

Announcements

- Image Kids' Lunch for parents, current volunteers, & anyone interested in serving on August 8.
- Discover Image will be on August 15.
- First Impressions Lunch for current volunteers and anyone interested in serving on August 22.
- We will be having a baptism on August 22. If anyone wants more information, they can go to imageatl.com/contactus and we will be in touch with them.

Prayer Suggestions

Schools

Most of our area schools start this week! Teachers & students I have talked to are excited to be back in the classroom in person. Some prayer suggestions:

- Endurance for the teachers and the students. The first week is always a marathon, but I imagine it will be especially so with everyone coming back this year. It could be a difficult adjustment to being back in person for everyone for the first time in over a year.
- Patience, kindness, wisdom, and discernment
- That the teachers are able to build good community in their classrooms
- Good partnerships with parents and community members
- Safety in regards to COVID & other health issues
- Safety in regards to issues of violence. With schools opening up fully in person, there is a possibility we will see an increase in school shootings and other acts of violence that have sadly become regular occurrences on school campuses.
- For teachers to teach and lead their students well
- For students to learn and grow and thrive this year
- For administrators and school boards to keep the best interests of the teachers and students in mind

Joshua Project Unreached Peoples: <https://joshuaproject.net/pray/unreachedoftheday>

Family Time

Family Time is an intentional space where we live out the model we see in Acts 2:42. We want to be devoted to the Word together, break bread, fellowship, and pray. It's also a place where we practice hospitality. We want this time to foster both spiritual and relational growth moving the group from acquaintances and friends to family. Family Time begins with conversations around a meal, followed by a discussion about Sunday's sermon.

Title: The Narrow Way

Series: Inverted Kingdom

Scripture: Luke 12:49 -- 13:30

Other Scripture/Cross References

Mentioned in the sermon:

Micah 6-7

Luke 9:23-24

Other pertinent verses:

Hebrews 10:34

1 John 3-4

Main Points

12:49-53 Not Peace But Division

Division is not a badge of honor, but a mark of sorrow.

12:54-56 Interpreting the Times

12:57-59 Settling Accounts

We are at a place of decision -- we have to choose what we believe about Jesus.

There's a journey to following Jesus, and it will be costly.

We may experience division when we choose to follow Jesus.

Are we deciphering the times, seeing who Jesus is & what He came to do?

Will we receive Jesus' payment for us in our place?

Luke 13:1-7 -- Repentance means a change of mind and heart that abandons your former ways and embraces a new way of life in light of who God is and what He's done.

Jesus confronts their security. Their faith wasn't in God's actions, but in what they were doing to be righteous.

Key Themes

1. Jesus is God in the flesh that came to bring mankind access to the Kingdom of God
2. Repentance is the means of access to God's Kingdom
 - a. Turning to Jesus
 - b. Repentance is not a one-time thing
3. A life of repentance brings about reorientation where our lives are about God's Kingdom

Questions

1. What challenged you? What were your takeaways? What encouraged or convicted you?
2. What questions do you have?
3. Take Up Your Cross

Pastor Mike explained that "taking up your cross is a radical way of living that is characterized by Jesus. Where your life is about His Kingdom and not yours. Radical generosity, radical intentionality to advance the message and ministry of Jesus...engaging with those in need, loving your neighbor, engaging and being intentional with those in the margins, seeing the unseen, radical love."

- a. Examine the fruit in your life. (Remember, Pastor Mike explained that **fruit is what is described above, not general polite niceties.**) Does your life look like taking up your cross? How?
- b. If there is no evidence of that kind of fruit -- evidence that shows you are taking up your cross and living the radical life Jesus lived and calls us to -- why is that?
 - i. Have you experienced that radical reorientation that comes from repentance, or have

- ii. you simply been exposed to & around the truth but never embraced Christ?
- iii. Have you relied on your proximity to the things of Jesus or do you have a relationship with Jesus?
- iii. Are you viewing your salvation as a “get out of hell free card” or as God reuniting us with himself and bringing us into his kingdom (meaning I must live as a citizen of His kingdom)?
- c. Sometimes we are tempted to believe we are “taking up our cross” because we had a change of heart when we came to Christ and our lives drastically changed immediately. But we are called to continual repentance and to become more and more like Christ as we grow in Him. Does your life bear evidence of this continual repentance, growth, and radical living like Christ?
- d. Does **the way you live*** show that you are Christian by affiliation or in a deep relationship with Christ?
- e. Does **the way you live*** show that you are a citizen of God’s Kingdom, or simply members of a religion?

