They may have grown up in Church, they may have heard sermons preached Sunday after Sunday. They may have heard bible verses read, or seen flannel-graph boards or veggie tales depictions of bible stories, they may have been to VBS or Bible Camp, or sung scripture-laden songs. They may know the basics. That is where the scribe is at, and Jesus says that he is **NEAR THE KINGDOM.**

Friend, if that's you this morning – if you know a lot about the Bible and Jesus, maybe you even know the heart and substance of his kingdom teaching like this scribe – you may be NEAR THE KINGDOM.

I would imagine that this church is full of children and teenagers and who are near the Kingdom. Our church back home in Kentucky is almost 75% children. Our ratio of children to adults is about four to one. Sometimes I look out when I am preaching and it feels like I'm speaking to a room full of kiddos, which is wonderful, praise the LORD! But I know that even though they can sing the songs and recite Scripture verses, even answer Bible questions correctly, a lot of those children haven't made personal professions of faith yet. They are there because their parents bring them to church. They are growing up hearing the Words of life, memorizing scripture, learning the songs we sing at church, and those are all wonderful things God calls their parents to lead them in, and I praise the Lord they are being disciplined in the way of truth. But until each of those children makes a personal decision to repent of their sins and receive Christ as their Savior, they are not members of the Kingdom of God. They are near it,

like the scribe. So we need to be praying for our children. Pray for the children in your own family, but also pray for all the children and young people in this church. That every single one of them, who is here week after week, learning the basics of the Kingdom, would ENTER the Kingdom through their genuine repentance and faith in Christ. Don't mistake simply knowing the basics of the kingdom for genuine saving faith. This passage helps us understand that you can have one without the other. Every act of salvation is by the grace of God alone. Remember to pray for them.

That's the first thing we learn about those near the kingdom; they understand the BASICS of the kingdom.

But more than that, we see that those who are near the kingdom:

2) Agree with the King's Words

Notice here that this man did not only agree with Jesus about a theological point – the text indicates that his heart was INCLINED to his words. We can see this in 3 places: first in verse 28. The scribe had heard Jesus correcting the Sadducees disbelief in the resurrection, and the text says this about the scribe in verse 28,

*“and **recognizing** that He had answered them **well**”*

Notice here how the scribe's heart responds to Jesus' answer. He is not agitated at Jesus, like his fellow pharisees. He's not resolving to PLOT A MURDER AGAINST this teacher, like his jealous colleagues. Rather he simply recognizes that Jesus answers well, and inquires further. That is the mark of someone NEAR the kingdom; they have a softened heart towards the words and person of Jesus.

We can see this again in verse 32. The scribe says to Jesus,

*“...**Right**, Teacher; You have **truly** stated that He is One, and there is no one else besides Him,
³³ and to love Him with all the heart...*

In other words the scribe says, “You have spoken the TRUTH about God and his law!” He AGREES with the Lord about his Word.

And as a result of his AGREEMENT with Jesus about his words, Jesus **commends** the man! Look at verse 34 again:

³⁴ When Jesus saw that he had answered intelligently, He said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God...”

And so, Jesus is happy with the man’s response.

The word here rendered “intelligently” can also mean “wisely.” It comes from two Greek roots which literally mean to “have mind,” that is, to be sensible, thoughtful, or prudent. All the scribe does is simple AFFIRM that Jesus’ teaching is correct. And as a result, Jesus says to the man “you are not far from the kingdom of God.”

Beloved, this man was near to God’s kingdom because he AGREED WITH the words of the King.

Only 2 chapters ago in Mark 10, we see someone else approach Jesus and agree with his words. A rich young ruler came to Jesus and asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” He knows that Jesus possesses the words of eternal life. And when Jesus calls him to give up his idol of wealth to follow him, he walks away sad. Why? Because he concurs with Jesus that entering the kingdom comes at a COST – but a cost which he’s unwilling to pay. Discipleship is too high a price. The rich young ruler was NEAR THE KINGDOM, but his wealth and possessions have such a grip on his heart, they choke out the seed of the gospel planted in his life. He’s unwilling to obey the king when he asks him to give his riches up.

