

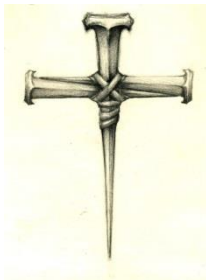
Chapter 4

The Ministry and Message of Jesus Christ



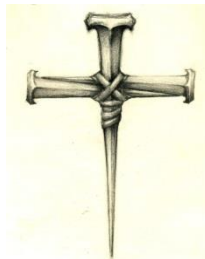
Chapter Outline

- Jesus '*invites*' us all, especially those on the margins, outsiders, outcasts, into the Kingdom of God
- Jesus is unorthodox in his approach
- Jesus invites through parables and miracles ... the only way to understand the misunderstood

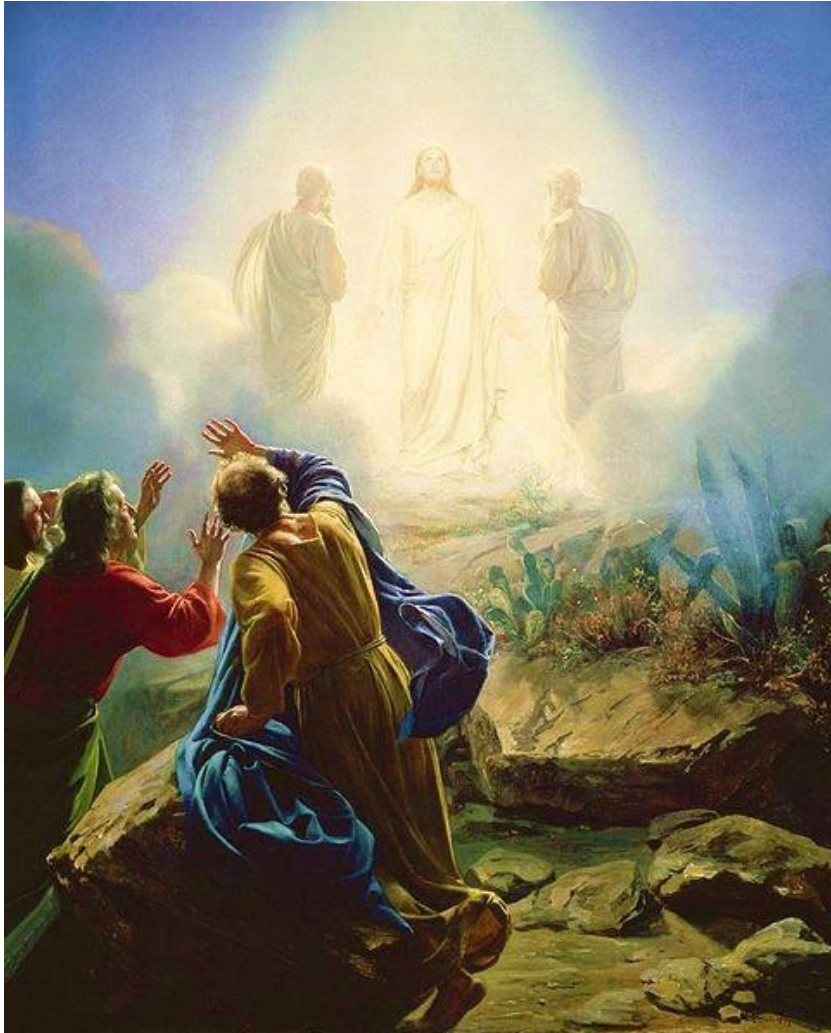


Parables

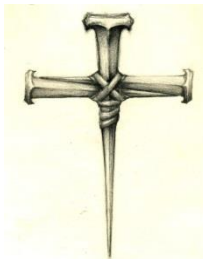
- **Purpose:** to reveal what the kingdom of heaven/God was like
- Drew from familiar images
- **'Parable' = (Gk.) comparison**
- **An analogy – one reality compared to something better/different**
- Parables:
 1. Challenge us
 2. Offer no conclusions
 3. Are open-ended, leave us with questions
- Confused many, intimidated some
- Serve as a **paradox** in Jesus teaching



Miracles



- **Signs** that the Kingdom of God had come ...
- ***Observable events not explainable by natural or scientific laws***
- With God, all things are possible ...
- Transfiguration
- Eucharist

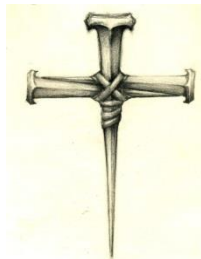


Kingdom of God

- Is the kingdom a 'place'?
- There is great imagery in scripture to illustrate the kingdom
 - Old Testament, New Testament
- *The Kingdom of God/heaven is like ... ???*
- Entrance into the kingdom has conditions:
 - 'The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the Gospel.'* Mk 1:15
- There is a sense of urgency!