***The Way You Live:** how you make decisions, how you use your money, how you work, how you parent, how you are as a child or sibling, how you treat others, how you speak to others, how you act online, how you think about others, who your friends are, whether you are in relationships with those on the margins, whether you actively pursue the Kingdom of God here on earth, how you vote, how you drive, where your kids go to school, where you shop, how you spend your time, the entertainment you consume, how you treat your body, whether you are seeking justice for your community members & living out principles of biblical justice, how you view the marginalized & the “strangers,” how you engage with God’s Word, how you follow Him, how you treat the planet, the neighborhoods in which you live, the people you admire, who you align yourself with, how you are with your spouse, the technology you use, the news you follow, how you rest, how you serve others, how you are engaged with the local church, how you dream (life dreams, not sleeping dreams), how you plan for the present & the future, how you vacation, how you love your neighbors, what you do for fun, etc.

Academics (Theology, History, Word Studies)

Luke 12:49-53 Setting families against each other

In vs 53, Jesus quotes Micah 7:6, which says “Surely a son considers his father a fool, a daughter opposes her mother, and a daughter-in-law is against his mother-in-law; a man’s enemies are the men of his own household.”

Micah 7 is a lament by the prophet Micah, who served during the reigns of kings Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah at the end of the eighth century BC. The *Baker Illustrated Study Bible* explains Micah 7 this way:

“Micah paints a dark picture of contemporary society. No one is left who desires to follow God. The only thing the people do well is evil. Micah is exceedingly distressed and likens his own reaction to that of a man who craves grapes and figs but arrives too late in the field to get any. In short, he is bitterly disappointed and frustrated. Even the most promising of his contemporaries are quite bad. The sins of the people have caught up with them. Society has turned against itself; the situation has degenerated into chaos. Even the closest human relationships (wife, child, parents) are unreliable. Hope is not found in human relationships; hope may be found only in God and Micah is confident in his God.”

The *Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible* says of Micah 7:6 that “even the basic family structure falls apart as the day of punishment arrives...[the image of children rebelling against the authority of their parents] likely combines rebellion as a tragic corollary of the day of punishment and rebellion as a natural reaction to the injustice of the parents by children waiting for the Lord.”

This passage in Luke is frequently quoted by some who claim it proves that Jesus came and wants us to sow discord and war among our nations. When we look at the context of Micah, we see that society is in chaos and familial relationships are disrupted because they have turned from following the Lord. *Baker Study Bible* notes that “The arrival of Jesus did bring peace on earth, but the fire of judgment also means the separation and division of families. That division stems from one’s stance toward Jesus.”

Essentially, following Jesus will lead to division of certain relationships, not because Jesus calls us to be people of division who sow discord, but because by following him, you are choosing him over your human family. As a result, some of those relationships may suffer. In addition, when one family member chooses the way of Jesus, and others choose the way of the world, there will inevitably, eventually be separation and division in those relationships, during the time of judgment. As Pastor Mike said during the sermon, we are not called to bring division or fight a “culture war.” Jesus is saying division will be a reality as a result of people’s decisions about him.

Israel, the Chosen People

The Old Testament tells the story of God choosing a people for Himself. In Genesis 12, God calls Abram, telling him, “I will make you into a great nation.” In Genesis 15, God makes a covenant with Abram, promising to give him the land. In Genesis 17, God institutes covenant circumcision, changes his name to Abraham, and promises “I will confirm my covenant that is between me and you and your future offspring...it is to a permanent covenant to be your God and the God of your offspring after you” (17:7-8). The rest of the Old Testament follows Abraham’s descendants as they become the people of Israel and come to know their God. God confirms His covenant with them over and over again.

