

YOU'RE  
NOT  
FAR

## Part Five: Kingdom Great

One message connected all the individual parables and miracles in the minds of Jesus' first century listeners– the Kingdom of God is here, *now*, and it represents a complete reversal of the values of the world, extending an open invitation to *everyone* to get involved in the constructive work of making all things new. Jesus brought a radical reminder that our love for the people around us is a reflection of our love for God. Rather than following the laws of power that rule this Earth, Jesus inaugurated a kingdom of love, one in which authority and power always leverages resources for the benefit of other people.

### Start Talking

1. What leaders do you think of when you hear the term, “respected?” Why does this person(s) come to mind?
2. Have you ever had an experience with a leader who primarily worried about themselves? What happened? How did you feel?

### Looking Back

1. After hearing last week's sermon, where did you identify places in your life where you have let go of the commands of God in order to hold onto human traditions? What loopholes had you come up with? Were you able to set your eyes back on the law of love instead of the loopholes this past week?
2. Who did you need to make things right with this week? Who had you neglected to treat well, while still managing to keep the rules of personal religion? Did you take the steps to make things right?
3. What did love require of you this week? What were three ways you practiced the love of Jesus even when it was inconvenient?



## What About You?

1. Have you ever worked for someone who was intentional about leveraging their influence for your benefit? What was that like?
2. Why do you think fear tempts us to go into a mindset of self-preservation? Why is it so hard to break out of that mindset?
3. What is wrong with retreating to fear? Why does it matter?
4. What would the world look like if everybody retreated to fear? How would this compare to a world where everybody got serious about leveraging their resources for others?

## Look It Up

*Read the Following Passages: Mark 1:14--15, 8:31--35, 9:30--32, 10:32--52. John 13:3--17.*

1. In John 13:3-17, we're told how Peter responded to an uncomfortable occasion. How do you think you would have responded?
2. What do you think the term, "taking up your cross," means for us, now?
3. How would you describe the way power works in the world these days? How would you describe Jesus' definition of what true authority should mean?
4. What does the encounter with Bartimaeus tell us about Jesus' priorities? How does it compare to his interaction with James and John?
5. How does the behavior of Jesus differ from other powerful people in his time?
6. Jesus talks in these passages about giving his life as a "ransom" for many other people. What is a ransom? What does it mean in this context?

## Putting It All Together

1. What is one thing you can do this week to demonstrate "not-so-with-you" leadership at home? At work? At church? In the community?
2. What story do you hope people tell about your response during this strange, trying season with the globe paralyzed by disease and fear?
3. What fears are bombarding you right now? How are they tempting you to think about your own well-being above the well-being of others? How can you resist that temptation?
4. Recall Jesus' encounter with Bartimaeus. Where do you need to pause your own agenda in order to pay attention to something or somebody else?
5. Who has less power or fewer resources than you right now? What can you do for them this week?

