



What is the Gospel?

Living as Kingdom People

Philippians 1:27; Matthew 5-7
Message-based Group Lesson

Overview

Jesus is King, his Kingdom is here, and because of his work on the cross and through God's grace and mercy, we can enter into that Kingdom and play a vital part in it. So what does that look like? Paul reminds us in Philippians 1:27 that as citizens of his Kingdom we are to live a life worthy of the gospel. Jesus himself gives us the most comprehensive introduction into that worthy life in Matthew 5-7, the Sermon on the Mount. In those three powerful chapters, he describes an inner life with God that translates into a visible outworking of that life. This life with God serves as a vital and authentic example to others that there is a different, more deeply satisfying, and impactful way of living than the ways we make for ourselves. He gives us concrete examples of how Kingdom living begins at a far deeper level than simply managing our external behaviors. In other words the gospel offers us a new kind of life that is removed from legalistic rule keeping and sin-management. It goes right to our innermost being and offers us real change at the core of who we are. We can actually become more like Jesus and live in a real and satisfying personal relationship with him. This is Good News!

Engaging with each other

1. What is your favorite reality TV show and why? What does it say about us and our culture that these shows are so wildly popular?

Engaging with the Bible

1. The Sermon on the Mount begins with a section we call the Beatitudes (Matt. 5:3-11). Develop a different title for the Beatitudes that summarizes their message. Why do you think Jesus starts this sermon with the Beatitudes?
2. In Matthew 5:13-16 Jesus gives us one of the important "whys" of kingdom living. How would you describe the purpose or impact of our kingdom living?

3. Beginning in Matthew 5:17-48 Jesus confronts us with the relationship of God's Law to Kingdom living. Identify the six instances where Jesus says, "But I tell you..."
4. Jesus is teaching against "sin management," i.e. controlling external behaviors to appear good to others. What do you infer from the contrasts that Jesus presents in terms of sin management as compared to heart attitudes?
5. In Matthew 6:1-18 Jesus talks about three different spiritual practices. What are they and what warnings does he give?

Engaging with our lives

1. How can you be salt and light this week in order to bring praise to the Father?
2. Which of Jesus' "But I tell you..." statements challenges you the most?
3. The purpose of spiritual practices is to change our inner lives, which in turn should lead to growth in trust and wisdom. Share examples from your life, or lives of others, on how spiritual practices have increased your level of trust and wisdom.