

Living Word Weekly Bible Study (November 21-26, 2016)

Monday: Matthew 13:31-32, 33

Jesus was a storyteller and He chose to teach by telling parables. In these two short stories Jesus describes the Kingdom of God. When we talk about the Kingdom of God we are talking about the way the world could and should be - the way God intended the world to be. In both of these stories, the Kingdom is described as something small, which grows and grows until it exceeds expectation.

Reflection Questions:

- 1.) Stories/Parables engage our imagination – what role does imagination have in the Kingdom of God?
- 2.) What do these parables make you wonder about? What questions do you have about the Kingdom of God?
- 3.) Where have you seen the Kingdom?

Tuesday: Mark 1:15 / Luke 17:20-21

In Mark, Jesus proclaims, “the Kingdom of God is here.” Some translations say near, or at hand but the idea is simply that the Kingdom of God isn’t just something that will happen but is something that is happening. Likewise, in Luke we see that people are trying to figure out when and where the Kingdom will arrive but Jesus tells them “the Kingdom of God is among you” - some translations even say “within you.” It would seem that not only is the Kingdom of God present now but it is inseparable from our lives and actions.

Reflection Questions:

- 1.) What do you think about the Kingdom being “among” or “within” you? What do you think that means for how we interact with others and the rest of creation?
- 2.) What do you think the Kingdom of God looks like?
- 3.) How should your image of the Kingdom of God affect your everyday life?

Wednesday: Job 4:8, Proverbs 22:8

These two passages are just a few of the examples of basic logic and wisdom. Job is widely considered our oldest biblical text and Proverbs is a collection of wisdom writings. This logic has been around for a while – you reap what you sow. I cannot separate our understanding of the Kingdom of God from this wisdom. If you participate in the Kingdom of God the Kingdom of God is what you will see and be a part of. If you do things counter to the Kingdom of God, it makes sense that you will be outside the Kingdom. What we do matters.

Reflection Questions:

- 1.) What do you think about this cause and effect understanding of faith? Is it comforting?
- 2.) This is a simple concept – why do you think people felt the need to repeat its teaching?
- 3.) What would the world look like if people understood that even the smallest of actions had great impact?

Thursday: 2 Corinthians 9:6-12

Following the same logic of reaping what you sow – Paul explains to the church in Galatia the spiritual logic of giving. When we share bountifully, we receive bountifully. This does not mean that God will give us all that we want and desire – but it does show us that we are blessed so

that we may bless others. The Kingdom of God is a Kingdom of abundance, not scarcity. When we share what God has given, everyone benefits and the Kingdom of God is strengthened.

Reflection Questions:

- 1.) Can you identify where you have been blessed?
- 2.) How can you bless others with your gifts, talents, prayers, service?
- 3.) Can you imagine a world in which people shared blessings openly? What would it look like?

Friday: Galatians 6:7-10

You “reap what you sow.” Our actions matter and carry with them consequences. “So then whenever we have an opportunity, let us work for the good of all.” This passage shows us that what we focus on in the present is what we will cultivate in the future – but it also shows us that if our focus is inward on ourselves that the future is less than if we had focused on things outside ourselves.

Reflection Questions:

- 1.) Why do you think focusing on self is detrimental to the future?
- 2.) What changes when we focus on others rather than ourselves?

Saturday: Matthew 6: 7-15

The Lord’s prayer is one of the most repeated and well-known scriptures. Most churches say it every time they gather for worship. Although this prayer is said often, its words are often overlooked. “Your Kingdom come Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven,” “forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.” The primary request of this prayer is that the world would become what it could and should be. There is also a strong emphasis on forgiveness.

Reflection Questions:

- 1.) What role does forgiveness have in the Kingdom of God?
- 2.) Why do you think this prayer is repeated so often and by so many different faith communities?

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