

# Jesus and the Kingdom of God

## Participant Guide Handout Sheets

If you're working with a class or small group, feel free to duplicate the following handouts in this appendix at no additional charge. If you'd like to print 8-1/2" x 11" sheets, you can download the free Participant Guide handout sheets at: [www.jesuswalk.com/kingdom/kingdom-lesson-handouts.pdf](http://www.jesuswalk.com/kingdom/kingdom-lesson-handouts.pdf)

### Discussion Questions

You'll find 4 questions for each lesson. Each question may include several sub-questions. These are designed to get group members engaged in discussion of the key points of the passage. If you're running short of time, feel free to skip questions or portions of questions.

1. Preparing for the Kingdom (Matthew 3:1-17; 4:17)
2. Fertile Soil for the Kingdom (Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23)
3. Pressing into the Kingdom (Matthew 6:24, 33; 7:7-8; 11:12)
4. The Present and Future Kingdom (Luke 17:20-37)
5. The Costliness of the Kingdom (Matthew 13:44-46; Mark 10:17-24)
6. The Spirit and the Kingdom (John 3:1-21)
7. Forgiveness in the Kingdom (Matthew 18:21-35; 6:9-15)
8. The Narrowness and Breadth of the Kingdom (Luke 13:18-30)
9. Serving in the Kingdom (Matthew 25:14-30)
10. The Call to the Kingdom (Luke 14:12-24; 9:57-62)

## Jesus and the Kingdom of God. Participant Guide Handout Sheets

## 1. Preparing for the Kingdom (Matthew 3:1-17; 4:17)

Q1. What happens when people adopt the Christian faith without repenting of their known sins? Why do people avoid repentance? What percentage of Christians today do you think are unrepentant, unprepared in heart?

Q2. (Matthew 3:5-10; Luke 7:30) How would John's baptism have offended a Jew's national pride? Who welcomed John's baptism? Who resisted it? Why?

Q3. (Matthew 3:11) What is the point of comparison between John's action and the Messiah's action? What is the point of difference? Do you really long to be overwhelmed by the Holy Spirit? What might prevent this in your life? What might encourage it?

Q4. Why is repentance so central to the Kingdom of God? Why is baptism important to converts to the King? Can Christ reign in an unrepentant heart?

### Key Verses

"They were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins." (Matthew 3:6, NIV)

"Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is near." (Matthew 4:17, NIV)

## 2. Fertile Soil for the Kingdom (Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23)

Q1. (Matthew 13:20-21) Why, according to Jesus' teaching here, do some people fall away so quickly? What is their problem?

Q2. (Matthew 13:22; Luke 8:14) Which of the thorns that Jesus mentions do you think is the most dangerous: Riches, worries/cares, or pleasures? Why do you think so?

Q3. (Matthew 13:23) Even good soil can have factors that hinder growth in various parts of the field, or make some areas grow taller and fuller wheat. What factors make a disciple especially good soil for the growth of the word or message of the Kingdom? What might be the reasons for 30-fold, 60-fold, and 100-fold growth?

Q4. What did Jesus intend the Parable of the Soils to teach us about the "message of the kingdom"? Why are these truths so important for keeping disciples from becoming disillusioned?

### Key Verses

"As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing." (Matthew 13:22, NIV)

"But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty." (Matthew 13:23, NIV)

### 3. Pressing into the Kingdom (Matthew 6:24, 33; 7:7-8; 11:12)

Q1. (Matthew 6:24) Jesus seems to make it sound like you can't seek wealth and God simultaneously. Does he really mean this? Is this hyperbole? Figurative? Literal? Can wealthy people serve God in actual fact?

Q2. (Matthew 6:33) What does it mean in verse 33 to "seek first his Kingdom"? What does it mean to "seek first ... his righteousness"? How can we both seek the Kingdom *and* support our families? What is the promise found in verse 33?

Q3. (Matthew 7:7-8) Why is continuing to ask, seek, and knock so important to prayer and to seeking the Kingdom? Why do we give up so easily? How do we gain boldness and persistency in prayer?

