

The Kingdom of God

The Kingdom for People from All Nations

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The Kingdom of God: The Kingdom for People from All Nations

Lesson 1 – The Global God and King of the Nations

Opening Questions

1. What would some good characteristics of a *perfect* president or king be?
2. Why do we need to feel (a) secure, (b) peaceful, (c) happy, and (d) truly loved?

Introduction

The Bible begins by telling us that there is a Creator God who has created this universe, this planet Earth, and mankind. As our Creator, God is our true King. He has created us with a purpose to have a loving relationship with him that brings true joy and happiness into our lives. However, mankind rebelled against God because we wanted to be our own king and rule our own lives. With mankind's rebellion against God, sin has come to our world and corrupted us. Everyone was born with a sinful or selfish nature. We behave selfishly in many ways in our lives. We daily sin against God. There is no one who is perfect in this world. Therefore, there are no government leaders who are perfect people, because just like us, they too behave selfishly in many ways in their lives. There is a longing deep inside of our hearts for a perfect king who can not only rule over us, but also truly love, protect, and guide us in this broken and corrupted world. We can only receive true love, protection, guidance, joy, and happiness from God, our true King.



To think about:

How do we prove that we truly love someone? Is it not by sacrificing ourselves (time, energy, attention, and other resources) for that person? If our Creator God and King truly loves us, would he not somehow sacrifice himself to show his love for us? The Bible says, "but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

From the Bible



Psalm 96:1-13

¹Oh sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth! ²Sing to the Lord, bless his name; tell of his salvation from day to day. ³Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples! ⁴For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; he is to be feared above all gods. ⁵For all the gods of the peoples are worthless idols, but the Lord made the heavens. ⁶Splendor and majesty are before him; strength and beauty are in his sanctuary. ⁷Ascribe to the Lord, O families of the peoples, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength! ⁸Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; bring an offering, and come into his courts! ⁹Worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness; tremble before him, all the earth! ¹⁰Say among the nations, "The Lord reigns! Yes, the world is established; it shall never be moved; he will judge the peoples with equity." ¹¹Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; let the sea roar, and all that fills it; ¹²let the field exult, and everything in it! Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy ¹³before the Lord, for he comes, for he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness, and the peoples in his faithfulness.



Discussion Questions

1. What does the writer of this psalm encourage his readers to do (v.1-3)? Why (v.4-6)?
2. What should we give to God, our Creator and King (v.7-9)?
3. What should we tell other people in all nations about the Creator God and King (v.10)?
4. This world is corrupted because of mankind's rebellion and sin against God. God is coming soon to make all things right. How does the writer describe this (v.11-13)?

Notes

Sin: thought, word, or action that is dishonoring or disobedient to God.

Sinful nature: the self-centered nature that we are born with. Sin is also a powerful evil force.

Longing: desire

Psalm: a song or hymn.

The Lord: the Creator God.

Salvation: deliverance from harm, evil, and sin.

Glory: great honor and respect; praise; great beauty or magnificence.

Idol: an image or representation of a god used as an object of worship. Mankind makes idols and shows our rebellions against God.

Sanctuary: a holy place for worship.

Ascribe: to give.

Equity: fairness; just.

For he comes to judge the earth: referring to Jesus Christ, the true King, who will return to judge all people with righteousness.

Isaiah 7:14 Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name *Immanuel* [which means God with us].

Isaiah 9:2 The people who walked in darkness have seen a *great light*; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone.

Isaiah 9:6-7 ⁶ For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷ Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end.

Luke 1:26-33 [selective]

²⁶ In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God ... ²⁷ to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph ... And the virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" ²⁹ But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰ And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High ... ³³ ... and of his kingdom there will be no end."

Discussion Questions

1. What can we learn about the significance of the birth of Jesus (Isaiah 7:14, 9:2)?
2. What are some of the titles of Jesus and their significances (Isaiah 9:6)?
3. What can we learn about the government of Jesus (Isaiah 9:7)?
4. How did Mary feel when the angel Gabriel appeared and talked to her (Luke 1:26-29)?
5. What message did Gabriel bring to Mary (v.30-31)?
6. What did Gabriel say about Jesus and his kingdom (v.32-33)?



Closing Points

1. God as our Creator is our true King. Only God can give us true happiness and joy. When we rebel against him, when we want to rule our own lives, and when we do not have a good relationship with him, we lose true happiness and joy. We live in sin and misery.
2. God is a loving God. He wants to save us from our own sin and rebellion against him. The Son of God came from heaven, was willingly born into our world as a weak baby, and identified himself with us. Jesus is fully and truly God and fully and truly man. He is Immanuel (God with us), Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace.
3. Jesus is the Great Light who has come to save us. We live in deep darkness because of sin and evil forces in this world. Our sin corrupts us. Sin is like a spiritual cancer that keeps destroying us from the inside out. The devil and his demons are evil spirits who use our weaknesses and this corrupted world to tempt and deceive us in order to keep us further and further away from God by sinning and rebelling against him. Jesus wants to save us and to restore our relationship with God. He wants us to believe in him and trust our lives to him by faith. He will enable us to see the darkness and brokenness within ourselves and the world. By inviting him into our lives, he offers us spiritual healing and a new life together with him—a personal and loving relationship with him.
4. Jesus came to sacrifice himself to die for the punishment of all our sins on the cross as our substitute. When we trust our lives to him, we are forgiven by God and are given a new life in Jesus—a life filled with true happiness and joy that lasts forever.
5. When Jesus came to this world, he brought a kingdom (the Kingdom of God) for us. His kingdom is a kingdom for people from all nations. He is the true and perfect king that our hearts long for. He is the only one who can truly love, protect, and guide us in this broken and corrupted world. We can receive him and his kingdom by believing in him.

Notes

Isaiah: The book of Isaiah was written by Isaiah, a prophet (messenger) of God, who lived about 700 years before Jesus was born. He wrote about the coming of the Son of God as the Great Light and the King who would save us from sin and darkness.

Immanuel: one of Jesus' titles which means God with us.

Wonderful

Counselor: Jesus gives us the right guidance for our lives. He is wise and wonderful.

Mighty God: Jesus' authority and power over nature, sicknesses, evil spirits, and death proves that he is the Almighty God.

Everlasting Father: Jesus is the King and Father who protects all his people and provides their needs.

Prince of Peace: Jesus will bring us true and eternal peace—peace with God and with one another.

The Son of the Most High (God): Jesus' spiritual title to emphasize his divinity (God-like).

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Lesson 2 – The Global Good News of the Kingdom

Opening Questions

1. What is an example of bad news that you recently saw online or on TV?
2. Why is there so much selfishness, pride, and corruption in this world?

Introduction

The Bible tells us that we are created by God to have a personal and loving relationship with him. God is our true Source of happiness and joy. But mankind has rebelled against God, and sin has come to our world and corrupted us. We have lost that personal and loving relationship with God that brings true happiness and joy. Each of us was born with a sinful or selfish nature. We behave selfishly in many ways in our lives. We daily sin against God. We are sinful, selfish, and prideful people and live in a sinful and corrupted world (see Psalm 14:2-3). This is the bad news. However, God has a plan to *remake* us from the inside out, making us as new creations spiritually—restoring our personal and loving relationship with him—then physically—giving us new holy bodies (see 2 Corinthians 5:17). He has a plan to bring us home because this world is not our true home. Only in the Kingdom of God, our true home, can we find true happiness and joy. Jesus came to this world as a weak baby and not as a great and strong warrior or leader, so that through his weakness, humility, and sacrifice, he may save us when we trust our lives to him by faith. Jesus has come to *restore* our relationship with God and to *remake* us as new persons fit to live in God’s kingdom. This is the global good news for all of us—people from all nations.



To think about:

Why is it easier to be selfish than to be loving towards other people? Is it possible not to be selfish and proud at all? Is it possible to be perfectly loving and humble? How can we change from the inside out? We cannot change our nature, but the good news is that our Maker (God) can change our nature and hearts, when our relationship with him is restored.

From the Bible



John 3:16-17

¹⁶ [Jesus says] “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.”

Romans 5:6-11

⁶ For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— ⁸ but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. ¹⁰ For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. ¹¹ More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.



Discussion Questions

1. What is the good news that people from all nations have from God (John 3:16-17)?
2. How did Jesus Christ save us—sinners who deserve God’s judgment (Romans 5:6-8)?
3. How does Jesus justify and save us from the judgment of God against all our sins (v.9)?
4. What more do we receive when Jesus reconciles us with God (v.10-11)?

Notes

Sin: thought, word, or action that is dishonoring or disobedient to God.

Sinful nature: the self-centered nature that we are born with.

