

KINGDOM *of* HEAVEN

A SERIES IN THE BOOK OF MATTHEW

Community Group Material

Matthew 13:24-43

Week of 12th to 18th of November

The Kingdom Now and Later

Leader Preparation

This week we see some more of how the Kingdom of God is revealed in Jesus' use of parables.

The parable of the wheat and the weeds draws out some major themes:

- The world NOW contains good and evil side by side.
- The world THEN will have all evil removed from it and God's reign will be complete and obvious.

The illustration of the mustard seed and the yeast also demonstrate that God's Kingdom will be huge, and will permeate every aspect of the world.

Last week may have contained some rather intense discussion around predestination / election in your group. This week also contains some images that can be difficult for us to grasp. Try to focus attention on the key truths and what that means for us, rather than abstract philosophical debates.

Ask God to speak through his holy spirit into the hearts and minds of your group members – cementing in them a firm assurance of his love, sovereignty and good plan.

Group Time:

Discussion suggestions:

Share about a time when you experienced a sense of God's peace, even in the midst of a stressful / chaotic environment?

If you owned a magic wand, what is one problem you would choose to solve for a person you know? Do you feel that God is at work in their situation?

Exploring the Passage

READ Matthew 13:24-43

The Kingdom Now

- What signs do you see in the world around you that the wheat from the sower and the weeds of the evil one are coexisting?
- Read 2 Peter 3:8-9. What reasons does this passage give for God leaving the wheat and weeds to grow together?
- How can we continue to be salt and light in a world that has been “sabotaged” by evil? How can we make God’s Kingdom real to the world around us?

The Kingdom Then

- Read Romans 8:22-23. Apart from us Christians, what other parts of God’s Kingdom are eagerly waiting for the harvest to come?
 - Does it make you anxious or relieved to know that everyone will face judgment, and that no evil will be left on earth?
 - Do you find it easy or difficult to place your confidence in God’s promise of his kingdom on earth?
 - What excites you about seeing the fulfilment of God’s kingdom?
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Prayer

Why not end the evening by saying the Lord’s Prayer together. You could each say the version you prefer aloud, or get each person to read a line, leaving a little time for contemplation before going on to the next line.

This version is from The Message:

Our Father in heaven,
Reveal who you are.
Set the world right;
Do what’s best — as above, so below.
Keep us alive with three square meals.
Keep us forgiven with you and forgiving
 others.
Keep us safe from ourselves and the Devil.
You’re in charge!
You can do anything you want!
You’re ablaze in beauty!
Yes. Yes. Yes.

This is a more traditional version:

Our Father in heaven
Hallowed be your name
Your kingdom come
Your will be done on earth as in heaven
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those
 who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial, and deliver
 us from evil.
For the Kingdom, the power and the glory
 are yours.
Now and forever
Amen