As Christians, we are “grafted into” the family of God, as Paul says in Romans 11. We do not replace the people of Israel or become the new “Chosen People,” but we become *part of* His chosen people.

However, as we see in this section of Luke, being part of Israel as the Chosen People did not preclude anyone from consequences or separation from God. They frequently turned their backs on God and suffered the consequences of those decisions. In a few places, we also see parables and stories about those who were Jewish (part of Israel, the chosen people) being separated from God or kept out of the Kingdom. They thought they knew God because they did righteous things or were part of the Chosen People, but Jesus looks to them and says, “I don’t know you or where you’re from.”

Parables

A parable is a story. They often taught a lesson or moral, or challenged the listeners in certain ways. *Baker Study Bible* defines a parable as “a literary form that communicates indirectly by means of comparative language, often for the purpose of challenging the listener to accept or reject a new way of thinking.”

There are possibly a few examples of parables in the Old Testament: the story of the trees in Judges 9 and the story of the ewe lamb in 2 Samuel 12 may be considered parables.

Our biggest example of parables in the Bible, though, comes from Jesus, who told them continually as a way to teach those listening and confront various beliefs and practices. The parables Jesus told range from short comparisons (the parable of the mustard seed) to longer stories (the prodigal son). Some parables are open-ended “in an attempt to force the listeners into a decisions about what should happen, or they may include a clear, concluding explanation that leaves no doubt as to how the audience should change their belief or behavior” (*Baker*)

Sabbath

The Sabbath is the Jewish day of rest (in Hebrew: *shabbat*). “Observing the sabbath and keeping it holy” is the fourth of the 10 Commandments. Observant Jews today continue to keep the Sabbath, though how strictly it is observed depends upon which branch of Judaism one is in (kind of like denominations). It begins at sundown on Friday evening, with a special dinner and special prayers, and concludes on Saturday evening, with prayers that close the Sabbath. In Jerusalem most of the city closes for 24 hours until Sabbath ends. Some observant Jews today who hold the Sabbath strictly will not drive cars or even push buttons, as those things are considered work (hotels in Israel often have a designated elevator on Sabbath that is pre-set to stop at every floor so that the occupants do not have to push the buttons and accidentally break the Sabbath).

In the New Testament, we see Jesus coming into conflict with the Pharisees over how the Sabbath should be observed. Once, they confront him about his disciples picking grain on the Sabbath (Matt 12:1-8, Mark 2:23-28, and Luke 6:1-5). Jesus also heals on the sabbath in various places. Many times Jesus confronts the Pharisees on their strict interpretation of this law, how they have little grace for others who work on the sabbath while they themselves do as well, and essentially asks them -- is it better to uphold these strict laws or do good? Which is

more like God?

Mustard seed & leaven

The mustard seed is a tiny seed that grows into a large tree.
Leaven is what spreads through dough to make it rise (like yeast).

Other Resources

Used in the sermon:

Stephen Witmer, *Unless You Stop Loving Sin*

Charles Martin, *They Turned the World Upside Down*

Bock, D.L. *Luke 9:51-24:53*

Discipleship Groups

Discipleship Groups are where our community groups divide into gender-specific groups for a time of more intentional discussion and connection. This creates a safer and more intimate space to open up our hearts in order to grow deeper in the gospel. This time begins with a discussion about Sunday's sermon and then transitions to a time of transparency where we are honest about where we are relationally, personally, missionally, and spiritually.

Sermon Discussion (30-40 min)

See Sermon Discussion Notes above.

RPMS (30-45 min)

R	How are you doing RELATIONALLY ? (friends, coworkers, neighbors, spouses, family -- also, how are you building relationships with people different from you or on the margins?)
P	How are you doing PERSONALLY ? (emotionally, mentally, physically, financially, etc.)
M	How are you doing MISSIONALLY ? (what you're doing daily to be on mission, how you're engaging people, etc)
S	How are you doing SPIRITUALLY ? (time with God, in Scripture, what you're learning, who you're learning from, memorization, etc.)

Prayer (10-15 min)