Psalm 14:2-3

The Lord looks down from heaven on the children of man, to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God. They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt; there is none who does good, not even one.

2 Corinthians 5:17

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

Perish: to die.

Weak: inability to be morally right with God.

Ungodly: sinners.

Scarcely: hardly.

Justify: to be made right with God; to be considered righteous.

Reconcile: to restore friendly relations.

Matthew 4:17, 23

¹⁷ ... Jesus began to preach, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

²³ And he went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people.

Luke 4:16-21

¹⁶ And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. ¹⁷ And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written, ¹⁸ “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, ¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.” ²⁰ And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. ²¹ And he began to say to them, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”



Discussion Questions

1. What message did Jesus preach to his listeners (Matthew 4:17, 23)?
2. Where did Jesus go on the Sabbath day in his hometown Nazareth (Luke 4:16)?
3. What was given to him to read (v.17)? What was written there (v.18-19)?
4. How is that *good news* for people from all nations? Who are the poor, the captives, the blind, and the oppressed? What does Jesus plan to do for them (v.18-19)?
5. What happened after Jesus read the text [*the Word of God*] (v.20b)? Why do you think Jesus had their full attention?
6. What did Jesus say to them? What do you think it means (v.21)?

Closing Points

1. The bad news is that we are sinful and selfish people living in a sinful, broken, and corrupted world. It is not easy, and it takes a lot of humility to admit our wrongdoings because of our pride. The good news is that God wants to *remake* us from the inside out, making us as new creations (new people) fit to live with him in his holy kingdom.
2. Jesus knows our needs and has come to save us. He knows that we are spiritually poor, being separated from God and having no good relationship with him. He knows that we are spiritually blind, unable to even see our own sins and weaknesses. He knows that we are spiritually enslaved by our own sinful nature. However, he has good news for us. He says, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed” (John 8:34-36).
3. Jesus has come to this world and identified himself with us in our weaknesses. He was rejected, betrayed, mocked, and tortured by others. He sacrificed himself to die bearing the punishment of all our sins against God. On the cross, God treated Jesus as a great sinner as our substitute. Jesus took the wrath and judgment of God for us. If we repent from our sins and turn our hearts to God, trusting our lives to Jesus who has died for us, God will forgive our sins and restore our relationship with him. God will give us a new heart and begin to *remake* us as new persons united with Jesus and his righteousness and holiness. This is the Gospel, the global good news of God's kingdom.
4. God loves us (the world—people from all nations). He sent Jesus Christ, his only Son to save us. Jesus was willing to sacrifice himself in our place, so that whoever believes in him should not receive God's judgment and die but have an eternal and joyful life with him. Jesus says, “Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28).

Notes

Preach: to publicly teach a religious message.

Repent: to regret of our wrongdoing and to turn our hearts to God.

Synagogue: a Jewish place of worship.

The *gospel of the kingdom*: the *good news* of God's kingdom.

Affliction: pain or suffering.

Sabbath: a holy day to worship God.

Scroll of the prophet Isaiah: a roll of paper with text (the inspired word of God) written by Isaiah, a prophet or messenger of God.

The Spirit of the Lord: the Holy Spirit of God.

Anoint: to dedicate someone to the service of God.

The poor, the captives (prisoners), the blind, the oppressed: beyond physical but ultimately spiritual poverty, blindness, captivity, and oppression.

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Lesson 3 – Entering and Becoming Citizens of the Kingdom

Opening Questions

1. What do we need to do when we want to travel to and enter another country?
2. Do you trust that the chair you are sitting on can hold your body and will not break?

Introduction

The sun is so bright that we cannot gaze at it without getting blind. The Bible tells us that no person in this world can see God and live because God is holy and we are sinful. When God appears to people, he must hide or limit himself in an object that people can see and still live, such as a burning bush. When God put aside his glory and majesty and was willing to be fully and truly human, be born as a weak baby, live among us, and enable us to see him, that shows how much he loves and cares for us. Jesus was fully and truly God and fully and truly man. He lived a sinless life before God for us and died on the cross, bearing the punishment for all our sins as our substitute. He really loves us and wants to save us. He asks us to trust in him, the only one who can bring us to God's kingdom, our true home.



To think about:

Why do we take a shower? We do so to clean our bodies. God is holy and his kingdom is a holy kingdom. No one who is not holy (spiritually clean) can enter or live in his kingdom. It is not compatible. The good news is that God will make us more and more holy day by day when we trust our lives to Jesus. When we repent or regret of our sins, turn our hearts to God, and put our faith and trust in Jesus, we become citizens of God's kingdom.

From the Bible



Luke 13:22-30

²² He [Jesus] went on his way through towns and villages, teaching and journeying toward Jerusalem. ²³ And someone said to him, "Lord, will those who are saved be few?" And he said to them, ²⁴ "Strive to enter through the narrow door. For many, I tell you, will seek to enter [the kingdom of God] and will not be able.

²⁵ When once the master of the house has risen and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and to knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, open to us,' then he will answer you, 'I do not know where you come from.' ²⁶ Then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets.' ²⁷ But he will say, 'I tell you, I do not know where you come from. Depart from me, all you workers of evil!' ²⁸ In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God but you yourselves cast out. ²⁹ And people will come from east and west, and from north and south, and recline at table in the kingdom of God.

³⁰ And behold, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last."

Discussion Questions

1. What question did someone ask Jesus (v.23)? What was Jesus' answer, and what do you think the parable means (v.24)?
2. In Jesus' parable, what would the master of the house tell those who knocked at his door (v.25)? How did they try to convince him to open the door, and how did he answer them again (v.26-27)?
3. What will be in hell—the *place for workers of evil* (v.28)?
4. Where will people who enter the kingdom of God come from (v.29)?
5. What did Jesus say to conclude his teaching (v.30)?



Notes

Jerusalem: the capital city of Israel.

Saved: saved from sin and the judgement of God.

Strive: to make great effort.

That place: refers to Hell.

Gnashing of teeth: grinding of one's teeth – a picture of *anger*.

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: ancestors of the Jewish people.

Prophets: a messenger of God.

Recline at table: a picture of *dining*.

Recline: to lean or lie back in a relaxed position.

Some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last: Jews as the first who received the *gospel* (good news of Jesus Christ) or special revelation about him will become the last ones to enter God's kingdom. Non-Jewish people as the last who receive the gospel will become the first ones to enter because they believed first.

John 10:3-18 [selective]

³ ... The sheep hear his [the shepherd] voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. ⁵ A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.” ⁶ ... ⁷ So Jesus again said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, **I am the door** of the sheep. ⁸ ... ⁹ **I am the door**. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. ¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

¹¹ **I am the good shepherd**. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹² He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. ¹³ He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. ¹⁴ **I am the good shepherd**. I know my own and my own know me, ¹⁵ just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. ¹⁶ And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. ¹⁷ For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. ¹⁸ No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again.”

Discussion Questions

1. Why will the sheep follow the shepherd and not strangers (v.3-5)?
How do you think the sheep can recognize the voice of the shepherd?
2. What does Jesus say about himself (v.7-9)? What will happen to the sheep who enter by him (v.9)? What will happen to the sheep who follow Jesus (v.10)?
3. What does Jesus say about himself, and how would he prove it (v.11)?
4. What will a hired hand do when a wolf comes to attack the sheep (v.12)? Why (v.13)?
Would you rather be in the care of your *true shepherd* or *hired hands*? Why?
5. How does Jesus describe the close relationship he has with his sheep (v.14)?
How does he further explain that his relationship with his sheep is very close and personal (v.15)?
6. Will Jesus' other sheep, who are not Jewish people, listen to his voice (v.16)? How?
7. Several times Jesus mentions laying down or sacrificing his life (v.11, 15, 17, 18). What may be the significance of it? What authority does he have for his own life (v.18)?



Closing Points

1. Jesus said that many people thought they would enter Heaven because they are “good” enough, but God would reject them and even called them “workers of evil.” Many people think that they do “good” things for other people and/or God, but they actually do those things for their own benefits. Their motives are self-centered. That is why God says that they are “workers of evil.” God will put them in Hell—a place for those who reject God and do not want to have a personal and loving relationship with him. They will weep and gnash their teeth—be angry at God. Their true character and evil hearts will be exposed.
2. Jesus came to this world to give us a new life in him, living joyfully and peacefully with God. He came to bring us to God’s kingdom, our true home. Our sins deserve God’s judgment. Jesus sacrificed himself to bear the punishment of our sins on the cross as our substitute. He is our good and perfect Shepherd who has laid down his life for us. He loves us with his own life. He came that we may have life and have it abundantly.
3. Because Jesus is God, he can speak to us in our hearts. We can hear his voice calling us to repent from our sins and trust our lives to him. All Jesus’ sheep (people from all nations) will hear his voice and come to him by faith. He is the door to God’s kingdom.

