

Discussion Questions



Key Scripture References

- Matthew 5:1-12 (The Beatitudes)
- Ephesians 2:8-9
- Romans 11:6
- 1 Corinthians 1:27
- Romans 5:8

Sermon Summary

This message explores how God's kingdom operates on an entirely different value system than the world. While the world celebrates wealth, power, and self-sufficiency, Jesus declares the poor in spirit, the meek, the mourning, and the persecuted as blessed. God consistently chooses the "wrong people" by worldly standards to accomplish His purposes, demonstrating that spiritual poverty—not earthly status—positions us to receive His grace.

Discussion Questions

Understanding God's Upside Down Kingdom

1. **The "If-Only Disease":** Pastor Peter described the "if-only disease"—thinking "if only I had X, then I could Y." What are some "if-onlys" in your own life? How do they affect your contentment and relationship with God?

2. **Wrong vs. Right People:** What does it mean that God blesses the "wrong people"? Why is this concept so countercultural and even offensive to our natural thinking?
3. **Spiritual Bankruptcy:** Peter said, "Poverty of spirit is the posture of faith." What does it mean to be "poor in spirit"? How is this different from low self-esteem or false humility?

Biblical Examples

4. **Unexpected Heroes:** Review the biblical examples mentioned (David, Gideon, Moses, Rahab, the disciples). Which story resonates most with you and why? What do these stories reveal about God's selection criteria?
5. **Rahab's Legacy:** Pastor Peter emphasized that Rahab, a Canaanite prostitute, became part of Jesus' family tree. What does this tell us about God's redemptive power and how He views our past?
6. **Personal Testimony:** Pastor Peter shared his own story of feeling like "number 856" at a factory. Have you ever felt reduced to a number or status? How does knowing you're God's beloved child change that perspective?

Living in the Kingdom

7. **Theology Becomes Therapy:** The sermon quoted David Wells: "Theology becomes therapy... all that is left is self." How do you see this playing out in modern Christianity? What's the danger in making Christianity primarily about self-improvement rather than God's kingdom?
8. **The Smell of Ministry:** Pastor Peter shared about the director who learned to love the smell of the drop-in center because it represented hope and survival. What "smells" (metaphorically speaking) do you find difficult to embrace in ministry? What would it look like to see past the surface to the person beneath?
9. **Burden for the Wrong People:** Jesus intentionally associated with tax collectors, sinners, lepers, and outcasts. Who are the "wrong people" in your community that God might be calling

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you to love? What barriers (internal or external) keep you from reaching them?

Key Takeaways

1. **God's value system is radically different from the world's.** Earthly status, wealth, and power mean nothing in terms of kingdom qualifications.
2. **Spiritual poverty positions us for grace.** We must come to God with empty hands, recognizing our complete dependence on Him.
3. **God specializes in using the "wrong people."** Throughout Scripture and history, God chooses the unlikely, the weak, and the outcast to accomplish His purposes.
4. **We are all the "wrong people" who become the right people for God's kingdom.** No one is beyond God's reach or too broken for His redemption.
5. **Following Jesus means loving the people He loves.** This includes those society rejects, marginalizes, or overlooks.

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge (Choose 1-2)

Personal Reflection:

- Identify one area where you've been measuring yourself or others by worldly standards rather than kingdom values. Pray daily this week asking God to transform your perspective.

Spiritual Practice:

- Write out the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-10) and meditate on one each day. Journal about what it means for you personally to be "blessed" in that particular way.

Relational Action:

- Identify someone in your life who might be considered a "wrong person" by society's standards. Take a concrete step to show them Christ's love this week—invite them for coffee, write an encouragement note, offer practical help.

Community Engagement:

- Research local ministries that serve marginalized populations (homeless shelters, addiction recovery programs, immigrant services, etc.). Consider how you or your group might volunteer or support this work.

Family Discussion:

- If you have children, talk with them about how God values people differently than the world does. Share age-appropriate stories of biblical "wrong people" God used.

Reflection Exercise

Silent Reflection: Take 3-5 minutes of silence for each person to consider:

- In what ways do I still measure my worth or others' worth by worldly standards?
- Where am I spiritually bankrupt and need to depend more fully on God's grace?
- Who is one "wrong person" God might be calling me to love this week?

Sharing: Invite volunteers to share one insight from their reflection time.

Closing Prayer

Prayer Focus:

- Thank God that we are loved not for our status but as His children
- Ask for eyes to see people as God sees them
- Pray for courage to love the "wrong people" in our communities
- Request grace to embrace our own spiritual poverty and dependence on God

Group Prayer: Have each person pray a one-sentence prayer for the person on their right, asking God to help them embrace their identity in His upside-down kingdom.