Invitation to the Kingdom Life

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Introduction:

- Shannon is the content director at the TENx10 Collaboration
- Roman Catholic ("sometimes good, mostly bad"), author/freelance writer
- Mother of 4 (ages 9-16), husband is Catholic school principal outside Chicago
- Recent book: reflection on Catholic social teaching
    - Written in honor of Pope Leo XIV from Chicago
    - Best-selling book: *Fat Luther, Slim Pickings* & *Praying with the Popes*

Core Teaching: Love of God & Neighbor (Mark 12)

- Scribe approaches Jesus asking which commandment is most important
- Jesus responds with Shema (daily Jewish prayer): "Hear O Israel, Lord our God is one"
    - Love God with heart, soul, mind, strength
    - Immediately adds: Love neighbor as yourself
- Scribe agrees genuinely (unlike typical Pharisee interactions)
    - "You are right teacher, correctly said God is one"
    - "Worth more than burnt offerings and sacrifices"
- Jesus: "You are not far from the kingdom of God"
- Mark's version emphasizes scholarly dialogue vs confrontation
- John Wesley's social holiness doctrine
    - "Solitary religion is not to be found there"
    - "No holiness but social holiness"
    - "Gospel of Christ knows no religion but social religion"
    - "Faith working by love is length, breadth, depth, height of Christian perfection"
- Trinitarian foundation: God as community (Father, Son, Spirit)
    - Made in God's image = made for relationship
    - Born into families, need community from birth
    - Cannot survive as isolated individuals

Good Samaritan Parable Analysis (Luke 10)

- Same question setup, Pharisee "wishing to justify himself" asks "Who is my neighbor?"
- Historical context: Samaritans considered impure by Jews
    - Disagreed on worship location and practices
    - Descended from Jews who stayed during exile
    - Religious tensions similar to Protestant/Catholic disputes
- Priest and Levite bypass wounded man for ritual purity (temple sacrifice duties)
- Samaritan's comprehensive response
    - Moved with compassion at sight
    - Oil and wine treatment, bandaging wounds
    - Transportation on own animal to inn
    - Payment for care plus promise: "I'll repay extra costs on return"
- Jesus shifts question: "Which was neighbor?" vs "Who is my neighbor?"
- Pharisee correctly identifies: "The one who showed mercy"
- Jesus: "Go and do likewise" - invitation to act on known truth
- Pope Francis (Fratelli Tutti): Jesus transforms approach
    - Don't decide who's close enough to be neighbor

    - Become neighbors to all
    - Kingdom with ever-expanding borders, no limits
- Group discussion on American church segregation
    - Dr. King: “Most segregated time is Sunday morning”
    - American church “looks more like America than Jesus”
    - Kingdom tension: “here and not yet”
    - Church needs renewal, white supremacy as “original sin of America”

Practical Kingdom Living

- 1John 4: “We love because he loved us first”
    - Cannot love unseen God while hating visible brother/sister
    - Commandment extends beyond church walls to all people
- Church on offense: “Gates of hell shall not prevail”
    - Gates = defensive position, church should be advancing
    - Not building walls but expanding kingdom boundaries
- Common good definition: Flourishing of all people
    - Physical: food, medicine, clean water, healthcare access
    - Mental: ability to flourish, grow, learn, create
    - Spiritual: ways to seek God according to divine calling
- Kingdom as leaven metaphor
    - Bubbles up, transforms world from within
    - Feeds and grows, overflows containers
    - Not military conquest but organic expansion
- Romero prayer theme: “Workers not master builders”
    - Plant seeds without seeing full harvest
    - Build kingdom we won’t see completed until Christ returns
    - Youth ministry example: send kids into world, rarely see long-term fruit
- Catalina Tapia insight: Image of God is collective
    - No single person/group bears full divine image
    - Each culture offers different glimpses of God’s fullness
    - Need diverse community to see complete kingdom picture

See-Judge-Act method for community discipleship

- **See: Total reality analysis**
    - Who, what, when, where, how, why
    - Root causes and contributing factors
    - Social, economic, spiritual, mental dimensions
- **Judge: Social & Theological analysis**
    - Social science tools: sociology, economics, history
    - Theological reflection and prayer
    - Christian tradition: Wesley, other thinkers through centuries
- **Act: Address both immediate and systemic issues**
    - Serve immediate needs like Good Samaritan
    - Work for justice on root causes
    - Aim to manifest God’s will and advance kingdom reign