Notes

Flee: to run away.

I am (AM) the door: Jesus used a special expression “I AM.” In the Greek Bible, the phrase “ego eimi” means “I am” or “I exist,” indicating an eternal present (no past and no future). Jesus describes himself as the only door for the sheep (us) to enter the God’s kingdom.

Pasture: grassland.

I am (AM) the good shepherd: Jesus used the same “I AM” expression. “*Agathos*” and “*kalos*” are two Greek words that mean “good.” Jesus used “*kalos*” that means good, beautiful, and perfect – “I am the *kalos* shepherd.”

Lay down: sacrifice.

Hired hand: a paid worker.

Snatch: to take suddenly.

Scatter: to disperse

Other sheep: followers of Jesus from other nations (non-Jewish people). Jesus explains that His sheep are people from all nations.

Flock: a large group

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Lesson 4 – Worshipping the King in Spirit and in Truth Personally and Communally

Opening Questions

1. Why is water very important to all living beings in this world?
2. What are some of the things that make you happy and satisfy your soul?

Introduction

The Bible is the Word of God, written by human authors over a period of 1,500 years under the guidance of God. Every book of the Bible ultimately points to Jesus. In the Bible, God teaches us the proper way to worship him and to live our lives according to his will. God has created us out of his love, so we can experience true and beautiful love in our personal and communal relationship with him that brings true joy and happiness to our lives.



To think about:

If God has created us for a personal and communal loving relationship with him, then not having a good relationship with him is disastrous to our lives. God is “the fountain of living water” for us (Jeremiah 17:13). If we do not have a personal relationship with him in our lives, we are spiritually dead.

From the Bible



John 4:5-18 [selective]

⁵ So he [Jesus] came to a town of Samaria called Sychar ... , ⁶ ... wearied as he was from his journey, was sitting beside the well. It was about the sixth hour. ⁷ A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink.” ⁸ (For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.) ⁹ The Samaritan woman said to him, “How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?” (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) ¹⁰ Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.” ¹¹ The woman said to him, “Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? ¹² Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock.” ¹³ Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴ but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” ¹⁵ The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water.” ¹⁶ Jesus said to her, “Go, call your husband, and come here.” ¹⁷ The woman answered him, “I have no husband.” Jesus said to her, “You are right in saying, ‘I have no husband’; ¹⁸ for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true.”

Discussion Questions

1. Where did Jesus go to bring the good news of the kingdom of God?
How was he when he arrived there? About what time did he arrive (v.5-6)?
2. Who came from the town, and what did Jesus ask of her (v.7)?
3. How did she respond to Jesus’ request, and what was her attitude (v.9)?
4. How did Jesus respond to her (v.10)? Do you understand what Jesus was saying?
5. How did she reply to Jesus (v.11-12)? To what degree do you think she understood that Jesus was speaking spiritually about *living water*, *the gift of God*, and *who he is*?
6. What did Jesus say to her (v.13-14)? How did she respond (v.15)?
7. What did Jesus ask of her, and how did she respond? How did Jesus reveal about her broken relationships and broken life (v.16-18)?



Notes

Samaria: a region in northern Israel.

Samaritans: were not pure Jews, but mixed-race people born from intermarriage between Jews and foreigners.

The Jews outside Samaria hated them and would not travel through Samaria. The Jews even considered sharing utensils with Samaritans as unholy or unclean. Jesus, however, purposefully went to Samaria, had a conversation with a Samaritan woman, and asked for a drink using her cup.

Weary: tired, exhausted.

Well: a deep hole that reaches a natural source of water.

The sixth hour: Ancient Jews used the sun as their time. It starts at 6 am our time. The first hour is 7 am. The sixth hour is 12 pm noon.

Jacob: an ancestor of Jewish people. Jacob’s sons become the twelve tribes of Israel.

Livestock: animal raised on a farm.

Spring: source.

John 4:19-26, 28-29, 39-42

¹⁹The woman said to him, “Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. ²⁰Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship.” ²¹Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. ²²You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. ²⁴God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” ²⁵The woman said to him, “I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things.” ²⁶Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am he.”

²⁸So the woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people,

²⁹“Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?”

³⁹Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, “He told me all that I ever did.” ⁴⁰So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. ⁴¹And many more believed because of his word. ⁴²They said to the woman, “It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world.”

Discussion Questions

1. What did she think about Jesus now (v.19)? What did she say to him (v.20)?
2. What did Jesus say about where and how we should worship God (v.21-24)?
3. What did she say to Jesus (v.25)? How did Jesus respond to her (v.26)?
4. How did she begin to become *a spring of water* for others (v.28-29)?
5. How did many other Samaritans believe in Jesus and receive his *living water* (v.39-41)?
6. What did they say to her about Jesus (v.42)?



Closing Points

1. God is our spiritual *Living Water*. He is the Source and the Giver of our lives. Without knowing him and having a loving relationship with him, personally and communally, we are spiritually dead in our sin.
2. Jesus has come to save us from our sins. He has sacrificed himself to die bearing the punishment of all our sins against God as our substitute. He is the gift of God for us. He is God himself, who has come to give us *Living Water*, individually and communally, so we can have a new life, a personal and communal loving relationship with him that truly satisfies our souls and brings true joy and happiness to our hearts. He invites us to believe and trust our lives to him. He is the Savior of the world. He has come to bring us (people from all nations) to God's kingdom and to give us an eternal life with him.
3. “God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” God is not limited in a location. We can sincerely worship God at any time anywhere from our hearts out of love for him and with proper understanding of him as he has revealed himself in the Bible. Everything in the Bible (the Word of God) is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training us in the righteousness of God, so we may have a joyful, personal, and communal loving relationship with God that never ends.
4. Faith in Jesus Christ is rational and personal. The Samaritan woman had a rational conversation with Jesus discussing religious topics. She was smart. She was also lonely and had five broken relationships. Jesus addressed her personal need and revealed who he is. She trusted her life to him and began to be *a spring of water* for others, sharing her testimony. Similarly, Jesus wants us to be his lights in this broken world personally and communally, sharing our testimonies and helping others to know him.

Notes

Prophet: a messenger of God.

Jerusalem: the capital city of Israel and the center of religious activities.

The hour: the time.

The Triune God (the Trinity): one God in three distinct persons (**God the Father**, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit). They are in unity and are equal in substance, power, and glory.

Salvation: being saved from sin and evil.

Messiah (from the Hebrew word) and **Christ** (from the Greek word): Jesus' title which means *the promised Savior*

I am (AM): Jesus used a special expression “I AM,” “ego eimi” in the Greek Bible, which means “I exist,” indicating an eternal present (no past and no future). It is the same expression that he (the Son of God) used to introduce himself to Moses about 1,400 years before he was born as a man in this world.

Testimony: proof; evidence.

The Kingdom of God: The Kingdom for People from All Nations

Lesson 5 – The King’s Power and Saving Grace for All Nations

Opening Questions

1. Have you received or heard any good news this week?
2. What have you learned from meeting people from different nations?

Introduction

Before Jesus went back to heaven, he gave a mission to all his followers, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:19-20). His followers will see and experience his power and saving grace working in and through them as they bring the gospel (good news) about him and his kingdom to people from all nations.



To think about:

Our hearts tend to reject and rebel against God. We need God’s grace to change our hearts from the inside out, healing our self-centeredness. The problem of our self-centeredness is that we still prefer to trust in ourselves rather than God. It is a *spiritual cancer* that destroys us.

From the Bible

Acts 8:26-40



²⁶ Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Rise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” This is a desert place. ²⁷ And he rose and went. And there was an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure. He had come to Jerusalem to worship ²⁸ and was returning, seated in his chariot, and he was reading the prophet Isaiah. ²⁹ And the Spirit said to Philip, “Go over and join this chariot.” ³⁰ So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?” ³¹ And he said, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. ³² Now the passage of the Scripture that he was reading was this: “Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter and like a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he opens not his mouth. ³³ In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth.”

³⁴ And the eunuch said to Philip, “About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?” ³⁵ Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus. ³⁶ And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, “See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?” ³⁸ And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. ³⁹ And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. ⁴⁰ But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he passed through he preached the gospel to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

Discussion Questions

1. Who told Philip to go down the road? Whom did he meet there (v.26-27)?
2. What was the Ethiopian reading? What did the Holy Spirit tell Philip to do (v.28-29)?
3. What was the specific passage of the Bible that the Ethiopian was reading (v.32-33)?
4. What did he ask Philip, and what did Philip say about the scripture (v.35)?
5. After understanding the Word of God, what did the Ethiopian want to do (v.36-38)?
6. What happened to Philip after (v.39-40)?

