

# The Kingdom of Heaven

Romans 14:17 says, “For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.” Living in the midst of our world’s kingdom cultures, we sometimes find parts of our lives not submitted to the Kingdom of God.

Our hearts and minds can be so focused on the world’s kingdom, that we miss out on the righteousness, peace and joy of living under the rule and reign of Jesus. Moreover, being caught up in kingdoms of the world can cause tensions and divisions within the Body of Christ and distract us from our mission of bringing others into the Kingdom of God. In the Lord’s Prayer, Jesus taught us to desire for God’s kingdom to come and His will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. This week we want to focus on the truth that, in Jesus, we are called to live out the Kingdom of God in every moment and every aspect of our life on earth. Therefore, we must ask God to focus our hearts and minds on His Kingdom and reign, and not be hindered, deceived, or distracted by the kingdom cultures of the world.

## Worship:

New Name Written Down in Glory | Charity Gayle

King of Kings | Hillsong

What a Beautiful Name | Hillsong Worship

**Read:** Romans 14:1-19

## Discussion:

1. What does God’s word say about righteousness?
  - 2 Corinthians 5:16-21, Ephesians 4:22-24, Matthew 5:6, Matthew 6:33
2. What does God’s word say about peace?
  - Isaiah 32:15-20, Philippians 4:4-7, John 14:25-27, Romans 5:1-2
3. What does God’s word say about joy?
  - Habakkuk 3:17-19, Isaiah 61:10-11, John 15:9-12, Galatians 5:22
4. After reflecting on Romans 14:1-19, what does Paul mean by “the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking...”?
5. The Kingdom of God is upside down or radically opposed to the kingdom of the world. What are some aspects of our world’s kingdom culture that can cause division and hinder us or others from receiving and experiencing the righteousness, peace, and joy of God’s kingdom?

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## Prayer:

Colossians 3:1-3 says, “Since then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.”

Break into groups of 2-3 and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal where you need a course correction to live fully in the Kingdom of God. Ask Holy Spirit to show the places where your heart and mind are not set on things above and surrender those places to the lordship of King Jesus.

## Dive Deeper:

We are to live a righteous, joyful, and peaceful life internally and carry it externally. According to Philippians 2 and Colossians 3, what are some attributes that make for a righteous, peaceful and joyful community?

## Additional Resources:

[Gospel of the Kingdom - Bible Project video](#)

[What is the Kingdom of God? – Desiring God podcast](#)

[The Kingdom of God - Tim Mackie \(The Bible Project\) Sermon](#)

# PASSION & PURPOSE

Scripture describes numerous accounts of everyday people encountering Jesus and immediately dropping everything to follow Him. In their journey of following and watching Jesus' daily interactions with even the most broken people, these first followers were radically transformed. The more they witnessed the gentle and humble love of the Father in Jesus, the deeper they were drawn into Him and the more they were changed by Him. Jesus saw the Father rightly and perfectly exemplified Him in every way. Jesus intimately knew the Father's perfect love, faithfulness and trustworthiness and, in this perfect knowledge, was willing to fully submit and ultimately give His life. Jesus dwelt among us as a humble servant, and it was His perfect humility and submission to the Father that was key to fulfilling the purpose for which He came.

## Worship:

Raise a Hallelujah | Bethel Music

When You Walk into the Room | Bryan and Katie Torwalt

Firm Foundation | The Belonging Co, Cody Carnes

## Read:

1. **Philippians 2:7-8** “...rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!”
2. **Matthew 9:9 and Mark 1:16-20**
  - Although fully human, Jesus humbly walked in a supernatural reflection of the Father that deeply impacted the lives He touched, often upon first impression. The first disciples had an encounter with Jesus that compelled them to immediately stop what they were doing and follow Jesus.
3. **Acts 9:1-22**
  - Paul's encounter with Jesus resulted in a dramatic revelation with an immediate radical life transformation.

## Discussion:

1. Share with the group either your “drop your nets encounter” or perhaps your more dramatic “Saul to Paul” encounter.
  - Though most of us likely experienced something less dramatic than Paul's Road to Damascus encounter, we have all experienced highly impactful moments of revelation. In our daily abiding in Jesus, it's those moments of revelation that enable us to see God more clearly, which then draws us deeper into relationship and transformation.

