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### 1. What Is a Paradox?

- Paradox: seems contradictory but is actually true.
  - Jesus’ paradoxes:
    - **Mark 9:35** – To be first, be last and servant of all.
    - **Luke 9:23–24** – Lose your life for Jesus and you save it.
  - They only make sense from a **Kingdom of Heaven** perspective.
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### 2. Why This Series, Why Now?

- Summer: less church, less groups, more travel = often **less Jesus**.
  - Result: **more counseling in the fall**—families tried to “do summer” with less spiritual fire.
  - **Illustration**: Log by the fire: pulled away, it burns out quickly.
  - We’re entering a **highly divisive cultural season**:
    - More news, more outrage, more fear—unless we stay anchored in Jesus.
  - Aim of the series: become **kingdom-minded** in a chaotic culture.
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### 3. The Kingdom of Heaven

- Jews expected a **political Messiah** to overthrow Rome.
  - They missed:
    - First coming: **Lamb** (suffering Savior).
    - Second coming: **Lion** (conquering King).
  - Now: a **spiritual kingdom** before the physical one.
  - The kingdom is a **kingdom of choice**:
    - God doesn’t force anyone in—now or in eternity.
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### 4. Build on the Rock (Matthew 7:24–27)

- Wise: hears Jesus’ words and **puts them into practice** = house on the rock.
  - Foolish: hears but **doesn’t obey** = house on sand.
  - Both face storms; storms **reveal the foundation**.
  - Question: Is my life (marriage, money, decisions) built on **His words** or on **sand**?
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### 5. Seek First His Kingdom (Matthew 6:19–34)

- The world **runs after** material things and security.
  - Jesus: “Seek **first** His kingdom and **His righteousness**.”
  - Not “be righteous to earn salvation,” but:
    - As saved people, pursue **His way of right and wrong**.
  - When we see injustice:
    - First response: **be** the righteousness of Christ right where we are.
    - We act, but we remember: in Christ, we’ve **already won**.
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### 6. Salt and Light (Matthew 5:13–16)

- Salt:
  - **Preserves** from decay, **adds flavor**.
- Light:
  - **Reveals** truth, shows God’s reality.
- Misuse: harsh, angry behavior justified as *“just being salt and light.”*
- God’s message through us:
  - Call sin what it is, but with His heart:
    - *“Sin separates you—but God loves you and wants to save you.”*

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## 7. The Beatitudes: Kingdom Attitudes (Matthew 5:1–12)

- Beatitudes describe the **inner posture** of kingdom people:
  - Poor in spirit, mourn, meek, hunger for righteousness, merciful, pure, peacemakers, persecuted.
- Over the next weeks, we'll unpack each.
- These attitudes explain **how** we are truly salt and light.

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## 8. Jesus Levels the Playing Field

- “*You have heard it said... but I tell you...*”:
  - **Lust** = heart-adultery.
  - **Hatred** = heart-murder.
- Not just outward sin, but **inward** sin.
- Result:
  - No one can claim, “*I learned the kingdom.*”
  - We must be **poor in spirit**—admitting spiritual bankruptcy and need for a Savior.

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## 9. The Big Paradox

- World's view:
  - Those chasing money, power, identity, and fame look like they're **winning**.
- Kingdom reality:
  - Without Jesus, they're **losing eternally**.
- Those who “*lose*” their life for Jesus **gain real life**.

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## 10. Your Response:

- If you've never received Jesus:
  - Because of sin, we are headed to hell—but He came to **save**, not condemn.
  - Today you can say:
    - “Jesus, pay for my sin. I receive You. I want new life.”
- If you're already a believer in Jesus:
  - Communion reminds you:
    - Who Jesus is.
    - What He did.
    - What's really happening in this clash of kingdoms.
  - Renew your choice to:
    - **Seek first His kingdom.**
    - Live as **salt and light**, shaped by the **Beatitudes** and the **cross**.

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## Key Take-Home Questions

1. Is my life built on **Jesus' words**—or on **sand**?
2. This summer, will I **drift from community** or stay close to the “*fire*” of Jesus and His people?
3. Am I **seeking first** His kingdom and His righteousness—or am I chasing what everyone else chases?
4. Do I act as **salt and light** with the **heart of the Beatitudes**, or with the spirit of the world?
5. Have I truly become **poor in spirit**, admitting my need for a Savior?

Use these notes to review the message, talk with your family or 4:19 Small Group, and prepare your heart for the rest of the “*Paradox*” series through the Beatitudes.