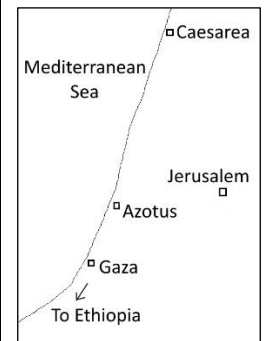


Notes

Grace: an act of God’s mercy and kindness to us with no consideration of our good quality.

Baptize: to give a sign of one’s internal repentance and faith in Jesus.

Jerusalem: the capital city of Israel.



Eunuch: a man whose testicles have been removed

Prophet: a messenger of God.
The prophet Isaiah: refers to the book of Isaiah in the Old Testament Bible.

Scripture: the sacred writing of the Bible.

The good news about Jesus: the **gospel** (good news) that we can receive God’s forgiveness and be saved by trusting our lives to Jesus, who has sacrificed himself and died bearing the punishment of all our sins as our substitute.

Acts 10:1, 19-20, 34-43 [selective]

¹ At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion of what was known as the Italian Cohort.

¹⁹ ... while Peter was pondering the vision, the Spirit said to him, “Behold, three men are looking for you. ²⁰ Rise and go down and accompany them without hesitation, for I have sent them.”

³⁴ [At Cornelius house] ... Peter ... said: “Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, ³⁵ but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.

³⁶ As for the word that he sent to Israel, preaching good news of peace through Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all), ³⁷ ... ³⁸ ... God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. ³⁹ And we are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, ⁴⁰ but God raised him on the third day and made him to appear, ⁴¹ not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. ⁴² And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³ To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”

Discussion Questions

1. Who told Cornelius to send people and to bring Peter to his home (v.19)?
2. What did Peter understand about God (v.34-35)?
3. Why is the gospel of Jesus Christ also called “the good news of peace” (v.36)?
4. What is a summary of the gospel message (v.38-40)?
5. What did Jesus command his followers to do (v.42, Matthew 28:19-20)?
6. What do ultimately all the messages of the Old Testament prophets point to (v.43)?



Closing Points

1. God told Philip and Peter to bring the gospel of Jesus Christ to an Ethiopian eunuch and an Italian centurion respectively—people of different ethnicities and nationalities—because God wanted to forgive and save them from their sins. They believed in Jesus and trusted their lives to him. Racial barriers are the results of our own sins and pride. However, in God’s kingdom, God wants racial barriers between us to be overcome. Followers of Jesus will see and experience his power and saving grace working in and through them as they bring the good news about him and his kingdom to people from all nations. The kingdom of God is the kingdom for people from all nations.
2. Christianity is the most inclusive and culturally diverse religion, because Jesus is the true Savior of the world and the true King for people from all nations. He has commanded all his followers to bring his gospel message to people from all nations. He has come from heaven to this world to save us. He loves us and has sacrificed himself to die bearing the punishment of all our sins against God on the cross as our substitute. All who believe in him and trust their lives to him by faith receive forgiveness, are saved from the judgment of God against their sins, and are brought into his kingdom. This is the good news (gospel) of Jesus Christ.
3. The idea of humility is central to the heart of Christianity. Jesus has given us the best example of humility. He was born in a smelly manger. He became weak, rejected, and died for us. He took our sins so he can give us his righteousness. Similarly, only when we humbly confess and regret of our sins before God, can we experience life-changing forgiveness and saving grace from God in our lives. And Jesus’ promise will be true for us, “I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Notes

Centurion: a Roman commander of a hundred soldiers.

Vision: God gave Peter a vision of his love and grace to people from all backgrounds. God taught Peter to do the same.

Partiality: favoritism.

Good news (gospel) of peace through Jesus

Christ: The gospel message is that we can have peace with God and with each other by believing in and trusting our lives to Jesus by faith.

Tree: refers to the cross.

The living and the dead: The Bible tells us that we are all spiritually dead, separated from God. When we trust our lives to Jesus, our relationship with God is restored. We are alive and spiritually born again. We become a new person (creation) in Jesus.

The Kingdom of God: The Kingdom for People from All Nations

Lesson 6 – The Law of the Kingdom that Protects and Guides the Citizens

Opening Questions

1. What are some benefits of having laws or rules for us as individuals and a society?
2. Why do people break laws? Would you like to work as a police officer or a judge who guards laws against law breakers?

Introduction

Because we are born with a sinful nature, we tend to be self-centered and rebellious in many ways, not only against the rules of the society we live in, but also against the rules of God. At its essence, sin is a rejection of God and his law. God has given us his law for our own good. God's law helps us not to sin, convicts us of our sins, and shows us the right way of living our lives that will bring joy, happiness, and peace to us individually and as a community of God's people. God's law is God's word and is our ultimate guide for right living and godliness. God's word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path.



To think about:

Does freedom mean that we can do whatever we want without any restrictions, or does it mean having the right restrictions and rules? God has created us with a purpose to have a right and loving relationship with him. When we have that, we have right relationships with others too, but when we reject it, selfishness, pride, and brokenness flourish in us and this world.

From the Bible



Exodus 20:1-17 [selective]

¹ And God spoke all these words, saying, ² ... ³ "You shall have no other gods before me. ⁴ "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. ⁵ You shall not bow down to them or serve them ... ⁶ ... ⁷ "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain. ⁸ "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. ⁹ Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, ¹⁰ but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work ... ¹¹ For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. ¹² "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you. ¹³ "You shall not murder. ¹⁴ "You shall not commit adultery. ¹⁵ "You shall not steal. ¹⁶ "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. ¹⁷ "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's."

Discussion Questions

1. What is the first commandment that God gave to his people (20:3)?
What would be the impact of worshipping a wrong or false god(s) for us?
2. What is the second commandment (v.4-5)?
How many carved images of gods are there in this world that people worship?
3. What are the third commandment (v.7) and the fourth commandment (v.8-11)?
4. What are the fifth commandment (v.12) and the sixth commandment (v.13)?
5. What are the seventh commandment (v.14) and the eighth commandment (v.15)?
6. What are the ninth commandment (v.16) and the tenth commandment (v.17)?
7. Which of these commandments are not compatible with some cultures in this world?



Notes

Sin: thought, word, or action that is dishonoring or disobedient to God.

Sinful nature: the self-centered nature that we are born with. Sin is also a powerful evil force.

Godliness: conforming to God's law; a life of devotion, pleasing, and honoring God.

Psalm 119:105

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

Vain: without real significance, value, or importance.

Sabbath: a holy day to worship God and to rest from work. Sabbath was observed on Saturday. Since Jesus' resurrection, which was on Sunday, Christians have gathered to worship God on Sundays.

Adultery: sexual relationship outside of marriage.

Spiritual adultery is unfaithfulness to God by worshipping other gods (idols).

2 Corinthians 5:20

Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ ...

Luke 10:27 “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.”

1 Peter 2:5, 9-12

⁵ you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

⁹ But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. ¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. ¹¹ Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. ¹² Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

Discussion Questions

1. How are God's Ten Commandments for us summarized (Luke 10:27)? How are we in doing this in our daily lives?
2. What are the illustrations being used for God's people individually and communally in God's kingdom (1 Peter 2:5)?
3. What is our identity and purpose of life communally as one people of God (v.9-10)?
4. Spiritually speaking, what are we (our status or identity) in this world (v.11a)? Why is this important to understand?
5. What should we do therefore (v.11b)?
6. What else should we do together (v.12)?



Closing Points

1. God's Ten Commandments for us are for our own good. The first four commandments teach us to love God with all our hearts. The last six commandments teach us to love other people just as we love ourselves. Love for God is the greatest commandment. When loving God becomes our greatest desire, we will also love what he loves. As a result, our love for God becomes the basis for living for him and caring for others.
2. When we are right with God, we will be right with other people as well. We are created by God to live under his law, which protects and guides us for right living and godliness. When we reject God's law, we are like fish trying to live out of water. Things fall apart in our lives. Christianity is not about rules but about right relationship with the true and living God personally and communally. God has saved us from our sins and sin slavery and has brought us to his kingdom, so we can have freedom to be righteous and to have a right and joyful relationship with him and others in his kingdom.
3. Obeying the Ten Commandments perfectly is impossible for us because of our selfish and rebellious nature. That is why we need to rest in Jesus. He lived a perfect life obeying God. He sacrificed himself and died for all our sins against God as our substitute. When we trust our lives to Jesus, God forgives all our sins—past, present, and future—and credits us Jesus' righteousness and perfect record of obedience. God treats us as if we are righteous and have lived in perfect obedience to all his law. God *justifies* us when we repent from our sins and trust our lives to Jesus by faith.
4. As God's children, our nationality and citizenship are in the kingdom of God. We are *sojourners* in this world. As God's people, our job is to be his *ambassadors* in this world, showing the love of God and serving the needs of others. We are *living stones* and *royal priests* of God's kingdom. We are to bring the gospel (good news) of God's kingdom to others and help them learn God's love and forgiveness in Jesus Christ.

