

the Journey of Discipleship

Lesson 1: The Gospel of the Kingdom

INTRODUCTION:

The gospel of the kingdom was Jesus' central message. Everywhere He went he preached, "The kingdom of God is near." In this lesson, we want to understand the message that Jesus taught and to align our understanding of the gospel with His teachings. Having understood Jesus' teaching of the gospel of the kingdom, we want to look at how the gospel shapes the way we live every day.

1.	How would you describe your current understanding of the "gospel"?
2.	Describe how you came to believe in the gospel -when did it occur? Who might have influenced you in your decision? What were the circumstances at the time?

READ MARK 1:14-20

¹⁴ Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, ¹⁵ and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."

¹⁶ Passing alongside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew the brother of Simon casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. ¹⁷ And Jesus said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men." ¹⁸ And immediately they left their nets and followed him. ¹⁹ And going on a little farther, he saw James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, who were in their boat mending the nets. ²⁰ And immediately he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants and followed him.

3. What do you think Jesus meant by the phrase "the time has come"?

4. What is the kingdom of God and what did Jesus mean by the phrase the "kingdom of God is near"? 5. What do you think it means to "repent and believe the good news"? 6. What are some of the things you had to repent of when you came to faith in Jesus (share what you are comfortable with for now)? 7. What did it mean for Simon, Andrew, James, and John to "repent and believe the good news"?

GOING DEEPER:

The kingdom of God is Jesus breaking into our world and reigning as King. It is seeing the work of Satan destroyed and the work or will of God established in its place. Sometimes it may be healing the sick or seeing people freed from evil spirits. Other times it may be people experiencing the Father's love or injustices made right. Every time someone comes to faith, the kingdom of God has come. There are too many expressions to list, but whenever things on earth are changed to look more like heaven or whenever God's will is being done, the kingdom has come! When Jesus said "the kingdom of God is near" it was an invitation to:

- 1. Experience the extravagant love of the Father
- 2. Experience a new identity as children of the King
- 3. Partner with Jesus and His authority to see His kingdom come in people's lives
- 4. Receive a kingdom that would last for eternity

In summary, it is an invitation to a radical new life and journey with God!

It is important that you begin the journey in the right way. Like any journey, you want to make sure you are going in the right direction. Jesus asks us to begin the journey with repentance and faith. Unfortunately, some have not understood this and have simply seen Jesus as a Savior and not a King. This results in people who are not really changed at their conversion and are still living their lives the same way they did before they believed in Jesus. They are living for themselves and are just waiting to die and go to heaven. This is not at all the gospel Jesus came to proclaim.

The gospel of the kingdom is a call to follow Christ as our King or Lord. He is indeed our Savior, the Son of God who died for our sins and who rose from the dead, but He is also our King. He requires us to leave our old life behind to follow Him. Knowing Him, building relationship with Him, learning to hear His voice, and becoming obedient to Him, now describes the new life Jesus has called us to live. Just as those first disciples responded with joy to leave everything and follow Him, we too take on that same attitude. There is no greater privilege on the earth than to follow and serve Jesus as King!

- 8. What is something new or most challenging aspect about the gospel of the kingdom that you learned from this lesson?
- 9. How have you experienced the kingdom of God working in you or through you? If you are not sure, please share what makes it difficult for you to experience the kingdom of God.

LIVING IT OUT

One analogy that has been used to help us understand what it means to make Jesus the King of our life, compares our heart to a house with many rooms. Each room signifies a place that we want to invite Jesus into to reign as King. We understand that the more He is the King of our life the more we will experience the kingdom. Look through the following list and see if there are any places Jesus might be showing you that He wants to be King in.

- The Study this represents our minds and our thought life. We all start the
 journey with many wrong thoughts about God, the world, and ourselves. We
 need to invite Jesus in to change the way we think and make it more kingdom
 focused.
- 2. The Dining Room this represents our appetites and desires. We start the journey with many selfish desires. We often want God to bless our plans and desires instead of asking Him to change our desires to fit His plans. We need to invite Jesus in to change our desires and make them like His.

- 3. The Living Room this represents a place of building relationship and friendship with God. We are not to just be servants, but close friends. This means spending time with Him and living life with an awareness of His presence. Do you regularly spend time with God? Do you invite Him into your daily life?
- 4. The Workroom or Office this represents our jobs and careers. We want to ask Jesus to lead our careers and to help us define success according to His plans for us. Have you surrendered your career to Him?
- 5. Recreation Room this represents our free time. Even in our free time, we want to be led by Jesus. Anything that is not pleasing to Him, we want to get rid of and form new habits. We will find that Jesus and the kingdom will always bring us the greatest joy.
- 6. The Bedroom this represents our marriage or desire to be married. It can also be our sexual desires that we want to be controlled by Jesus. If we are looking for a marriage partner, it is trusting in God and His timing to fulfill that desire. If we are married, it is asking His will to be done in our relationship.
- 7. The Hall Closet this represents the things we hide from others. Past sins, embarrassing moments, past wounds. All of these are things that need to be brought to Jesus so He can cleanse and heal us.
- 8. Transferring the Title this represents giving our life over to Jesus. We do not just invite Him into our heart as a guest, but we want Him to have full ownership over our entire life. Have you given him full ownership of your life?

MOVING FORWARD

1. As you read through this list, did any of these stick out to you as places that need to be surrendered or given over to Jesus?

2. Is there anything else that you feel Jesus is speaking to you about in regards to being the King of your life?