

THE GOSPEL IS REVOLUTIONARY

The Revolution of The Kingdom. Vive La Resistance! Long Live the Revolution! (Handout 1)

“Even after the battle at Mantinea, which Thucydides has described, the one who first announced the victory had no other reward for his glad tidings [euangelion – singular] than a piece of meat sent by the magistrates from the public mess” (Plutarch; Agesilaus, p. 33, 1st century, emphasis mine).

“Accordingly, when [Aristodemus] had come near, he stretched out his hand and cried with a loud voice: ‘Hail, King Antigonus, we have conquered Ptolemy in a sea-fight, and now hold Cyprus, with 12,800 soldiers as prisoners of war.’ To this, Antigonus replied: ‘Hail to thee also, by Heaven! but for torturing us in this way, thou shalt undergo punishment; the reward for thy good tidings [euangelion – plural] thou shalt be some time in getting’” (Plutarch; Demetrius, p. 17, 1st century, emphasis mine).

“Why, as we are told, the Spartans merely sent meat from the public commons to the man who brought glad tidings [euangelion] of the victory in Mantinea which Thucydides describes! And indeed the compilers of histories are, as it were, reporters of great exploits who are gifted with the faculty of felicitous speech, and achieve success in their writing through the beauty and force of their narration; and to them those who first encountered and recorded the events [εὐαγγέλιον – euangelion] are indebted for a pleasing retelling of them” (Plutarch; Moralia (Glory of Athens), p. 347, 1st century, emphasis mine).

Matthew 4.23—Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news [euangelion] of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people.

Luke 4.43—But he said, “I must proclaim the good news [euangelion] of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent.”

Mark 1.14-15—After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. “The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news [euangelion – gospel]!”

Matthew 10.7-8—As you go, proclaim this message: “The **KINGDOM OF HEAVEN** has come near.’ Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.

Luke 10.9—Heal the sick who are there and tell them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’

Luke 9.6—So they set out and went from village to village, proclaiming the good news [euangelion] and healing people everywhere.

NOT JUST PASSING THROUGH

Matthew 13.31-32—He told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches.”

THE PARDON OF GOD

Luke 15.20-31—“But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him. The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate. Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. Your brother has come,’ he replied, ‘and your father has killed the

“Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.”— John 14.9

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Isaiah 61.1,2—The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor and the day of vengeance of our God . . .

fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.' The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him . . . But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.'”

Luke 4.16-29—He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.” Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. He began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.” All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips . . . “Truly I tell you,” he continued, “prophets are not accepted in their hometowns. I assure you that there were many widows in Israel in Elijah's time, when the sky was shut for three and a half years and there was a severe famine throughout the land. Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to a widow in Zarephath in the region of Sidon. And there were many in Israel with leprosy in the time of Elisha the prophet, yet not one of them was cleansed—only Naaman the Syrian.” All the people in the synagogue were furious when they heard this. They got up, drove him out of the town, and took him to the brow of the hill on which the town was built, in order to throw him off the cliff.

ENEMY LOVE

Leviticus 19.17-18—Do not hate a fellow Israelite in your heart. Rebuke your neighbor frankly so you will not share in their guilt. Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD.

Matthew 5.20-48—For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven . . . You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

John 13.34-35— A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.



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THE GREAT REVERSAL

Deuteronomy 28 –The Blessings and the Cursings

Luke 6.20-24—Looking at his disciples, he said: “Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God . . . But woe to you who are rich, for you have already received your comfort.”

Luke 16.19-31—The Rich Man and Lazarus

Luke 16.1-13—Jesus told his disciples: “There was a rich man whose manager was accused of **WASTING** his possessions. So he called him in and asked him, ‘What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your management, because you cannot be manager any longer.’ The manager said to himself, ‘What shall I do now? My master is taking away my job. I’m not strong enough to dig, and I’m ashamed to beg—I know what I’ll do so that, when I lose my job here, people will welcome me into their houses.’ So he called in each one of his master’s debtors. He asked the first, ‘How much do you owe my master?’ Nine hundred gallons of olive oil,’ he replied. The manager told him, ‘Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it four hundred and fifty.’ Then he asked the second, ‘And how much do you owe?’ ‘A thousand bushels of wheat,’ he replied. He told him, ‘Take your bill and make it eight hundred.’ The master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly. For the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light. I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings . . . No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.

Luke 16.14-17(NRSV)— The Pharisees, who were lovers of money, heard all this, and they ridiculed him. So he said to them, “You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of others; but God knows your hearts; for what is prized by human beings is an abomination in the sight of God. The law and the prophets were in effect until John came; since then the good news of the kingdom of God is proclaimed, and everyone is attacking it. Surely it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away, than for one stroke of a letter in the law to be dropped.

“Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.”— John 14.9

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THE NONVIOLENT NONCOOPERATION OF JESUS

Deuteronomy 19.2—Show no pity: life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

Matthew 5.39-41—But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also. And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well. If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles.

Luke 9.21-24—Jesus strictly warned them not to tell this to anyone. And he said, “The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.” Then he said to them all: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it.

Matthew 13.31-32—He told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches.”

ENLARGING THE KINGDOM

Acts 8.12—But when they believed Philip as he proclaimed the good news of **THE KINGDOM OF GOD** and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

Acts 19.8—Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about **THE KINGDOM OF GOD**.

Acts 20.25— Now I know that none of you among whom I have gone about preaching **THE KINGDOM** will ever see me again.

Acts 28.23—They arranged to meet Paul on a certain day, and came in even larger numbers to the place where he was staying. He witnessed to them from morning till evening, explaining about **THE KINGDOM OF GOD**, and from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets he tried to persuade them about Jesus.

Acts 28.30-31—For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. He proclaimed **THE KINGDOM OF GOD** and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ—with all boldness and without hindrance!

Today, Jesus is still extending the ongoing invitation to join his revolution. He is looking for those who are weak but daring, afraid but believing, unsure but willing to take a risk, people who are simply crazy enough to go for it with him. To follow Jesus and live the Jesus way is the most revolutionary thing a human being can do. It's not about a ticket to go to heaven. (How boring, tame, and domesticated.) It's not about saying a simple prayer, going to church once a week and then simply going back to the way things have always been done. To follow Jesus IS radical and revolutionary. It is to adopt a completely counter intuitive way of doing life called The Way, of which Jesus is the template. The “kingdom of God,” rightly understood, is an alternate society formed around Jesus and his teachings. It's about learning to follow the Jesus practice of love, forgiveness, restorative justice, mercy, and fidelity to self-sacrificial, other-centeredness.

We are too skilled at taming revolutions and making them conventional. Too skilled at turning things like the sermon on the mount into a blasé blessing of the conventional life we've always known.

The Seeds of revolution will always be present as long as the Jesus story is around, and you just never know when someone might leap.

Love subversively and dedicatedly. Don't wax cold, till a world where love reigns is the only world that remains. Vive la resistance. LONG LIVE THE REVOLUTION!