Notes

Living stones, spiritual house: all followers of Jesus from all nations are *living stones* and being built up as a *spiritual house* (God's kingdom). It is a metaphor to describe strong relationships.

A holy and royal priesthood: As one people of God, we are holy and royal priests of God, whose job is to mediate between God and people.

A chosen race, a holy nation: In God's kingdom, we who are from different races and nationalities, become one race and one nationality.

Sojourner: a foreigner who lives as a permanent resident rather than a temporary visitor or tourist.

Exile: one who does not live in one's country.

Flesh: the sinful desire in our body.

Gentile: non-Jewish person; here refers to a person who does not believe in God of the Bible.

Day of Visitation: the day Jesus returns to this world.

The Kingdom of God: The Kingdom for People from All Nations

Lesson 7 – True Happiness in God’s Kingdom

Opening Questions

1. What makes you happy? Give some examples of short-term and long-term happiness.
2. What are some of the common struggles that we have in this world?

Introduction

This world is not the true home for God’s people. Our home is in heaven with God. God’s people, as sojourners living in this world, are God’s representatives, bringing God’s love and hope to others. God’s people also experience troubles, difficulties, and sufferings in this world. However, Jesus will one day return to bring us home. Matthew 5:2-12 is known as “The Beatitudes,” in which Jesus teaches about those who are in the kingdom of God because they are blessed simply by God’s grace. There are eight beatitudes; each begins with the word “blessed.” The Greek word for “blessed” is “makarios,” which means being spiritually happy and well because of God’s presence in the person’s life. It fundamentally means *the joy of the soul* and includes a happier future destiny given by God. Each of these virtues is fulfilled by Jesus Christ because none of us is able to do so, yet what Jesus has fulfilled is credited to us when we believe in him, follow him, and trust our lives to him.



To think about:

Imagine that each of us is a cup. God wants us to come to him as an empty cup, so that he can fill us with his love and true happiness. But so often we come as a cup full of our own achievements to show off to God, and God says, “All your achievements are full of pride. I want you to come to me empty and humbly.” Would we be able to do that? If we do so, he promises to give us true love and happiness that we cannot find or get from this world.

From the Bible



Matthew 5:1-8

- ¹ Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. ² And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:
- ³ “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- ⁴ “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.
- ⁵ “Blessed are the meeke, for they shall inherit the earth.
- ⁶ “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.
- ⁷ “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.
- ⁸ “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Discussion Questions

1. Why did Jesus go up on the mountain, and who came to him (v.1-2)?
2. Who do you think are *those who are poor in spirit*? Why are they blessed and happy (v.3)? Who are *not* poor in spirit, and why don’t they belong to God’s kingdom?
3. Why are *those who mourn* blessed and happy (v.4)?
What do you think they mourn for?
4. Why are *those who are meek* blessed and happy (v.5)?
5. How do you think God will satisfy *those who hunger and thirst for righteousness* (v.6)?
6. How do you think *those who are merciful* to others will receive mercy from God (v.7)?
7. Why are those who are pure in heart blessed and happy (v.8)?
What does being pure in heart mean? Is there anyone perfectly pure in heart in this world? What are the things that contaminate or corrupt our minds and hearts?



Notes

Sojourner: a foreigner who lives as a permanent resident rather than a temporary visitor or tourist.

Beatitude: greatest happiness.

Grace: undeserved blessing or goodness given by God with no consideration of our quality of good.

Virtue: a quality of excellence or high moral standard.

Fulfill: to bring to completion or reality.

Disciple: a follower or student.

Mourn: to grieve or feel deep sorrow.

Meeke: humble, gentle.

The earth: points to the renewed earth that Jesus will make when he returns; God’s kingdom.

Righteousness: the quality of being morally right with God.

Mercy: act of kindness, favor, or compassion.

Sin: thought, word, or action that is dishonoring or disobedient to God.

Matthew 5:9-12

⁹ “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

¹⁰ “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ¹¹ “Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

¹³ “You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. ¹⁴ “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

Discussion Questions

1. Why are *the peacemakers* blessed and happy (v.9)?
Is it easier to be a peacemaker or a troublemaker? Why?
2. Why are *those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake* blessed and happy (v.10)?
Why are *those who are persecuted for Jesus' sake* blessed and happy (v.11-12)?
For what reasons are followers of Jesus Christ persecuted in this world?
3. What is salt for? What do you do with salt that has lost its taste? How should followers of Jesus live their lives as *the salt of the earth* or *influence-makers* of God's kingdom in their societies (v.13)?
4. What do you think Jesus means by saying that his followers are the light of the world?
What is light for? What are two illustrations that Jesus used to teach this (v.14-15)?
5. For what purpose should Jesus' followers shine their light before other people (v.16)?



Closing Points

1. All the qualities of the beatitudes describe those who are in God's kingdom. Each person in God's kingdom possesses all the qualities because all of them are connected. However, none of us possess any of the qualities. Jesus, the Son of God, came from heaven to this world to fulfill and model all the qualities in his life. He did not do this for his sake but for ours. Jesus is the poor in spirit, who mourns for sin, who is meek, who hungers and thirsts for righteousness, who is merciful, who is pure in heart, who is the peacemaker between God and us, and who was persecuted and died for us as our substitute. He is also the only true *salt of the earth* and *light of the world*.
2. When we realize that we possess none of these qualities, we can come to God humbly as those who are poor in spirit—as *an empty cup*. When we do so, God will pour out all these qualities into us and fill us up. Jesus' perfect accomplishment—fulfilling and modeling all these qualities in his life—is credited or given to us when we believe in him and trust our lives to him. That is how we are filled and blessed and receive true happiness from God. True happiness is not achieved by our own effort, but we can receive it from God by faith in Jesus. Once we become true followers of Jesus and God's children, God works in us, making us more and more like Jesus day by day from the inside out, demonstrating these qualities in our lives as we obey him.
3. Jesus wants his followers to imitate him. He wants us to be *the salt of this earth*—good *influence-makers* of God's kingdom in this world—bringing the gospel (good news) of his kingdom and showing his love to others. Jesus is *the true Light* that has come to this world to save us from darkness and evil and bring us to his kingdom of light. He wants us to be *the light of the world*—his *lights* or *agents* in this dark and broken world—bringing his love and hope to those who still live in the darkness of their sins.

Notes

Persecute: to subject someone to hostility or ill-treatment; to harass persistently; to oppress.

Prophet: a messenger of God proclaiming the will of God.

Trample: to walk on or walk over.

A city on a hill: the light of the city can be seen from far away, especially in the dark of night. Followers of Jesus, as the light of the world, are like a city on a hill giving light (love and hope from God) to their surroundings.

Glory: great honor and respect; praise.

The Kingdom of God: The Kingdom for People from All Nations

Lesson 8 – The Enemies of the Kingdom

Opening Questions

1. What are some major temptations or struggles that we experience in our lives?
2. Why do we need each other's help in our lives?

Introduction

As God's people and sojourners living in this world, we have three enemies: (1) the devil, (2) *the flesh*—our sinful nature that is still attached to our bodies and souls, and (3) this corrupted world. The devil uses this corrupted world and our sinful nature (weaknesses) to tempt, deceive, and make us sin against God and unfaithful to him. Jesus has defeated the devil for us by his sacrifice on the cross. Jesus has also defeated death for us by his resurrection. Although *the big war* has been won by Jesus, his people still have daily spiritual battles against the devil and his army (evil spirits) until Jesus returns to end all evils—without ending us (his true followers who have been justified by faith in him)—and to complete the work of his kingdom by renewing this world, uniting it with heaven, and making it a perfect, holy place for his people to live in with him forever.



To think about:

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world” (1 Peter 5:8-9). God has advised us to be careful of the devil and to support one another as a community and a family of God's people.

