

# GROWTH GROUPS

October 14, 2012

**Matthew 4:17; Jeremiah 15:19; Revelation 2:1-5**

## **Conversation Starter:**

Have you ever found yourself looking forward to hearing someone preach, teach, present a subject and then found that you were a bit disappointed because what you heard did not live up to your expectations? What do you think that the first century Israelites were expecting to hear the first time from the man who presented himself as “the messiah”?

**Understanding:** In the early section of Matthew we have looked at how Jesus is presented as King sent from heaven and we begin to see this Jesus present a picture of the kingdom of God that was clearly different from what most people expected to hear. Jesus, the Rabbi, is clearly doing and speaking differently from what the people of Israelite would expect from someone who was sent by God. His choice of disciples, his miracles, and his ideas of what would please God, his teaching and his preaching would all raise eyebrows and cause people to respond to him in radically different ways. Some would follow him and proclaim him the anointed one from God. Other people would respond and be more inclined to say that he was a good man with radical ideas that would never catch on. Still others would prefer that he just go away or judgmentally decide that he should die for blasphemy. On the day that Jesus preaches his first sermon, people would come and here a message that was getting a lot of “air-time” in those days. The popular preacher, John the Baptizer, was preaching this same message and people were flocking to him, trying to discern if the time for the messiah had indeed finally come. People had heard John’s words when Jesus came to be baptized, “Behold the lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world.” Some had heard about the water that Jesus had turned into wine. So people come to hear this new preacher. What would he say? “Repent, for the kingdom of God is near,” Jesus said.

## **Questions**

1. What did these words mean to the first century believer? What would it mean to people, two thousand years later?
2. What do you think about the big idea presented by these few simple words? How are these words different or similar to what you hear preached in churches today in our culture? Are people turned off by such a message? Why?
3. Why should the kingdom of God being near spark this response from people? What do you think Jesus would say that we need to repent from to be ready for His kingdom today?

First Presbyterian Church of Maumee  
<http://fpcmaumee.org> Email [staff@fpcmaumee.org](mailto:staff@fpcmaumee.org)  
200 East Broadway, Maumee, Ohio 43537  
Phone 419-893-0223 Fax 419-893-0327