

# Summary

Pastor Chris delivered a message about the kingdom of heaven using several parables from Matthew 13. He began by illustrating how none of us qualify for God's kingdom through our own efforts or rule-following, but Jesus came as the 'glorious breaker of man's rules' to bring the kingdom of heaven. Through the parables of the wheat and weeds, mustard seed, leaven, and hidden treasure, he taught that the kingdom grows among imperfect people, starts small but becomes great, influences everything it touches, and is worth sacrificing everything to obtain. The central challenge was about commitment and cost - what are we willing to give up to pursue God's kingdom first? He emphasized that while salvation is free, truly seeking the kingdom will cost us time, comfort, and perhaps relationships, but it's worth everything we have.

## Intro Prayer

Heavenly Father, as we gather together in this small group, we thank You for bringing us here today. We ask that You would open our hearts and minds to what You want to teach us through Your Word. Help us to be honest with ourselves and with each other as we discuss what it means to truly seek Your kingdom first. Give us ears to hear what You are saying to us personally, and courage to respond to Your call on our lives. We invite Your Holy Spirit to guide our conversation and draw us closer to You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

## Ice Breaker

If you could win \$100 but had to meet impossible qualifications (like the pastor's example), what would be the most ridiculous requirement you'd be willing to attempt?

## Key Verses

- Matthew 4:17
- Matthew 13:24-30
- Matthew 13:31-32
- Matthew 13:33
- Matthew 13:44-46

- Matthew 6:33
- 2 Samuel 24:24

## Questions

- How does it feel to know that none of us 'qualify' for God's kingdom on our own merit? What does this reveal about God's grace?
- In the parable of the wheat and weeds, Jesus teaches that believers will grow alongside non-believers. How should this affect how we interact with unbelievers in our daily lives?
- The mustard seed parable shows that small beginnings can have great impact. What 'small' thing could you offer to God's kingdom that you've been hesitant to start?
- Pastor Chris mentioned that 'saved people serve people.' How does serving others connect to our understanding of the kingdom of heaven?
- What does it mean practically to 'seek the kingdom first' in your current life circumstances?
- The pastor shared about the Russian pastor who said commitment was lower when there was no cost. How do you think comfort and freedom can sometimes weaken our commitment to Christ?
- In the parable of the hidden treasure and pearl, the person sold everything to obtain what was most valuable. What might God be asking you to 'sell' or give up to draw closer to Him?
- How can we maintain the passion and excitement for God's kingdom that we had when we first believed?

## Life Application

This week, identify one area where you've been 'settling' in your spiritual life or holding back from fully pursuing God's kingdom. Take one concrete step to 'sell' whatever is keeping you from moving closer to God - whether it's time, comfort, a habit, or fear. Commit to seeking His kingdom first in this specific area.

## Key Takeaways

- Jesus came as the breaker of man's rules to bring the kingdom of heaven, not a kingdom of religious requirements
- The kingdom of God grows among imperfect people, and we shouldn't be afraid to be around 'weeds' because we were once weeds ourselves

- Small acts of faith, service, and giving can have tremendous kingdom impact when offered to God
- The kingdom of heaven is infectious - even a little bit of our time, talent, and treasure can influence everyone we contact
- Truly seeking God's kingdom first will cost us something, but it's worth sacrificing everything to obtain the treasures of His kingdom

## Ending Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank You for the reminder that Your kingdom is worth everything we have. Help us to not settle for less than what You have called us to. Give us courage to identify what we're holding onto that keeps us from drawing closer to You. We don't want to be people who go away sad because we love our stuff more than we love You. Help us to sell whatever it takes to gain the treasure of Your kingdom. May we be faithful with the little You've given us so You can entrust us with much. We commit to seeking Your kingdom first this week. In Jesus' name, Amen.