From the Bible



Ephesians 2:1-10

¹ And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— ³ among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. ⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— ⁶ and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷ so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Discussion Questions

1. When we were dead in sins, what did we do in our lives (v.1-3)?
How can our three enemies enslave us to sin against God if we are not careful?
2. How has God saved us from our sins and made us to be children of his kingdom (v.4-5)?
3. What else has God done for us in our union with Jesus Christ (v.6-7)?
4. Is getting saved from God's judgment for all our sins against him our own achievement? How should we behave therefore (v.8-9)?
5. What is God's purpose for making us new creations (new persons) in Christ (v.10)?
What are some of the good works that we can do together as God's people for others?



Notes

The devil (Satan): the leader of rebellious angels (evil spirits or demons).

Sober: to stay alert.

Vigilant: watchful.

Adversary: enemy.

Devour: to eat quickly; to destroy.

Steadfast: to be firm.

Trespass: sin; thought, word, or action that is dishonoring or disobedient to God

The course of this world: the sinful ways of our culture and societies.

The prince of the power of the air: the devil.

The passions of our flesh: the sinful desires we have.

Made us alive together with Christ: We are unable to believe in God because we are *spiritually dead*, separated from God and having no relationship with him. God makes us *spiritually alive*, helping us to believe and trust our lives to Jesus Christ when we learn about him. God unites us with Jesus.

Ephesians 6:10-18

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. ¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. ¹² For we do not wrestle [only] against flesh and blood, but [mainly] against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. ¹³ Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. ¹⁴ Stand therefore, having fastened on *the belt of truth*, and having put on *the breastplate of righteousness*, ¹⁵ and, as *shoes* for your feet, having put on the readiness given by *the gospel of peace*. ¹⁶ In all circumstances take up *the shield of faith*, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; ¹⁷ and take *the helmet of salvation*, and *the sword of the Spirit*, which is *the word of God*, ¹⁸ praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints.



Discussion Questions

1. What encouragement is given to God's people (v.10)? What do you think it means?
2. What should God's people do? Why (v.11, 13)?
3. What do God's people wrestle or battle against in their lives (v.12)?
4. What is our spiritual belt, breastplate, shoes, shield, helmet, and sword (v.14-17)?
5. What truth should we believe in (see John 14:6 and John 17:17)?
6. Whose righteousness should we keep putting on (see Romans 5:19)?
7. Why should we always be ready to bring the gospel (good news) of Jesus Christ to others (see Romans 1:16)?
8. What is faith (see Hebrews 11:1)? Who is our shield (see Psalms 28:7)?
9. Our helmet is the assurance of our salvation in Christ. How can we be assured of this (see Philippians 1:6)?
10. All the parts of our spiritual armor are to protect us against the enemies' attack, but our sword is the only weapon that can not only protect us but also attack our enemies back. What is our spiritual sword (v.17)?
11. As we face daily battles against our enemies, what should we always do (v.18)?

Closing Points

1. God, who has saved us from our sins and justified us through our faith in Jesus Christ, will complete our salvation by sanctifying us, making us more and more like Christ daily, and glorifying us, giving us a new heavenly body when Jesus returns to this world to complete the work of his kingdom and to end all sins and evils.
2. This sinful and corrupted world is the devil's playground. He wants us to play with him. He gives us temptations and tries to deceive us. He tries to take our eyes from focusing on God to thinking constantly about the things in this world. He wants us to spend more time playing with him—what he offers us from this world. We must be careful of the devil's schemes, this corrupted world, and our own sinful nature and desires. God has warned us, "Sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is contrary to you, but you must rule over it" (Genesis 4:7). We must always put on the armor of God and be prepared to fight our daily battles. When we resist the devil with the armor of God, he will run away from us (James 4:7).
3. The Bible is the Word of God, written by human authors over a period of 1,500 years under the guidance of God the Holy Spirit. It is useful for teaching, reproofing, correcting, and training us in righteousness, so that we, as God's holy people, may be complete and equipped for every good work that God wants us to do (2 Timothy 3:16). By reading the Bible and praying to God daily, we will be strong to defeat our enemies.

Notes

Armor of God: spiritual armor that Jesus wore in his life in this world.

Scheme: strategy.

Heavenly places: spiritual realms.

Withstand: resist.

Dart: arrow.

Supplication: request; asking.

Saints: God's holy people.

John 14:6

Jesus said ..., "I am the way, and the truth, and the life.

John 17:17

Sanctify them in the truth; your [God's] word is truth.

Romans 5:19

... by the one man's [Jesus'] obedience [to God] the many [his people] will be made righteous.

Romans 1:16

[The gospel] is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes ...

Hebrews 11:1

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

Psalms 28:7

The Lord is my strength and my shield.

Philippians 1:6

... he [God] who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

The Kingdom of God: The Kingdom for People from All Nations

Lesson 9 – The Fruit of the Holy Spirit in the Lives of God’s People

Opening Questions

1. What is one character quality that you would like to develop more in yourself? Why?
2. How do we overcome or defeat evil with good? Give an example!

Introduction

Growing in maturity is not easy. Most of us want to grow and mature, but it takes very long. We constantly battle with our own weaknesses. Biblical maturity is being like Jesus Christ. Being more and more like Jesus every day is our spiritual goal, and the key to accomplish this is to be *rooted* and *built up* in Jesus (Colossians 2:7). Jesus says, “I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing” (John 15:5). All true followers of Jesus are in union with him. We are connected or rooted in him, just as the branches are connected to the vine. We receive spiritual nourishment from Jesus through daily prayer, Bible reading, having a loving relationship with him, worshipping him individually and communally, and serving other people out of love for him and for his glory (great honor).



To think about:

How do we become like a fruitful tree that produces not just little fruit but much fruit that will bring glory to God as his people individually and communally? God teaches us, “Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked ... but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law [the Word of God; the Bible] he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers [he is fruitful]” (Psalm 1:1-3).

From the Bible



Galatians 5:16-24

¹⁶ But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. ¹⁸ But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. ¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, ²¹ envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. ²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. ²⁴ And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

Discussion Questions

1. What do you think “gratify the desires of the flesh” means (v.16)?
2. Why are the desires of the Spirit against the desires of the flesh (v.17-18)?
3. What are the works (the sinful desires) of the flesh? What happens to people who continuously live in these sins (v.19-21)?
4. What is the fruit of the Holy Spirit that is produced in the lives of God’s people? Notice that it is *fruit* (singular) and not *fruits* (plural). What do you think it means (v.22-23)?
5. What does the Bible say about God’s people—those who truly belong to Jesus and are in union with him (v.24, see also Galatians 2:20)? Why is this truth important for us?



Notes

Walk by the Spirit: live our lives according to the will of God and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Gratify: satisfy.

The flesh: our sinful nature that is still attached to our bodies and souls.

Under the law: Followers of Christ or God’s people no longer live under a law-keeping, enslaving, religious salvation system but under the grace of God in which the Holy Spirit has led us to saving faith and freedom in Christ.

sexual immorality: sex outside of marriage.

Enmity: hostility.

Strife: quarreling.

Fit: outburst.

Dissension: disagreement.

Orgy: wild party.

Galatians 2:20
I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Romans 12:9-21

⁹ Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. ¹⁰ Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. ¹¹ Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. ¹² Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. ¹³ Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality. ¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. ¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. ¹⁶ Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. ¹⁷ Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. ¹⁸ If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. ¹⁹ Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." ²⁰ To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." ²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.



Discussion Questions

1. God wants and teaches his people to be more and more like him—to love what he loves and to hate what he hates. What should we love and what should we hate? How should we love one another (v.9-10)?
2. Why should we not be lazy but be enthusiastic in serving God and others (v.11)?
3. Why should we rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, and be constant in prayer (v.12, see also Romans 5:3-5)? What tribulations may God's people experience?
4. What benefits are there in helping and showing hospitality to each other (v.13)?
5. What else shall God's people do in their lives as they learn to develop the fruit of the Holy Spirit in their lives (v.14-18)? As we try to do all these, how are the nine godly character qualities of the fruit of the Spirit developed together in us?
6. Why should we not avenge but trust in God who will make all things right (v.19-21)?
7. As God's people living in this world and producing the fruit of the Spirit in our lives, how do we personally and communally impact our society and the people around us?

Closing Points

1. The fruit of the Holy Spirit is one fruit with nine "flavors" or character qualities. Another interpretation is the fruit of the Holy Spirit is *love* that comes with the other godly character qualities. When we believe in Jesus and trust our lives to him, God makes us as a new creation (person), making us to be more and more like Jesus daily as we are joyfully being obedient to him, developing true love for God and other people. God is love. Love is the essence of God. God has created us out of love and wants us to be like him, being able to love others with true love that he has given us in our new nature when we are spiritually born again in Jesus Christ.
2. True Christians are in union with Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit who dwells in them. True Christians are God's children and will produce fruit of the Holy Spirit in their lives. Everyone will produce fruit, although some will produce more than others according to their obedience to God.
3. Showing hospitality and meeting the needs of others are acts of obedience to God's Great Commandments for his people—to love God and others. Those who receive hospitality and goodness from God's people experience the love of God for them and a foretaste of what God's kingdom looks like.
4. The ability to bless and pray for those who wrong or hurt us is a mark that we are true followers of Jesus Christ and children of God, having been impacted by the grace and love of Jesus Christ that empowers us to do the same for others.

