



Though most churches talk often about “salvation,” the central theme of Jesus’ ministry was the Kingdom of God. These two ideas are connected in that His Kingdom brings salvation and/or that salvation makes us participants in His Kingdom. A value change necessary in the life of an apprentice of Jesus is to live in joyful submission to Jesus and His Kingdom. For many this type of thinking is a shift from living for our own “mini-kingdom” and living with a growing desire for “His Kingdom to come and His will to be done.”

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DISCUSSION #1: PRESENT AND FUTURE

Though most churches talk often about “salvation,” the central theme of Jesus’ ministry was the Kingdom of God. These two ideas are connected in that His Kingdom brings salvation and/or that salvation makes us participants in His Kingdom. A value change necessary in the life of an apprentice of Jesus is to live in joyful submission to Jesus and His Kingdom. For many this type of thinking is a shift from living for our own “mini-kingdom” and living with a growing desire for “His Kingdom to come and His will to be done”.

As we begin unpacking a Kingdom mindset, we will discover that the Kingdom of God is a “present and future” reality. This Kingdom exists now perfectly in heaven and exists in saved lives here on earth.

MY STORY | Starting Place

In your life, what team or group were you most proud of being a part of and why?

DIGGING DEEPER | Practical Biblical Application

Read Matthew 6:9-10 and make observations on the beginning of this prayer.

Why do you think God’s will is done (perfectly) in heaven, but we need to pray it into reality on earth? Are we praying for an internal or an external reality to come to fruition? Or both? Explain.

What do you think the outcome would be if we didn’t pray toward the fulfillment of God’s will on earth?

Compare and contrast John 18:36-37 and Mark 1:14-15. In one Jesus declares that he has a fully functioning Kingdom, and in the other it is proclaimed as a new reality.

Why do you think Jesus needed to proclaim his kingdom here on earth?

Teasing that out further, why do you think John the Baptist's ministry (of repentance) was a necessary first step in this process?

GROWING TOGETHER | Spiritual Friendship

Thinking beyond personal salvation, how does being a participant in God's Kingdom move you? Is it a new concept? Exciting? Confusing?

How does participating in God's kingdom change your thoughts about your own time, energy, and possessions?

What aspects of God's Kingdom and "His will being done on earth as it is in heaven" are you most excited about? How can you best steward your energies to help make that come into reality?

MOVING OUTWARD | Faith in Action

This week, prayerfully ask God to give you an increased desire to see His will and Kingdom fulfilled in your life and the lives of others.

DISCUSSION #2: THE CENTRAL MESSAGE

Though most churches talk often about “salvation,” the central theme of Jesus’ ministry was the Kingdom of God. These two ideas are connected in that His Kingdom brings salvation and/or that salvation makes us participants in His Kingdom. A value change necessary in the life of an apprentice of Jesus is to live in joyful submission to Jesus and His Kingdom. For many this type of thinking is a shift from living for our own “mini-kingdom” and living with a growing desire for “His Kingdom to come and His will to be done”.

In this discussion, we will explore how preaching the Kingdom of God (or Heaven) was the central theme of Jesus’ earthly ministry and the early church.

MY STORY | Starting Place

Do you remember what the central invitation was presented to you when you first came to church? What is personal growth/health? Salvation? Friendships? Other?

DIGGING DEEPER | Practical Biblical Application

In the life of Jesus and the movement of the church, “preaching of the Kingdom of God” was a central theme. Read the following verses from the life of Jesus and the early life of His church. Luke 4:43; Matthew 9:35; Acts 8:12; Acts 19:8

In American Christianity “salvation from sin and hell” seems to be the primary message of the church. Is there a difference in preaching salvation vs. preaching of the Kingdom of God? Why or why not?

What does preaching the Kingdom of God include that perhaps preaching personal salvation misses?

GROWING TOGETHER | Spiritual Friendship

How has the idea of the Kingdom of God worked its way into how you live your life (time, energy, resources, etc..)?

How can you, as a group, live more fully to see God’s “Kingdom come and will be done on earth as it is in heaven”?

MOVING OUTWARD | Faith in Action

Plan a practical (new) way that you can participate in God’s Kingdom work this week.

DISCUSSION #3: THE POSTURE OF THOSE WHO ENTER

Though most churches talk often about “salvation,” the central theme of Jesus’ ministry was the Kingdom of God. These two ideas are connected in that His Kingdom brings salvation and/or that salvation makes us participants in His Kingdom. A value change necessary in the life of an apprentice of Jesus is to live in joyful submission to Jesus and His Kingdom. For many this type of thinking is a shift from living for our own “mini-kingdom” and living with a growing desire for “His Kingdom to come and His will to be done”.

This discussion focuses on how, we enter into the Kingdom of God by repenting of our sins and allegiance to our self-centered patterns of decision-making.

MY STORY | Starting Place

Have you ever been a part of a club or group with a strange requirement for entry or participation?

DIGGING DEEPER | Practical Biblical Application

How does one enter into the Kingdom of God? Read Matthew 4:17, John 3:3, and Matthew 7:21 to paint a picture of what is required.

Why is it important for people to repent to enter the Kingdom of God? What should someone repent (or turn away) from? What are practical problems if they do not repent?

What do you think it means to be “born again?” How can a person know if this has occurred? What might the signs be?

What does it mean to “do the will of the Father?”

How do these three things together (repentance, being born again, and doing the will of the Father) paint a picture of the correct posture of people who live and serve in God’s Kingdom?