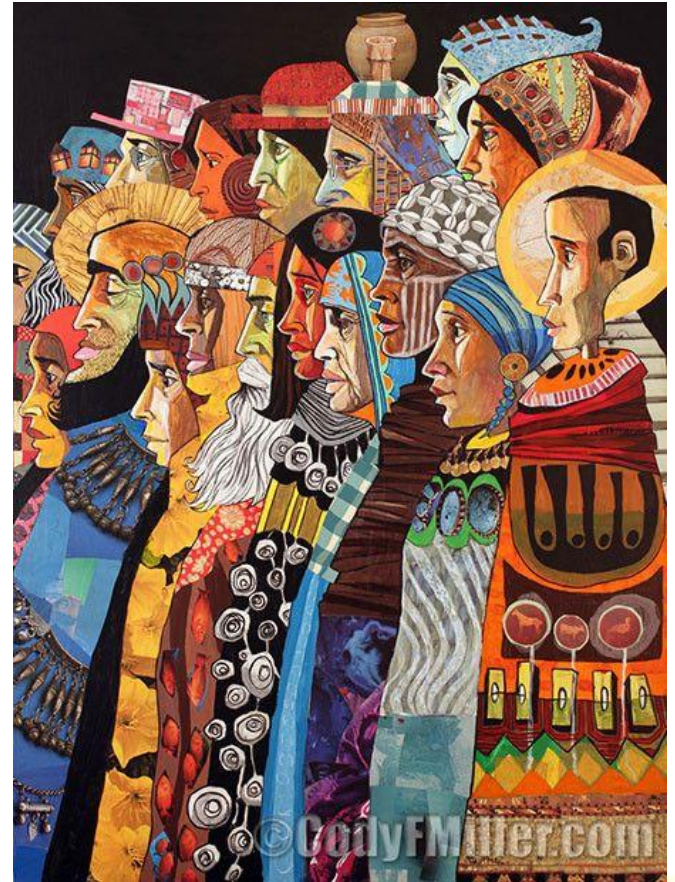
**TO GAIN ENTRY ...
ONE MUST GIVE
ALL ...**



Kingdom of God

UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD:

1. The kingdom has a **present and future dimension**
2. The kingdom is **meant for all**, especially the **poor**
3. The kingdom is **open even to sinners**
4. The **Beatitudes** model the kingdom



Those with no sense of need of the Kingdom of God ...

Those with empty piety = might be seen as 'holy rollers'

- See repentance as something *others* need rather than themselves
- Piety becomes a distraction rather than a virtue

Wealthy = not necessarily rich, but distracted

- Jesus didn't hate rich people, but warned against anything that distracts us from God

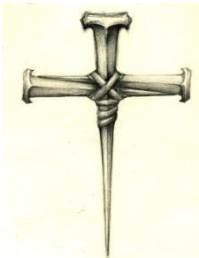


Beatitudes



The Sermon on the Mount, by Carl Heinrich Bloch, used by permission of the National Historic Museum at Frederiksborg in Hillerød, Denmark

- Sermon on the Mount / Plain ...
- Present a model of how to live on earth so as to enter the Kingdom of God ...
- Beatitudes challenge our assumptions
- Confounds conventional thinking