Notes

Abhor: hate.
Fast: tight; firm.
Slothful: lazy.
Zeal: passion
Fervent: enthusiastic.
Tribulation: trouble.
Saints: God's holy people. All God's people are saints or holy in God's eyes.
Persecute: torture.
Haughty: proud.
Lowly: simple or ordinary people.
Avenge: revenge.
Vengeance: punishment.
Overcome: defeat; conquer.
Heap burning coals on his head: your kindness will make him ashamed and change him.

Romans 5:3-5

... we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

The Kingdom of God: The Kingdom for People from All Nations

Lesson 10 – The Joy of Jesus Christ and All His People in His Kingdom

Opening Questions

1. Have you ever done something for someone because it makes you joyful or happy?
2. What are some valuable material possessions that you currently have?

Introduction

We have learned that God’s people have three enemies: (1) the devil, (2) *the flesh*—our sinful nature that is still attached to our bodies and souls, and (3) this corrupted world. The devil always tempts us by offering things in this corrupted world and temporary happiness. Jesus warns us, “And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul?” (Matthew 16:26). Unlike the devil, Jesus offers us the kingdom of God, true happiness, and permanent joy by believing in him and trusting our lives to him by faith.



To think about:

How much will you help someone you love when a big trouble comes to him/her? Because of our sins and rebellions against God, we deserve to receive a death punishment. We are in big trouble. We are lost and cannot save ourselves. However, the Bible tells us that God loves us so much. Jesus came from heaven to this world with the purpose to save us. He was born as truly and fully man to take the punishment of all our sins on the cross as our substitute. He came to save us with the cost of his own life. He lived and died for us. That is how much he loves us. We are the joy of his life.

From the Bible



Matthew 13:31-33, 44-50

³¹ He [Jesus] put another parable before them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his field. ³² It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is larger than all the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.”

³³ He told them another parable. “The kingdom of heaven is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, till it was all leavened.”

⁴⁴ [Jesus says] “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

⁴⁵ Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, ⁴⁶ who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

⁴⁷ Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind. ⁴⁸ When it was full, men drew it ashore and sat down and sorted the good into containers but threw away the bad. ⁴⁹ So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous ⁵⁰ and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”



Discussion Questions

1. Jesus taught his listeners about the kingdom of heaven (the kingdom of God) with some parables. What is the first one, and what do you think it means (v.31-32)?
2. What is the second parable, and what do you think it means (v.33)?
3. How does Jesus describe the kingdom of heaven and the people who find it (v.44-45)? What do you think that Jesus wants us to learn from these two parables?
4. How does Jesus liken the kingdom of heaven and the end of the age (v.47-50)? What do you think Jesus wants us to learn from this parable?

Notes

Joy: an inner feeling of happiness. For God’s people, joy comes from trusting God and having a close relationship with him.

Happiness: an outward expression that comes because of pleasant circumstances.

The devil (Satan): the leader of rebellious angels (evil spirits or demons).

Parable: a short allegorical story or a sentence of comparison or analogy.

Mustard seed: a very small seed.

Leaven: a substance, such as yeast, to make dough rise.

The end of the age: the day Jesus returns to this world to: (1) judge all peoples, (2) end all sins and evil, and (3) renew this world for God’s people to live in without sin and corruption.

Gnashing of teeth: grinding of one’s teeth – a picture of *anger*.

Luke 15:3-10

³ So he [Jesus] told them this parable: ⁴ “What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it? ⁵ And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. ⁶ And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.’ ⁷ Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance. ⁸ “Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and seek diligently until she finds it? ⁹ And when she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.’ ¹⁰ Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

Discussion Questions

1. In Jesus' first parable, what did the shepherd do when he lost one of his sheep (v.4)? If you were the shepherd, what challenging situations and dangers might you experience as you did that?
2. What did the shepherd do to the lost sheep when he found it? Why do you think he did that? What was he feeling (v.5)?
3. What did he do when he returned home (v.6)?
4. What did Jesus say to his audience (v.7)? What do you think it means?
5. In the second parable, what did the woman do when she lost one of her coins (v.8)? If you were the woman, how would you “seek diligently” in a house with a dirt floor?
6. What did she do after she found it? What was she feeling (v.9)?
7. What did Jesus say to his audience (v.10)? What was Jesus' main point in his teaching?
8. How do the man and the woman point to Jesus himself who “sought diligently” and sacrificed himself to find and rescue us (his lost people)?



Closing Points

1. The kingdom of God is the most valuable possession that we can have. We cannot have it through our own work accomplishments but can receive it freely by God's grace. Because of our sinful and rebellious nature against God, we happily choose *the kingdom of this world*—the things that this corrupted world offers us. Only after God changes our hearts can we see the value of his kingdom and desire to be in it and have a personal and close relationship with him.
2. In the parables, the man (shepherd) would face dangers and difficulty as he tried to find his lost sheep. The woman's hands and feet would get dirty as she tried to find her lost coin. They point to Jesus. Jesus was willing to leave his heaven, came to this filthy and corrupted world, and experienced great troubles and pain. He was arrested, beaten, and killed (crucified). He sacrificed himself to save us. He died on the cross for the punishment of all our sins as our substitute so he can save us and bring us to his kingdom—our true home. We are lost, but he came to save us (Luke 19:10).
3. We are the joy of Jesus' heart. Knowing that he can save us by dying for us, he was willing to sacrifice himself for us. When we repent from our sins and trust our lives to him, there is a great joy and celebration in heaven. The angels join him in celebrating us as we become part of his kingdom family.
4. Jesus invites us to join him in searching for all his people who are still lost. He wants us to bring his gospel to all nations, until we find all our brothers and sisters scattered around the world. To be on mission with Jesus is our greatest calling and joy. One day, when he returns, we will have a big celebration as we all gathered in his kingdom.

Notes

Sin: thought, word, or action that is dishonoring or disobedient to God.

Sinner: someone who sins against God; a law breaker.

Repent: to turn away from our sins and wrong doings with true regret and sorrow and to turn our hearts to God.

Repentance (noun).

Silver coin: was worth a fair salary for a full day of work.

Grace: an act of mercy, kindness, or blessing from God to us with no consideration of our good quality or worth.

Luke 19:10

[Jesus says]
“For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

Gospel: good news. The Gospel is the *good news* that we can receive God's forgiveness and be saved from the punishment of all our sins by trusting our lives to Jesus Christ by faith. It is the good news of what Jesus has accomplished for us.

The Kingdom of God: The Kingdom for People from All Nations

Lesson 11 – The King’s Love and Prayer for All His People

Opening Questions

1. If you knew that you would die tomorrow, what would you do today?
2. Have you ever done something big for someone you love?

Introduction

The Son of God came from heaven, was born in this world, and was given the name Jesus. Jesus is fully and truly human and fully and truly God. Christ is his title, which means the promised Savior. Jesus is the Christ—the promised Savior that God has sent to save all his people from the punishment of their sins and rebellions against God. The night before Jesus sacrificed himself, he prayed to God for all his people in all nations.



To think about:

Have you ever thought about what was in Jesus’ mind on the night before he sacrificed himself to save us? He knew he would be tortured and experience great pain. In fact, he would experience hell on the cross, being separated and left alone by God. God treated him as a great sinner as he took all our sins, received our punishment, and died as our substitute.

From the Bible



John 17:1-11

¹When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, ²since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. ³And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. ⁴I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. ⁵And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed. ⁶“I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. ⁷Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you. ⁸For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. ⁹I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. ¹⁰All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. ¹¹And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one.

Discussion Questions

1. Jesus wants us to know that he is the Son of God who came from heaven to save us by sacrificing himself to die bearing God’s judgment for the punishment of all our sins as our substitute. What did Jesus ask God the Father (v.1)?
2. What has Jesus received from the Father? What does Jesus give to all his people (v.2)?
3. What is eternal life with God (v.3)? What does “knowing” someone mean?
4. How did Jesus glorify God on earth (v.4)?
5. Can you imagine the glory that the Son of God had with God the Father *before the world existed*? What would that be like (v.5)?
6. To whom does Jesus reveal who he is and who God is (v.6-8)?
7. For whom does Jesus pray this prayer (v.9)?
8. How does Jesus describe the unity and glory of God and his people (v.10-11)?