Q4. (Matthew 11:12; Luke 16:16) Admittedly, this is a hard passage to interpret. However, if you take the "forceful" or "violent" people as seekers who are doing whatever it takes to press into the Kingdom, then what is Jesus teaching us here about the nature of the Kingdom?

#### Key Verses

"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." (Matthew 6:33, NIV)

"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened." (Matthew 7:7-8, NIV)

"From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it." (Matthew 11:12, NIV)

#### 4. The Present and Future Kingdom (Luke 17:20-37)

Q1. (Luke 17:21) In what sense was the Kingdom of God present in the Person and ministry of Jesus? In what sense is the Kingdom of God present today?

Q2. (Luke 17:22-24) What do Jesus' words about lightning teach us about the nature of the coming of his Kingdom?

Q3. (Luke 17:24-32) What indications does Jesus give in this passage that he will suddenly come in his Kingdom without further warning? What are the implications of this for our attitude? For our lives?

Q4. (Luke 17:33-36) What does our passage teach about the separation and judgment that will occur when the Kingdom comes? How should this affect our lives? Our testimony? Our love for our neighbors?

#### Key Verses

"The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is within you." (Luke 17:20b-21, NIV)

"For the Son of Man in his day will be like the lightning, which flashes and lights up the sky from one end to the other." (Luke 17:24, NIV)

"I tell you, on that night two people will be in one bed; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding grain together; one will be taken and the other left." (Luke 17:34-35, NIV)

## 5. The Costliness of the Kingdom (Matthew 13:44-46; Mark 10:17-24)

Q1. (Matthew 13:44-46) What do the Parables of the Hidden Treasure and Pearl of Great Price have in common? What is the main point of these parables? How should it affect our values? Our lives?

Q2. (Mark 10:21) Why do you think Jesus requires the rich young ruler to divest himself of his fortune? Why does this trouble us so much? If there was no other way for the man to be saved, what does that say about the spiritual dangers of wealth?

Q3. (Mark 10:22) Why is poverty and self-sacrifice an inadequate religion? Why does Jesus ask the man to follow him? In what senses was this a great privilege that the man was offered? Why did he reject the offer?

Q4. What does Jesus teach us about the value and worth of the Kingdom? Why are we tempted to value it so little? What helps us to appreciate its true value? How might your testimony help a seeking friend to value the Kingdom more?

### Key Verses

"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field." (Matthew 13:44, NIV)

Jesus looked at him and loved him. "One thing you lack," he said. "Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." (Mark 10:21, NIV)

"It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.... With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God." (Mark 10:24b-25, 27, NIV)

## 6. The Spirit and the Kingdom (John 3:1-21)

Q1. (John 3:3, 5) What does Jesus teach here about the nature of the Kingdom of God? Does Nicodemus understand him, do you think? Why not?

Q2. (John 3:3-5) What does “entering the Kingdom” have to do with being “born anew”? Which do you think is the best translation here: “born again,” “born anew,” or “born from above.” Defend your reasoning.

Q3. (John 3:5-7) What does it mean to be “born of water and the Spirit”? What do you think “water” refers to? Why have you come to this conclusion? How, then, would you paraphrase “born of water and the Spirit” to best bring out the meaning?

Q4. (John 3:16) Why is this verse so famous? What does it teach us about God? What does it teach us about salvation? Since “entering eternal life” is a synonym for “entering the Kingdom of God,” what does this verse teach us about our destiny?

### Key Verses

“I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.” (John 3:3, NIV)

“I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You must be born again.’” (John 3:5-7, NIV)

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16, NIV)



## 7. Forgiveness in the Kingdom (Matthew 18:21-35; 6:9-15)

Q1. (Matthew 18:21-22) Jesus says we must forgive 77 times or 490 times. Should we take these numbers literally or figuratively? If figurative, what are they figurative of? What does this teach us about God's willingness to forgive *us* repeatedly for the same sin?

Q2. (Matthew 18:23-35) In the Parable of the Unmerciful Servant, what is the purpose of contrasting the huge debt with the small one? If we were to put ourselves in the parable, which debt would we owe? Which debt might be owed us? Why was the king insulted by the unmerciful servant's action?