Friend, this morning, do you concur with Jesus' words? When you hear the word of the Lord, do you agree with Jesus that he is right? How does your heart respond to what you read in the Bible? Or what you hear preached on Sunday? Or what we sing in worship? When you hear that you are a sinner, who has broken God's law, who is rightly abiding in his wrath, and who deserves to be punished by eternal torment for your sin, do you humbly bow before these truths? Do you agree with God about his assessment of your spiritual condition?

Agreeing with Jesus is necessary for entering the Kingdom, but JUST agreeing with the truth isn't enough. Mere mental assent to what you read in the Bible or hear preached on Sunday isn't enough to bring you from one who is near the Kingdom to one who has Entered the Kingdom.

In the book, Pilgrim's progress, the protagonist named Christian meets a man named Evangelist who urges him to pass through the narrow the gate of salvation. But when Christian approaches the wicket gate, a man named Worldly Wiseman entices Christian to take up residence in a city NEAR THE GATE. "You don't have to ENTER THROUGH THE GATE to be saved" he promised. "All you have to do is dwell in the nearby city of MORALITY. Through self-righteousness you can achieve what the gate provides! You can secure YOUR OWN salvation, there! You don't have to actually ENTER THROUGH THE GATE and bear the cost of discipleship; through your good works you can scrub your guilty slate clean!" But thankfully, as Christian approached the city of morality, he was rescued by Evangelist who warned him that this city will be destroyed by fire like the city whence he began his pilgrimage! If Christian remained in the city of morality, he would be destroyed in the coming judgement and cut off from the celestial city.

Friends, agreeing with the words of Jesus can get you NEAR THE KINGDOM, it can get you CLOSE TO his counsel, it can get you PROXIMATE to his presence, it can even bring some temporal blessings (because his ways are right and lead to life), but it cannot bring you salvation. Dwelling in the city of morality will finally serve to condemn those who dwell in it. Because no one gets saved by their own morality – that's not how it works.

Even the demons know true things about God – and they AGREE WITH HIM! They even shudder and cower before those truths, but the demons aren't saved. We need more than DEMON FAITH; we need more than DEMONIC AFFIRMATION of propositional truths about Jesus. Because agreeing with the KING isn't enough to get you in the kingdom of heaven.

Entering in requires something much more foundational to happen. If you are NEAR the KINGDOM this morning, if this is you, then scripture says there is one thing that you lack:

You need to:

3) RECEIVE the King

Unless the scribe IDENTIFIES Jesus for who he is – and then RECEIVES HIM for who he is, he WILL NOT enter the Kingdom of heaven. Unless you grasp Jesus TRULY for who he is, and RECEIVE him for who he is, you will remain AT THE GATES of the kingdom, but NEVER ENTER IN. We can see this in verse 35, where, immediately following Jesus' commendation of the scribe, He begins teaching in the temple, and he shares about his IDENTITY.

Look there with me, beginning in verse 35,

³⁵ And Jesus *began* to say, as He taught in the temple, “How *is it that* the scribes say that ^[a]the Christ is the son of David? ³⁶ David himself said ^[a]in the Holy Spirit,

‘The Lord said to my Lord,
“Sit at My right hand,
Until I put Your enemies beneath Your feet.”’

³⁷ **David himself calls Him ‘Lord’; so in what sense is He his son?** And the large crowd ^[a]enjoyed listening to Him.

And so immediately Jesus puts a question to the crowds to reveal his identity. Why is that? Well, it's because Jesus wants the man to ENTER INTO the kingdom! IDENTIFYING and RECEIVING JESUS for who he truly is, is the means by which this scribe will enter the kingdom of God.

And so, if that's true, then perhaps the most important question we could ever ask is: who does Jesus reveal himself to be? If you are NEAR THE KINGDOM today, the only way to find salvation for your sins is to SEE JESUS FOR WHO HE IS, and RECEIVE HIM FOR WHO HE IS. So, who is he?