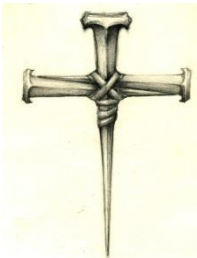
Beatitudes in contrast

Matthew 5:1-12

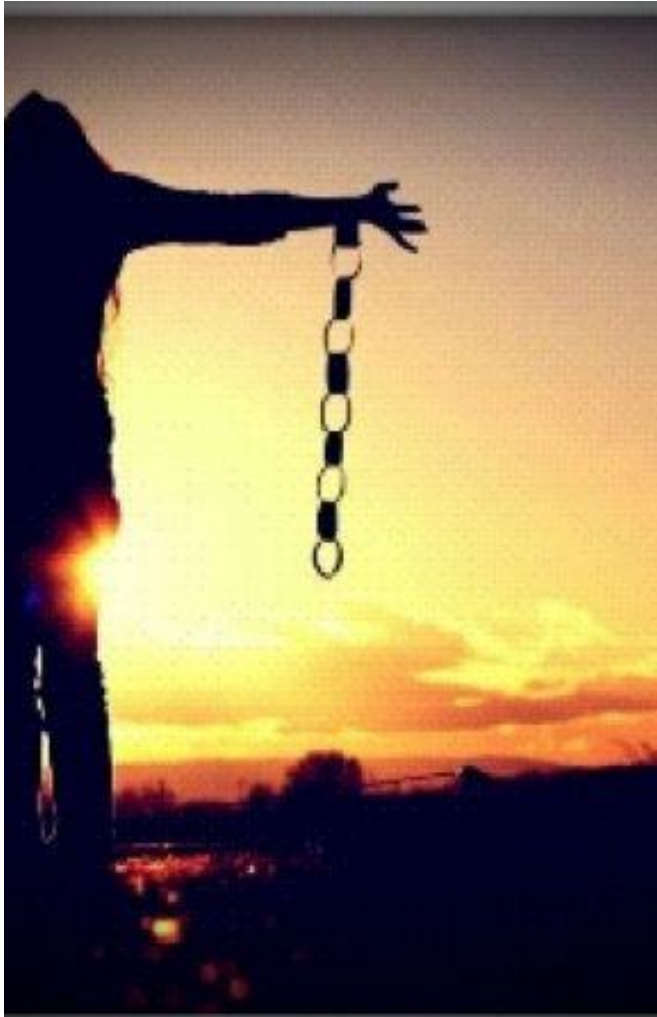
1. Poor in spirit > kingdom of heaven is theirs
2. Those who mourn > comforted
3. The meek > inherit the land
4. Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness > will be satisfied
5. The merciful > shown mercy
6. The clean of heart > will see God
7. The peacemakers > called children of God
8. The persecuted > theirs is the kingdom of heaven

Luke 6:20-23

1. The poor > kingdom of heaven is theirs
2. The hungry > will be satisfied
3. Those who are weeping > will laugh
4. When people hate, exclude, insult you, and denounce you because of God > reward will be great in heaven



Beatitudes and Spiritual Freedom



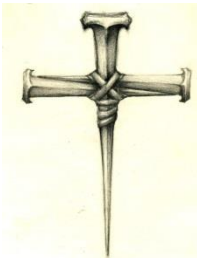
- As a way to explain the Beatitudes, St. Thomas Aquinas taught that we will find spiritual freedom if we detach from the following things:

1. **Wealth**
2. **Pleasure**
3. **Power**
4. **Honor**



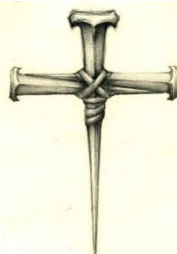
Primary Messages of the Parables

1. Jesus introduces us to the Kingdom ...
2. Heaven is open to everyone ...
3. ... including sinners
4. Salvation is not to decide on later ... it's for now ... a sense of urgency
5. Once we accept the Kingdom, we must prepare our hearts ... with repentance ...
6. Be prepared to suffer for Jesus ...





IF YOU DON'T
BELIEVE IN
MIRACLES
PERHAPS YOU'VE
FORGOTTEN
YOU ARE
ONE.



Miracles are ...

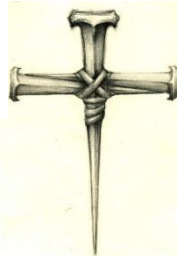
- ... *observable events not explainable by natural or scientific laws* ...
- ... and **God** makes them happen
- ... a sign of the dawning of the Messianic age
- Along with parables, provide a glimpse of the kingdom of God
- ... are known by many names ... *'Signs, works, wonders'*



Miracles are ...

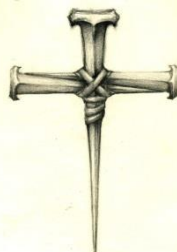
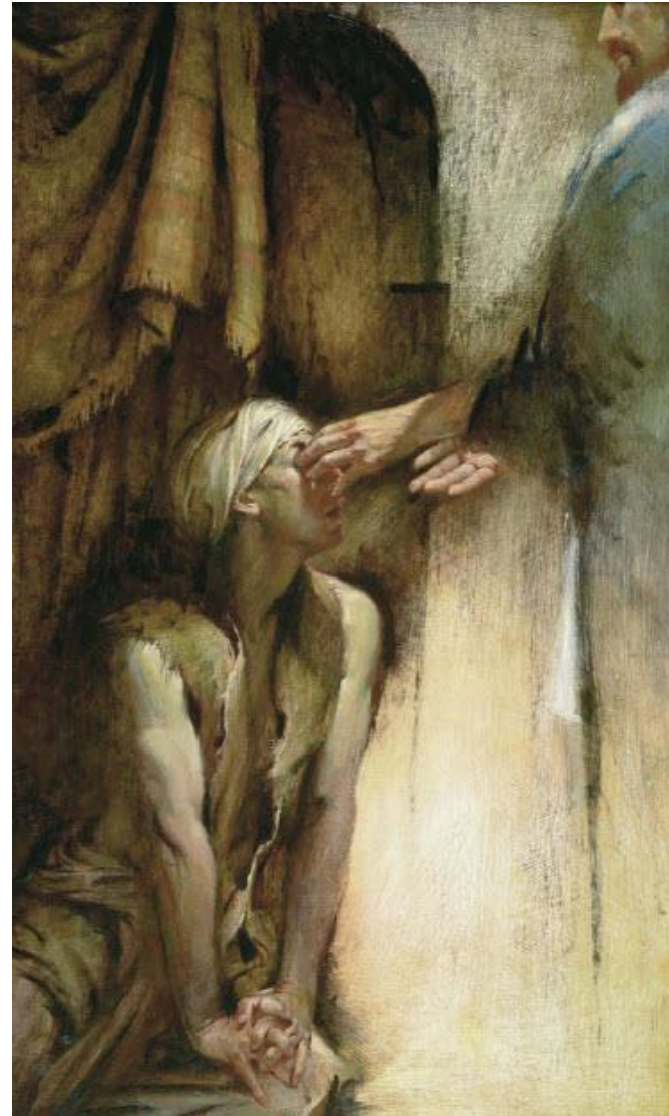
"SIGNS" THAT ...