Notes

Sin: thought, word, or action that is dishonoring or disobedient to God.

The Triune God (the Trinity): one God in three distinct persons (**God the Father**, **God the Son**, and God the Holy Spirit). They are in unity and are equal in substance, power, and glory.

The hour: the time.

Glory: great honor and respect; praise; great beauty or magnificence.

Glorify: to honor.

Flesh: here refers to people.

Know: to have a personal and close relationship; not simply to know about.

Manifested your name: to manifest or reveal God’s name means to reveal the whole character and nature of God.

God is all mighty, all-knowing, present everywhere, holy, righteous, loving, forgiving, just, wise, and perfect. He has no beginning and no end. He does not increase nor decrease. He is our Creator.

John 17:12-26

¹² While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. ¹³ But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. ¹⁴ I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁵ I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. ¹⁶ They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁷ Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. ¹⁸ As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. ¹⁹ And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth. ²⁰ "I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, ²¹ that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²² The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, ²³ I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. ²⁴ Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. ²⁵ O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me. ²⁶ I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them."



Discussion Questions

1. Jesus protects his people in God's name and gives his own joy to us (v.12-13). What do you think Jesus' joy is like? What may be the result of receiving his joy?
2. Jesus says that he and his people are not of the world (v.14). What does it mean?
3. What does Jesus ask God to do for his people (v.15-17, 19)?
4. What do you think Jesus sends his people to the world for (v.18)?
5. What does Jesus ask God for concerning all his people in all nations (v.20-23)?
6. What does Jesus desire and want to have (v.24)? Why do you think he desires that?
7. What is Jesus' purpose to continue guiding and teaching all his people (v.25-26)?

Closing Points

1. This prayer that Jesus made to the Father happened on the night before he was crucified. The next day, he carried our cross—not his cross—and he sacrificed himself to bear the judgment of God for the punishment of all our sins. He died on our cross as our substitute. Jesus took our death to save us, so we can have a new life with him. By believing in him and trusting our lives to him by faith, we receive God's forgiveness, and the righteousness of Jesus is credited to us. God adopts us as his children, and we become God's people. God has brought us to his kingdom.
2. Jesus wants us to know that: (1) he has come from heaven to this world to save us; (2) he has authority over all people and has given us eternal life; (3) God the Father has given us to him and him to us; (4) he loves us so much and never stops praying for us even now in heaven; (5) he watches over our lives and guides us patiently; (6) he nourishes and sanctifies us by his word as we read and study the Bible; and (7) he always gives us his joy as we remain in a personal and close relationship with him. He knows that we will experience struggles and troubles in this sinful and corrupted world. He wants us to know that he is always with us. If he did not abandon us when he carried our cross and died for us, he will never ever leave us alone.
3. Jesus desires for us to be with him forever in his kingdom. He will return and renew this world, making it a perfect holy place for his people to live with him eternally.

Notes

Kept in your name (God's name): to be protected by God's sovereign power, wisdom, and love for us.

The son of destruction: Judas; one of Jesus' disciples who betrayed him. Judas loved money and not Jesus. He never trusted his life to Jesus. He was not one of Jesus' true people. He sold Jesus for money and destroyed himself by killing himself. He did not repent from his sin and turn his heart to God.

My joy (Jesus' joy): divine or godly joy that is unchangeable, and unaffected by any circumstances.

Of the world: God's people live in the world but not of this sinful world.

Sanctify: to purify; to make holy and righteous.

Your word is truth: The Bible is the word and truth of God. God's people are sanctified by God's word.

Consecrate: to dedicate to the service of God.

The Kingdom of God: The Kingdom for People from All Nations

Lesson 12 – The Return of the King to Make All Things New

Opening Questions

1. How do you feel when you get a new pair of shoes to replace the old ones?
2. Is it possible for all people in this world to live peacefully together—no wars, crimes, conflicts, power grabbing, jealousy, rude or mean attitudes, etc.?

Introduction

This world is not God's people's true home. We are sojourners in this world, and our true home is in heaven with God. We constantly face troubles and problems in this world that is full of sin and evil. We all face physical sickness and death. God has a plan to renew this world and to unite it with heaven, making it a perfect place for God's people to live in for eternity. God begins his work by remaking us, making us new creations (people) when we trust our lives to Jesus. He then makes us to be more and more holy like Jesus day by day as we joyfully obey him. One day, Jesus will return to this world to (1) judge all people, (2) end all sin and evil (3) renew this world and unite it with heaven, and (4) give a new heavenly body to all his people and bring them to their new home (heaven on earth).



To think about:

Jesus talked to his disciples privately in the night before he sacrificed himself to die bearing the punishment of all our sins on the cross. He said, "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also" (John 14:1-3). Why is Jesus preparing a place for us in heaven? Why does he want us to be with him forever? How much do we understand his love for us?

From the Bible



1 Peter 1:3-9

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, ⁵ who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶ In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷ so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. ⁸ Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, ⁹ obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Discussion Questions

1. What has God done for us by his great mercy (v.3)?
2. Once we trust our lives to Jesus and become members of God's family (God's people), what kind of inheritance does God have for us (v.4)?
3. How are we being protected until the day Jesus returns to judge all people (v.5)?
4. What is God's purpose of allowing us to go through various trials in this life (v.6-7)?
5. "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). How is our faith or trust in Jesus very important in our lives (v.8-9)?



Notes

Sin: thought, word, or action that is dishonoring or disobedient to God. Sin is also a powerful evil force.

The Triune God (the Trinity): one God in three distinct persons (**God the Father**, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit). They are in unity and are equal in substance, power, and glory.

Christ: Jesus' title which means *the promised Savior*.

Born again: we are *spiritually* born again when we trust our lives to Jesus by faith. God makes us a new creation (person) and spiritually unites us with Jesus.

Imperishable: cannot become bad

Undefiled: not polluted.

Salvation: deliverance from evil and sin. Our complete salvation includes our future glory, receiving a new heavenly body and all other heavenly blessings (inheritance).

The last time: the day Jesus returns.

Glory: great honor.

Revelation 7:9-10 ⁹ ... behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, ¹⁰ and crying out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!”

Revelation 21:1-5 ¹ Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. ⁴ He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.” ⁵ And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”

Revelation 22:12-13 ¹² “Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay each one for what he has done. ¹³ I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”

Discussion Questions

1. How many people will be in heaven, and where are they from (Rev 7:9)?
2. What will they be doing (v.10)?
3. What did John see in a vision from God (Rev 21:1-2)?
4. What did John loudly hear (v.3)?
5. What will God do for his people in the new heaven and the new earth (v.4)?
6. What does Jesus say from his throne (v.5)? What do you think it means?
7. What will Jesus do when he returns (Rev 22:12)?
8. Jesus has several titles including *the Christ*. What are some of his other titles (v.13)?



Closing Points

1. When we believe in Jesus and trust our lives to him, God spiritually unites us with Jesus. Consequently, Jesus’ sacrifice, death, and righteousness are credited to us. We are spiritually born again and remade as new persons in spiritual union with Jesus. God adopts us as his children, and we become heirs of God’s kingdom. We have *an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for us*. God begins the work of saving us from sin and darkness, sustains our salvation, and will complete it when Jesus returns by glorifying us—giving each of us a new heavenly body.
2. The *gospel* is the *good news* of what Jesus has done for us. It is not advice about how we should live our lives. It is not about us. It is about Jesus, his love and sacrifice for us, and what we can receive—not accomplish—if we trust our lives to him by faith.
3. Jesus is “the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.” He exists eternally. He begins and ends creation. “All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men” (John 1:3-4).
4. Jesus will return to this world to judge all people. He will end all sins, evil, and death. He will renew this world, bring heaven down, and unite the spiritual world and the physical world. God’s people will live with God forever in perfect happiness and holiness. All true followers of Jesus—*a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages*—will gather, joyfully celebrating what Jesus has done for them. May Jesus’ words comfort and strengthen us, “I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.”

Notes

Multitude: a large number.

The Lamb (of God): one of Jesus’ titles. Jesus sacrificed himself to save us.

I saw: John, one of the twelve disciples of Jesus, was given a vision of heaven in the future.

The holy city, new Jerusalem: the new city for all God’s people (heaven on earth). As the capital city of Israel, Jerusalem was “the holy city” and the religious center at the time of Jesus.

Adorn: make more beautiful/attractive

Bride, husband: a spiritual picture of a covenant relationship and union between Jesus (the husband) and his church (all his people) as his bride.

Death: Sin brings corruption, pain, and death to us. God wants us not to experience death anymore, but to live eternally with him.

Recompense: reward.

Alpha, Omega: the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet.

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