Well, he is both DAVID'S SON and DAVID'S LORD. Jesus quotes Psalm 110:1, which King David wrote 1000 years earlier. David was the King who received the promise of God that one of his sons would reign on his throne forever and ever. All of Israel was looking forward to a day when an anointed King would arrive to crush the enemies of God, restore the fortunes of his people, and usher in the PERMANENT KINGDOM of God. Everyone knew that a son from David's line would sit on the throne and place God's enemies under his feet. But in Psalm 110 David says something CURIOUS about this SON OF DAVID. He prophesies by the Spirit, that this SON OF DAVID is ALSO his LORD! Look there with me again at Psalm 110:1:

"The Lord said to my Lord..."

Now, in the original Hebrew, the text literally says, "YAHWEH SAYS to MY LORD." That first word may be in ALL CAPS in some of your translations – as a euphemism for the DIVINE NAME. The first word is YHWH and the second is ADONI (you may have heard the word "Adonai" before, which means "Lord.") That "I-ending" adds the singular suffix "my" as in "my Lord." And so, David prophesies that his SON is HIS LORD. One of his DESCENDENTS is his MASTER. What on earth is he talking about? First, off, how can it be that David's son is greater than David? Everyone knew in the Ancient Near East that the father was always greater than the son. And second, how can it be that David refers to his son as PRESENTLY "my Lord?" Is this a prophetic anticipation of his coming Lord already existing 1000 years before his arrival? How can it be that the messiah would be both a SON OF DAVID and DAVID'S Lord?

Jesus proposes this mystery to the crowds, and no one can answer him. Why? Because the mystery is only resolved IN HIM. In Jesus Christ we have someone who is FULLY MAN. He descended from David through his adoptive father Joseph. But Jesus is also SO MUCH MORE than merely the son of David; he is also the SON OF GOD! With respect to his PERSON, he is God the Son. Mark reveals his paradoxical identity in the very first verse of Mark. He says in Mark 1:1 says, “

“The beginning of the gospel of Jesus **Christ, the Son of God.**”

On the one hand he is the Christ – he is truly a man. And yet on the other hand he is the Son of God – he is truly God. In chapters 1, 9, and 12, the Father acclaimed it. In chapters 3 and 5, the demons recognized it. In chapter 14 the high priests will question it, and in chapter 15 the centurion will declare it. Jesus is the Son of God!

No one saw this coming. None of the Jews expected God to do this. No one imagined that the promised human king would be God incarnate! No one ever DREAMED that God himself would take on human flesh and become one of us, be born into the very family and lineage of David. And yet, this mystery had been hiding in plain sight, here in Psalm 110, for 1000 years.

How is it that the Jews did not foresee that God would become a man? How is it that those who were the most WELL-VERSED in the Bible, couldn't anticipate God's plan for the most important event in human history? Well, 2 Corinthians 3 tells us. It says in verse 14:

“¹⁴ But their minds were hardened; for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil ^(a)remains unlifted, because it is removed in Christ. ¹⁵ But to this day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their heart; ¹⁶ but whenever a person turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.”

The mystery of the Gospel – that God would become flesh in order to save us – has been VEILED to the hearts of the jews. That’s why they couldn’t see it in the scriptures. But when they turn to Jesus in faith, the veil is REMOVED, the scales fall off; they can see the KING IN HIS BEAUTY; they identify and receive him for WHO HE IS as SON OF DAVID, AND the SON OF GOD. In the words of John Macarthur:

“the eternal, transcendent, all knowing, all powerful, all present God became a human being. The infinite one became finite. The eternal one entered time. The invisible became visible... The personal God came into the world - he became a MAN. The truth that God became flesh - Immanuel, God with us - is the most important truth of all truth. It’s the only truth that can save us from eternal hell. God took on a second nature not mingled, but fused together in indivisible oneness, [in the person of his Son].”

And so, although he was the creator of the world, he was born a baby in a manger. Although he continued to uphold the universe by the Word of his power, he needed his mom to teach him how to walk. Although he knew all things, he now needed to learn. Although he had all-power, he was now weak. Although he owned all things, he now had to earn an income as the son of a carpenter. Although he was creator, he became a part of creation. God became one of us. He wrapped himself in the flesh of his most prized creation; humankind.

What do we sing together? “Amazing love, how can it be, that thou MY GOD should’st die for me”. God became killable so that he could die for you and for me.

What do we say together at Christmas time when we sing “hark the herald angels sing”? **“Veiled in the flesh the godhead see, hail incarnate deity.”** In Jesus Christ, we see a human being who is also the eternal God.

