

Upside Down Kingdom: The Gateway to Change

Small Group Discussion

Matthew 5:2b-12

Opening Question (get everyone involved in discussion):

- What is one thing (outside of the political realm) that you think *everyone* in our community could do, which would make a vast difference to the world?

Read Matthew 5:1-12, and then discuss the following.

1. In this week's sermon, we heard that ***the Sermon on the Mount is a beautiful picture of how the world should be.*** Do you agree or disagree? Why?
2. Choose one or more of the following passages, from the Sermon on the Mount. How would the world be better if a significant number of people lived this way?
 - Matt. 5:21-22
 - Matt. 5:27-28
 - Matt. 5:33-37
 - Matt. 5:43-47
 - Matt. 6:25-34
 - Matt. 7:3-5
3. To what degree are these ethical principles aligned with the prevailing values of our culture?
4. We also heard in this week's sermon that ***the Sermon on the Mount is a terrifying reminder of our fallenness.*** To what degree do you feel this statement to be true?
 - How does the Sermon on the Mount expose our motives? Feel free to reference the passages above, if need be. See also Matt. 5:48.
 - To what extent do you think it is possible to live out the ethical principles of the Sermon on the Mount with a natural, unchanged heart?
 - David Martyn Lloyd-Jones, in *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*, says that these principles "crush me to the ground. Were it not for the new birth, I am undone. Read and study it, face yourself in the light of it. It will drive you to see your ultimate need of the rebirth and the gracious operation of the Holy Spirit." Do his words resonate with you? Why or why not?
5. But there is hope: If the Sermon on the Mount shows us the kind of life we need to live, then the beatitudes tell us how to get there. Pastor Josh said, "The beatitudes are ***a picture of the change that must happen in our hearts and character for us to live the way we should.***"
6. Take some extended time now to look at each beatitude (vv. 3-10) and discuss the following four questions:
 - How does this character trait differ from my natural tendency?
 - How does this character trait lead to true happiness (or "blessedness")?
 - How does this character trait come about in a heart that has been changed by the gospel of Jesus Christ?
 - How would my life look different if the Spirit of Jesus brought about this change in me?
7. How are the beatitudes a description of the life that Jesus lived? How can this realization empower us to live this way ourselves?
8. Share about your **prayer needs** with your group. As you **pray for one another**, spend some time confessing where you don't measure up to the ideals of Jesus. Invite the Holy Spirit to bring about these changes in you.