Q3. (Matthew 18:34-35) Why does Jesus frighten us with his statement: "This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you..."? Is he serious? Is forgiveness (1) a learned grace, or (2) a foundational principle of the Kingdom?

Q4. (Matthew 6:12, 14-15) How could praying the Lord's Prayer become a curse upon a person? Is forgiving in order to be forgiven a kind of "righteousness by works"? Why or why not?

### Key Verses

"Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, 'Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?' Jesus answered, 'I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.'" (Matthew 18:21-22, NIV)

"Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors." (Matthew 6:12)

"For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins." (Matthew 6:14-15, NIV)

## 8. The Narrowness and Breadth of the Kingdom (Luke 13:18-30)

Q1. (Luke 13:19-21) What is the point of the Parables of the Mustard Seed and the Leaven? How would this be encouraging to Jesus' disciples who had expected an instant Messianic Kingdom? How might it be encouraging to people experiencing smallness or poverty in their lives?

Q2. (Luke 13:24-27) Why do you think Jesus characterizes the entrance to the Kingdom here as "narrow"? Why will many people "try to enter and will not be able to"? Why would people delay entering until it is too late?

Q3. (Luke 13:28-30) The great "feast in the kingdom of God" has guests from all over the world. Who are they? Who will be the ones "thrown out" of the feast? Why will they be excluded?

Q4. (Luke 13:18-20) According to these parables in this lesson, in what ways is the Kingdom small? In what ways does the Kingdom grow? In what ways is the Kingdom door narrow? In what way is the Kingdom banquet, on the one hand, large and diverse, and on the other, selective?

### Key Verses

"What is the kingdom of God like? What shall I compare it to? It is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his garden. It grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air perched in its branches." (Luke 13:18-19, NIV)

"Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to." (Luke 13:24, NIV)

## 9. Serving in the Kingdom (Matthew 25:14-30)

Q1. (Matthew 25:14-30) What do you think the “talents” represent? If you were to take an inventory of your “talents,” what would they be? What spiritual gifts have you been given? What abilities do you have? What Bible knowledge do you have? Where has God placed you in your community? In society? In your profession or industry? In what sense do these “belong” to God rather than to you?

Q2. (Matthew 25:15, 21, 23) What are the factors that make up a person’s “ability to carry out something”? What percentage of this is raw talent, in your opinion? Why are some who succeed not necessarily the most talented? What factors are keeping you from carrying out what God has entrusted you to do?

Q3. When we are successful, to whom does the fruit of our labors belong? In what sense are we independent entrepreneurs? In what sense are we stewards of the gifts and “talents” given us? How does the attitude of a self-made person differ from the attitude of a steward?

Q4. How do you think Jesus will hold you personally accountable on Judgment Day for using your “talents”? If you begin to be more faithful from now on, how do you think that may affect his accounting on that Day?

### Key Verses

“To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability.” (Matthew 25:15, NIV)

“Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!” (Matthew 25:21, NIV)

“For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him.” (Matthew 25:29, NIV)

## 10. The Call to the Kingdom (Luke 14:12-24; 9:57-62)

Q1. (Luke 14:15-24) In the Parable of the Great Banquet, who do the original guests represent? Who do the later invited guests represent? What does it mean to “compel them to come in” (KJV)? How might this sense of urgency apply today?

Q2. (Luke 14:15-24) In what way is the Parable of the Great Banquet about grace? In what way is it about judgment? In what way is it about evangelism? To what End Time event does the great banquet point?

Q3. (Luke 9:57-61) Why was Jesus so harsh with those who made excuses when called to follow him? Why is the call so urgent? Why do our excuses seem so trivial when offered to Jesus?

Q4. What does the call to the Great Banquet sound like when we extend the invitation to those around us? In what sense are we the servants told to “compel them to come in”? In what sense are we those who have been called to the feast in the Kingdom of God?

### Key Verses

“Then the master told his servant, ‘Go out to the roads and country lanes and make them come in, so that my house will be full.’” ( Luke 14:23, NIV)

“No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.” (Luke 9:62, NIV)