

Hidden Kingdom Part 4 - "Changed by Truth" (2-28-21)

Review: Following Jesus into Life is about rediscovering what God has always intended for us!

Today's Focus: "Changed by Truth" - learning to surrender to and co-operate with the one who is Truth!

Introduction: Change - My favorite Baseball Player

Spring Hill population: **1990:** 1,400 **2000:** 7,000 **2010:** 29,000 **Today:** 48,000+

1) The Call to Change - Love's invitation

Consider Rich Young Ruler (Mark 10:17-27)

- Rich Young Ruler - What must I do to have eternal life? (genuine)
- Jesus - lists some of the commandments

Mark 10:20-21 (ESV)

(20) And he said to (Jesus), "Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth." (21) And Jesus, looking at him, **loved him**, and said to him, "You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me."

Note: Jesus loved Him. The call to change is first of all an invitation of love!

Jesus loves us enough to change & challenge us!

Matthew 16:24-25 (ESV)

(24) Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. (25) For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

Note: The call to **Follow** Jesus and **Change** is costly, and God is honest with us about that . . .

2) The Cost of Change - Truth's Challenge

Luke 14:27-30 (ESV)

(27) Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. (28) For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? (29) Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, (30) saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.'

Note: Jesus invites us to count the cost - He believes it is worth it or He wouldn't call us, but we need to consider the challenges ahead.

Context: Re-Cap Story from Luke 14:15-24

Invitation to a Great Banquet, those who said yes, got word that it was ready and now time to come . . .

Luke 14:18 (ESV)

But they all alike began to make excuses . . .

Note: Am I willing to see in myself the strong pull to make excuses and avoid his invitation?

Jesus challenges our tendency for avoidance, and redirects us into personal reflection & challenge!

2 examples of how we avoid . . .

a) What about this

Matthew 12:9-12 (ESV)

(9) He went on from there and entered their synagogue. (10) And a man was there with a withered hand. And they asked him, “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?”—so that they might accuse him. (11) He said to them, “Which one of you who has a sheep, if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not take hold of it and lift it out? (12) Of how much more value is a man than a sheep! So it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.”

b) What about them

Matthew 15:1-3, 6-9 (ESV)

(1) Then Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem and said, (2) “Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat.” (3) He answered them, “And why do you break the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition? . . . (6) So for the sake of your tradition you have made void the word of God. (7) You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, when he said: (8) “‘This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; (9) in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’”

Note: How often do our own thought lives, conversations, and even our group bible studies look like this?

Example: Sitting around analyzing the world around me, and I’ve solved many problems . . .

- Covid Crisis
- Systematic Racism
- Political Unrest
- Left-Wing Liberal Media Bias
- Right-Wing Social Media fueled conspiracy theories

Yet somehow none of it is any better?

The real question: Am I willing to be changed by truth?

- Consider the possibility that I focus more on the parts of the Truth that already agree with me
- Now instead - Will I allow and invite Jesus to contradict, challenge, and ultimately change me?
- If your walk with Jesus isn’t regularly challenging and changing you - **who’s really in charge?**

Let's return to the parts of Luke 14 that I purposely avoided - as Jesus is calling out excuse making and encouraging people to count the cost of following him, he says these words . . .

Luke 14:26-30, 33 (ESV)

(26) “If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. (27) Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. (28) For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? (29) Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, (30) saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’ . . . (33) So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.

Challenge: Instead of Avoidance, let’s purpose to listen to the hard but loving truth Jesus speaks!

Remember: Jesus loved the rich young ruler enough to show him the truth - what he really loved . . .

Mark 10:21-24 (ESV)

(21) And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, "You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." (22) Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. (23) And Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!" (24) And the disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said to them again, "Children, how difficult it is to enter the kingdom of God!

Note: Jesus loved Him. Therefore, Jesus put his finger on the real issue - what did he love MOST?

3) The Way of Change - Embrace Truth in Love

Mark 10:26-27 (ESV)

(26) And they were exceedingly astonished, and said to him, "Then who can be saved?" (27) Jesus looked at them and said, "With man it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God."

Note: The way of change - real relationship with God (means - a love relationship with the one who is truth!)

Embracing Truth in Love . . .

Ephesians 4:15-16 (ESV)

(15) Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, (16) from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

Note: Growth and Maturity comes from a life built on truth in love!

Beware:

- **Love without truth** - is just sentimentality. It's not real love. In fact it's manipulative.
- **Truth without love** - Ravi Zacharias

Practical Application: The Way of Change - (Jesus speaking about His Kingdom - Sermon on the Mount)

a) Co-operate with Truth

Recap: Wise & Foolish Builders - Jesus closing words (Matthew 7:24-29)

- They both hear the word - **Am I positioning myself to hear him (Truth)?**
- Only wiseman heard and obeyed - **Am I doing what He said (co-operating with Truth)?**
- Co-operating with the one who is truth is the central issue - it creates a life of integrity!

b) In Loving (Humble) Community

Matthew 5:1-3 (ESV)

(1) Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. (2) And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying: (3) "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Note: In order to co-operate with truth, we need Community & Humility