Colossians 2:9 says this about Jesus: “For in him the WHOLE FULLNESS of Deity dwells bodily.”

And so, the Word became flesh. The Light of God has entered the darkness of this sinful world, and become a HUMAN BEING.

Although from the time of David to the time of Jesus, God's people waited over 1000 years, God did not BREAK his promise! No, **God put flesh and bones on his promises in the person of his Son Jesus Christ.** Philippians 2 tells us that this humble act of incarnation culminated in the cross. Why did Jesus have to die on a cross as a human being? Well, to pay for the sins we committed against God. The perfect lamb was slain as our SUBSTITUTE. He who knew no sin BECAME OUR SIN – 2 Corinthians 5 says. Why? SO THAT we might become the righteousness of God in him. What does that mean? It means that for all who look to him in faith, a great exchange occurs: we trade our sin for his righteousness. All of his perfect works are credited to our account (as if we had done them), and all of our sins are credited to his account (as if he had done them). So that we might be saved.

So unless you receive THIS JESUS for who he truly is, this God-Man who took on your sin and died as your substitute, you will remain outside of his kingdom. It all comes down to how we RESPOND to Jesus. Maybe you're like the scribe in this story today: you know the heart of the law, you've grown up in Church, you even AGREE WITH JESUS about most of his teaching. If you're that person today, the bible says that you are NEAR THE KINGDOM. You're at it's very GATES. But you have not yet ENTERED the kingdom. You are still on the outside. Right now, the bible says, the GATES ARE OPEN! You can ENTER IN TODAY! TODAY is the day of salvation. If you know the basics teachings of Jesus, and you agree with what you read in the Bible, I urge you to take the next step! Repent of your sins, and place your faith in the sacrifice of Christ on your behalf as the only thing that could ever make you right God! Commit to following him in humble obedience as your Savior and the highest authority in your life! Because a day is coming when those open gates will forever CLOSE. And all those who have not entered in will be locked out into outer darkness where Matthew 25 says there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Receiving Jesus is not a small matter; it's a matter of eternal life and death; it's a matter of heaven and hell; it's a matter of enjoying your creator for all eternity in paradise, or suffering God's righteous judgement for your sin, where Jesus says in Mark 9, "their worm does not die, and the fire that burns them is never put out." IDENTIFYING Jesus RIGHTLY is a matter of eternal life and death. And so Jesus identifies himself for us. He shows us that He is God. He is your creator, the maker of heaven and earth. He shows us that he is both David's SON and David's LORD. And if you will repent of your sin and trust Him, He will be your Savior as well.

We're not told how the scribe responded to Jesus. We don't know whether or not he made it into God's kingdom. We don't know whether or not he remained at the gates and was tragically SHUT OUT on his last day. But this I do know: if you are NEAR THE KINGDOM TODAY, you must RECEIVE THE KING. You must receive his RULE AND REIGN over your heart and life. The Son of David is not just a man, he's the son of GOD and he has claim over EVERY INCH OF YOUR LIFE.

There's a reason why there's no ending in the scribe's story – it's because we are the scribe in the story! The decision to receive the King or remain NEAR to his kingdom is our decision – not the scribes. What will YOU do with Jesus? Would you submit to him today? Would you repent of your sins, and believe in his finished work for you on the cross today?

A lamp with the cord placed just beside the power socket on the wall is powerless. It's CLOSE TO the power, but has not received the power. That lamp only receives power once it has PLUGGED INTO the wall socket. There are so many so-called "Christians" today who are like a lamp that is UNPLUGGED from the wall. They are NEAR THE KINGDOM, but they have not PLUGGED INTO JESUS; they have not RECEIVED him into their life as the power of God unto salvation. And as a result their lives are not FULL OF his light. We need Jesus' power and presence INSIDE OF US to give us a new life. Only through receiving THIS KING can we enter his kingdom.

Because that's how those who are NEAR THE KINGDOM ENTER IN. That's how those outside the gates are welcomed home. That's how those dwelling in the city of morality enter the celestial city; through trusting in JESUS as your king and Lord. Because Jesus is the Gospel.

Let's pray.