

The Modest, Potent, Priceless Kingdom

March 31, 2019

To KNOW Christ and one another more deeply,
To CARE for one another in truth and in love,
To GROW as followers of Jesus,
To SERVE those God has placed in our path.
- CG Mission Statement

Worship: I Corinthians 1:18-31

(Here is a psalm/song to help your group as you worship)

Read through I Corinthians 1:18-31 as a group.

Icebreaker

What was your favorite children's story when you were growing up?

Text for Discussion: Matthew 13

Turn in your Bibles and read this passage aloud together.

Aid for Discussion: Sermon Summary

As Christians, we have a personal relationship with God. But we're also a community of Christ followers, citizens of God's Kingdom. The Kingdom was Jesus's central message, which He gave us glimpses of through His parables found in Matthew 13.

In The Parable of the Sower (v3-9), four types of soil represent people's responses to hearing the Good News. Some will reject it due to their hardness of heart. Others respond with interest but never seriously enough to remain faithful when life gets difficult. Many may appreciate Christ's message, but their hearts are too crowded – there isn't enough room for God in their lives. And finally, there are those who take what they hear to heart, resulting in a bountiful harvest. What can we learn from this parable?

Many hear, but few receive. Our Kingdom citizenship depends on the condition of our hearts, and this parable invites healthy, personal self-evaluation – to thoughtfully question whether we have truly received Christ's message and allowed it to take root in our heart. Because when it has, **Kingdom citizens are radically transformed**; it creates in us an irrepressible, soul-transforming, God-empowered new life.

The Parable of the Weeds (v24-30). Although the Kingdom has come in Jesus, our world is like a field full of wheat and weeds. **The Kingdom has been inaugurated but not yet consummated.** Citizens of the Kingdom and of the world remain side by side. There has been an intentional delay in separating them, so our lives will continue to find tension and conflict. We must not underestimate Christ's power that is at work within us, nor the power of the Enemy at work against us.

The Parable of the Mustard Seed (v31-32) teaches that **the Kingdom had a modest beginning.** This was not the triumphant Kingdom the Israelites expected. We too must adjust our expectations. Our King did not come to be served but to serve. And so, we too are called to become humble servants. But we shouldn't let the modesty of the Kingdom deceive us. As The Parable of the Yeast (v33) describes, the **Kingdom is potent**, taking what is unremarkable to accomplish the remarkable (1 Cor 1:27). We live in the reality of our weakness and God's strength (John 15:50), boasting all the more of our weaknesses so that Christ's power may rest upon us (2 Cor 12:9-10).

The Parables of the Hidden Treasure and the Pearl (v44-46) shows that **the Kingdom is treasured above all**. Its citizens have found something so precious that they'd joyfully sell all they have to gain it. It is a treasure that fills our heart, pushing out all other concerns. Kingdom citizens wholeheartedly love Jesus; He has become the core of who they are.

The Parable of the Net (v37-50) is a reminder that **there will be a day of judgment and consummation**. The Kingdom has come, but it has come small and humble, often rejected and attacked. And yet, the Kingdom is potent, using what is weak to reveal the power of God. And one day, Jesus will come to establish the fullness of His Kingdom on earth. This message is a promise that one day all things will be made right by our righteous and loving Father.

Guiding Question of the Week

(This question is intended as a target for the whole conversation. Do not ask for responses now. It will be repeated later in the study.)

How does the idea of the Kingdom and Kingdom citizenship affect your view of your Christian life?

Questions for Discussion

(Remember it is better to wrestle deeply with two good questions than gloss over many. Sub-bullets are intended for potential follow-up.)

- After reading the parable of the sower, what kind of soil do you identify with (Matt 13:3-9)
 - How do you respond when the worries of life come? Does God and His kingdom get choked out?
 - How can we help each other when we are going through trials in life?
- Read the parable of the wheat and the weeds (Matt 13:24-30). Why does the farmer delay separating the weeds from the wheat?
 - What is Jesus saying about how we as believers are to interact with the world?
- When you think of the Kingdom of God, what comes to mind?
 - In the parable of the mustard seed, why is a mustard seed like the Kingdom of God?
- How does the idea of Kingdom and Kingdom citizenship affect your view of your Christian life?
- Thinking about your citizenship, are you a real kingdom citizen?
 - How can you begin to think about this question or how can you determine the answer?

Prayer

"Thy Kingdom Come, Thy will be done." Use this statement from our Lord's Prayer to pray over your prayer requests this week.

Experiment of the Month

(A suggestion for engagement in following the way of Jesus this week)

Spiritual Formation Experiment – Commit to memorizing Colossians 1:15-20. Meditate on the verses daily.

Missional Experiment - What would you include if you were to tell a brief, concise, yet complete version of God's story to an unbelieving friend or neighbor if asked? Write the story and practice sharing it with your community group for feedback. Feedback questions to ask - Did this story make sense to you? What sticks out to you? What did you learn about God? What do you wonder about? Ask a friend if you can practice telling the story to them as you learn to share it from memory. Have the community group pray that God would give you the opportunity to share it with an unbelieving friend, neighbor, or loved one.