

**THE MEANING OF THE KINGDOM**

Jesus (verses 14-15) has just announced that “the kingdom was near.”

1. In verses 16-20, what do we learn about the kingdom?
2. What do verses 21-22 teach about the kingdom of God?
3. What do verses 23-28 teach us about the kingdom of God? Despite modern prejudices against the idea of demon-possession, how does the existence of evil spirits help us explain what goes on in the world?
4. Over what area of life do verses 29-34 show his authority? What do we learn about the kingdom here?
5. People today struggle with the idea that we must absolutely submit all of our thinking and practice to the Lordship of Christ. How can we answer a person who struggles like that?

**Remembering the big picture**

**Who Jesus is:** He is the King, Christ and the Son of God. He is as powerful as John the Baptist said that He would be (1:7). He has supernatural authority.

**Why Jesus came:** Jesus came to establish a new kingdom. He holds power over the spiritual and physical world.

**How should I respond?** Man's response was apathy, everyone who meets Jesus was “amazed” and the evil spirits were violently opposed to him.

Looking back at your notes from this week’s teaching, was there anything you heard for the first time or that caught your attention, challenged or confused you? Can you think of one or two significant encounters you had with Jesus or a Christian that influenced your decision to follow Jesus?

## **DIGGING DEEPER**

The “kingdom of God/heaven” is used over 100 times in the Gospels. In Matthew 13, Jesus tells several parables to help us understand what the “kingdom of God/heaven” is like. As you read Matthew 13:24-46, mark up the passage and then answer the questions below it.

1. Circle / highlight any words or phrases that catch your attention.
2. Underline the verse you see as most important to remember.
3. Put an X next to anything that confuses you.

What do you learn about the kingdom of heaven from these parables?

- How could a better understanding of the kingdom of God help us in our journey of following Jesus?
- What do you learn about what we need to give up or leave behind in order to follow Jesus?
- Hearing that we need to follow and obey Jesus can often feel like we’re being asked to do something impossible. We can easily wonder, “How can we expect to be able to obey Jesus when we live in a fallen world and we have a sin nature?” What insights and encouragement do you find in John 15:1-8 as to why following Jesus is possible and not something we have to accomplish by sheer determination alone?
- What are some challenges for you to consistently remain in Christ?
- Looking back on this week’s sermon and study, what’s most important for you to remember

## **RESOURCES**

[Welcome to the Kingdom of God - Chris Brown](#)

[Mark 1 - Performed by Max McLean](#)

[GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM - Bible Project](#)

Listen to: [The Kingdom of God Part 1: The Kingdom of God Is the Gospel, starting from Genesis 1](#)

## **MATTHEW 13:24-46**

### **The Parable of the Weeds**

24 Jesus told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. 25 But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. 26 When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared.

27 "The owner's servants came to him and said, 'Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?'

28 "'An enemy did this,' he replied.

"The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?'

29 "'No,' he answered, 'because while you are pulling the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them. 30 Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.'"

### **The Parables of the Mustard Seed and the Yeast**

31 He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. 32 Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches."

33 He told them still another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into about sixty pounds of flour until it worked all through the dough."

### **The Parable of the Weeds Explained**

36 Then he left the crowd and went into the house. His disciples came to him and said, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field."

37 He answered, "The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. 38 The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the people of the kingdom. The weeds are the people of the evil one, 39 and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels.

40 "As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. 41 The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. 42 They will throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 43 Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears, let them hear.

### **The Parables of the Hidden Treasure and the Pearl**

44 "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.

45 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. 46 When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.

## **John 15:1-8 New International Version (NIV)**

### **The Vine and the Branches**

15 "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. 2 He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes[a] so that it will be even more fruitful. 3 You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. 4 Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. 6 If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. 7 If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 8 This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

## **BONUS MATERIAL**

### **PART 2 of 2 YOU'RE NOT FAR - Andy Stanley- Unsettling**

#### **Week 2: Unsettling**

Jesus ignored certain religious protocols. He claimed to have authority to forgive sin. He was uncomfortably comfortable with unrepentant sinners. In this message, we hear about three encounters that showed Jesus came to reverse the order of things.

#### **Discussion Questions**

**1. When you hear the term “faith” in a religious context, what do you assume it means?**

2. Read Mark 2:2–5.

- What stands out to you?
- What did Jesus see that he equated with faith?

**3. We've all had unanswered prayers. Have you ever been blamed or blamed yourself for not having enough faith?**

4. Read Mark 1:38–45.

- What stands out to you?
- Look at verses 39–40. How much faith did the leper have? Apparently, it was enough.

5. Read Mark 2:13–14.

- What stands out to you?
- Given that Levi was probably viewed as corrupt, how would Jesus's inner circle have felt when Jesus invited Levi into their group?
- **What lessons can we learn from Jesus's invitation to Levi?**

#### **Changing Your Mind**

Jesus demonstrated and said that God accepts sinners and invites them into a new kind of kingdom. As a result, Jesus followers were faced with a choice: Do we walk away and save our reputation, or do we repent and believe the good news? Mark, documenting Peter's experience with Jesus, tells us that this new way would continue to collide with Peter's way. He would have to face fear, insecurity, and prejudice head-on. We must do the same.

**The kingdom of God is near, and everyone is invited to participate.**