



APRIL 6 - 12

Kingdom Matters

Prepare

Reflect on Betsy's sermon and read Acts 1:1-11 and Matthew 13.

Ice-Breaker

Betsy talked about how we sometimes don't get what Jesus is doing. We all have "clueless" moments in life. Share an embarrassing or clueless moment you've experienced.

Discussion Time

Read

Read Matthew 13:24-33 and 36-43 together.

Betsy's message discussed Acts 1:6, where the disciples ask Jesus, "Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?" They still did not fully understand this idea of the "kingdom of God." In this session, we look at some of the "kingdom parables" from Jesus in the Gospels. As you read and discuss, think about what these parables tell us about the kingdom of God and what it could mean for us today.

Discuss

1. What part of this reading speaks to you?
2. What questions do you still have? (There may be a number of them. That's good! Take some time to discuss them as a group, looking at other parts of the Bible that may be relevant to your discussion.)
3. What points stood out to you from the teaching in this week's sermon?
4. What role should Christians play in the kingdom of God?
5. What would it mean to bring God's kingdom to your neighborhood or sphere of influence (place of work, circle of friends, etc.)?
6. How do you need to respond to God based on the text and the sermon?
7. Is there a promise from this study you like to remember in times of need?



Pray

Close by sharing prayer requests and praying for each other.

Textual Notes

The point of the **mustard seed parable** seems to be that while the kingdom of God may appear to have insignificant and unnoticeable beginnings (i.e., in the ministry of Jesus), it will someday (i.e., at the second advent) be great and quite expansive. The kingdom, however, is not to be equated with the church, but rather the church is an expression of the kingdom.

Also, there is important OT background in the image of the mustard seed that grew and became a tree: Ezek 17:22–24 pictures the reemergence of the Davidic house where people can find calm and shelter. Like the mustard seed, it would start out small but grow to significant size.

(From the notes on the NET)

Both of these parables are in many ways difficult words to work through. Take some time discussing their meaning, and focus on how God may be leading you to apply the text. As Betsy mentioned in her sermon, at the core of Jesus' kingdom message is a clear point. The kingdom is not all about what Jesus will do. It's about how we will follow Jesus. As Christians, it is our calling to take this "kingdom of God" to the world.