1. Show that the Messiah was among us ...
2. ... that the Messiah was sent by the Father
3. ... and which invite us to believe in him



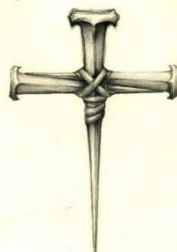
Miracles by many names ...

- Synoptics = (Gk.) *dynamis* = 'act of power'
- John = (Gk.) *ergon* = 'work' and *semion* 'sign'
- Overall, signs of great power, or something more



Jesus miracles ... why?

- Free us from **earthly problems**
- Free us from the **slavery to sin**
- Free us from the **power of evil**
- Anticipate the **Paschal mystery**



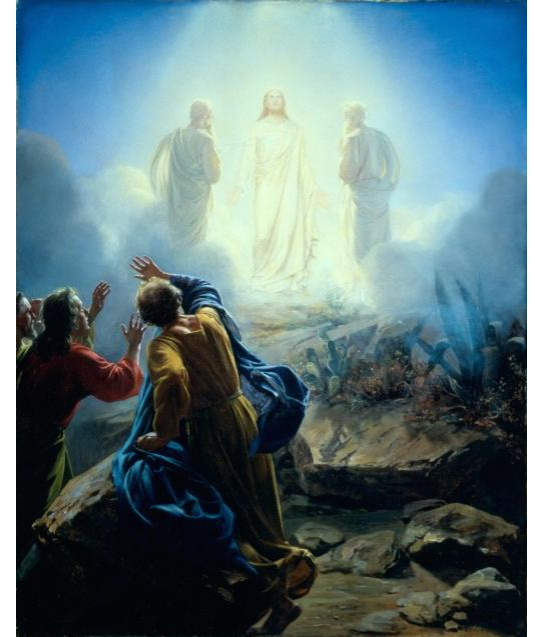
Kinds of Miracles ...

1. Physical
2. Exorcisms
3. Nature miracles
4. Raisings from the dead

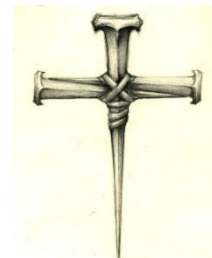


Transfiguration

- *Metamorpho* (Gk.)
 - *meta* = ‘to change’
 - *morphe* = ‘form’
 - to change into another form
- Change what?
 - Jesus’ human nature into his **Divine nature**
- Purpose:
 1. To give his apostles (Peter, James, John) **a foretaste of the kingdom of God**
 2. To **reveal Jesus’ divine glory** (confirming the faith of Peter)
 3. To show that the **prophecies about the Messiah** - **Moses=the Law, Elijah=prophets** – had been **fulfilled in Jesus**



Institution of the Eucharist

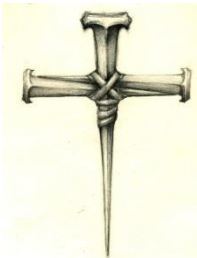


Passover



- Memorial of Israel's deliverance from death to life

- God's saving activity continues to be present to us
- Not the people remembering God, but God *remembering his people*



Passover

- What the disciples understood:
 - Sharing the Passover meal with Jesus – what good Jews did
- What the disciples did not understand
 - Jesus did something radically new
 - He identified himself with the bread and wine
 - Reveals his death on the cross



Eucharist = Service





I BELIEVE IN MIRACLES