GROWING TOGETHER | Spiritual Friendship

Which point, or verse above, resonated the most with you? Which one is harder to understand, or see why it would be important?

Is living under any of these principles difficult for you? What is the greatest pull in your life keeping you from living with a focus on God’s Kingdom?

MOVING OUTWARD | Faith in Action

Seeing a bigger purpose to our lives can bring great hope and excitement. Identify a person in your life with whom you could have a conversation about the Kingdom of God and all He has invited us into.

DISCUSSION #4: HIS KINGDOM VS. MY KINGDOM

Though most churches talk often about “salvation,” the central theme of Jesus’ ministry was the Kingdom of God. These two ideas are connected in that His Kingdom brings salvation and/or that salvation makes us participants in His Kingdom. A value change necessary in the life of an apprentice of Jesus is to live in joyful submission to Jesus and His Kingdom. For many this type of thinking is a shift from living for our own “mini-kingdom” and living with a growing desire for “His Kingdom to come and His will to be done”.

This discussion unpacks how seeking the flourishing of the Kingdom of God is the primary focus for a Christian. In doing so, our needs will be fully satisfied in God’s master plan.

MY STORY | Starting Place

How have you viewed authority over your life? Do you naturally respect and comply, question toward clarity, or flat out want to rebel?

DIGGING DEEPER | Practical Biblical Application

In Jesus’ Kingdom, we willingly lay down our agendas and see His will to be done. Read the following verses on this reality. Matthew 6:10, Matthew 6:33

What is the benefit of seeking for “God’s will to be done as it is in heaven?” What truths does this prayer imply? What are some value shifts that need to occur to truly pray this?

“But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.” What does this verse really mean? What does it implicitly say? What does it not say (but what we might read into it)?

GROWING TOGETHER | Spiritual Friendship

What comes to mind when you think about “your kingdom”? Is it wrong to still seek our own kingdom as a follower of Jesus? Why or why not?

What aspects of “your kingdom” do you struggle trusting God with? Why?

What insights or wisdom makes it easier to surrender our own kingdom for the sake of the Kingdom of God?

MOVING OUTWARD | Faith in Action

Search your own heart this week and prayerfully discern if and how you are truly seeking the Kingdom of God in your daily life.

DISCUSSION #5: GOD’S KINGDOM: VALUES AND LIFESTYLE

Though most churches talk often about “salvation,” the central theme of Jesus’ ministry was the Kingdom of God. These two ideas are connected in that His Kingdom brings salvation and/or that salvation makes us participants in His Kingdom. A value change necessary in the life of an apprentice of Jesus is to live in joyful submission to Jesus and His Kingdom. For many this type of thinking is a shift from living for our own “mini-kingdom” and living with a growing desire for “His Kingdom to come and His will to be done”.

In this discussion we will learn how we participate in the Kingdom of God by living within the values and purposes of that Kingdom.

MY STORY | Starting Place

Have you ever been kicked out of a class, a club, a group, or out of a game? Can you share why?

DIGGING DEEPER | Practical Biblical Application

Though the participants are a rag-tag group, there is order and purpose to the Kingdom of God. Romans 14:17, Matthew 5:10, Galatians 5:19-21, and Matthew 18:3 outline the values of those who live within the Kingdom of God. Make a list of insights from these verses.

Collectively what do these verses say about the nature of the Kingdom of God?

If someone refuses to surrender to these, what might that say about them? What steps are available for them to possibly still participate?

“Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.” What does this verse actually mean?

GROWING TOGETHER | Spiritual Friendship

Does your Christian experience feel more like a series of “dying to what you want,” or “living for what God wants”? In other words, has your perspective of Christian growth looked more like “stopping and avoiding” or “reforming and renewing?” Explain.

What lessons have you learned on the trail of following Jesus in His Kingdom?

MOVING OUTWARD | Faith in Action

Oftentimes we fear what we are about to lose and fail to see all that we gain by trusting Jesus. Is there a friend in your life who might be in this struggle? How might you wade in to encourage them toward the goodness of God?

DISCUSSION #6: ONE GLORIOUS KINGDOM

Though most churches talk often about “salvation,” the central theme of Jesus’ ministry was the Kingdom of God. These two ideas are connected in that His Kingdom brings salvation and/or that salvation makes us participants in His Kingdom. A value change necessary in the life of an apprentice of Jesus is to live in joyful submission to Jesus and His Kingdom. For many this type of thinking is a shift from living for our own “mini-kingdom” and living with a growing desire for “His Kingdom to come and His will to be done”.

This discussion reveals how, in the end, the Kingdom of God will encapsulate all the kingdoms of this world.

MY STORY | Starting Place

Do you have a favorite “happily ever after” story (book or movie)? What is it, and what do you love about it?

DIGGING DEEPER | Practical Biblical Application

Revelation 11:15, Daniel 7:27, Psalm 103:19 are a few verses that point to the reality that God’s Kingdom will encapsulate all the kingdoms of the world.

How and why is this good news?

Who would this be bad news for? Why? What offer does God still extend to them?

GROWING TOGETHER | Spiritual Friendship

How does it give you comfort to know that Jesus is the King of the Kingdom of God and that Kingdom will powerfully come into reality?

Is there something specific you long to see accomplished in this?

MOVING OUTWARD | Faith in Action

Dream with a friend about the reality of Jesus’ Kingdom and the joy of His “will being done on earth as it is in heaven.”