# PASSION & PURPOSE

2. In your journey with Jesus, share an example of how a revelation of Jesus' heart resulted in a transformative moment that increased your passion to love and follow Him. How has that moment changed the way you live?
3. Read John 13:2-9 and Philippians 2:5-8.
  - What is the significance of Jesus washing the feet of his disciples?
  - Why is taking the humble posture of a servant essential to fulfilling our purpose in Christ?
4. As a servant of Jesus, what thing in your life is not yet humbly submitted and what holds you back from entrusting this to Him? What is a practical way you can submit this to Jesus today?

## Prayer:

Break into groups of 2-3 and Read Hebrews 12:1-2 together. Ask Holy Spirit to show you the things that still entangle and hinder you from fully pursuing the purpose for which you were created. Spend the remainder of your time praying for each other to be set free.

## Deeper Dive:

We are to live a righteous, joyful, and peaceful life internally and carry it externally. According to Philippians 2 and Colossians 3, what are some attributes that make for a righteous, peaceful and joyful community?

## Additional Resources:

- *Passion & Purpose: Believing the Church Can Still Change the World*, book by Jimmy Seibert
- The Chosen, "[The Calling of Matthew](#)" - video clip

# ENCOUNTER | DISCIPLE | MISSION

As followers of Jesus, we are called and commissioned to be a people who make disciples who **encounter** God, **disciple** others and live on **mission**, or live “EDM”. Acts 2-4 describes how the early Church truly lived out EDM in every aspect of their lives. Most notable, however, is the correlation we see between encountering God and being empowered to live out the “DM”. We see throughout scripture that encountering God is paramount and what empowers us to follow in obedience. In other words, we need empowering by the Holy Spirit before we can effectively go make disciples or live on mission. John 20:20-22 and Luke 24:45 describes how the risen Jesus breathed the Holy Spirit on his disciples and opened their minds to the scriptures. These empowering encounters preceded their commissioning to go and make disciples in all nations. One of the most notable events portrayed in scripture was Pentecost, described in Acts 2. This incredibly powerful encounter with the Holy Spirit radically changed the disciples and catalyzed one of the most dynamic and rapid periods of growth in the early Church. Therefore, we can clearly see that “E” is what empowers “DM”! Throughout the New Testament we can see numerous instances of the Holy Spirit empowering the Church to live out DM in a life-giving and fruitful way. Finally, in 2 Corinthians 5:18-20, we can see also that there is an overarching urgency for the Church to live out EDM.

*<sup>18</sup>All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: <sup>19</sup>that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. <sup>20</sup>We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God.*

This week, we are going to take look at how we can live out EDM in our Lifegroup community and powerfully change the world around us.

## Worship:

Our Father | Bethel Music

Yes Lord | Antioch Music

How Great is our God | Chris Tomlin

**Read:** Acts 2:1-4, 42-47 and Acts 4:23-37

## Discussion:

Acts 2-4 poignantly illustrates activation of EDM in the early Church, and that E truly empowers the DM! This scripture makes it clear that we must not rely on our own strength to sustain us, but instead repeatedly come to Jesus for fresh encounters to empower us. Jeremiah 17:5-6 admonishes, “**Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who draws strength from mere flesh...That person will be like a bush in the wastelands; they will not see prosperity when it comes.**” While Jeremiah 17:7-8 continues to say, “**but blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose**

# ENCOUNTER | DISCIPLE | MISSION

*confidence is in Him... [that person] never fails to bear fruit.” We can certainly choose to obey something in our own strength, and even manage to produce some fruit. However, our own strength will sustain us for only so long. We must instead realize that powerful and sustained obedience and abundant fruit comes only from empowering encounters with God and a surrendered heart to always say yes!*

6. Read 1 Kings 19:11-13 and Isaiah 6:1-8.
  - How do these two encounters with God differ? Why did they both empower obedience?
7. Now read Psalm 1:1-3.
  - What does this passage say about encountering God?
  - In what ways do we encounter God as a Lifegroup? Is our DM empowered by E?
8. Read Mathew 28:19-20 and 2 Timothy 2:1-3.
  - How do these passages describe discipleship?
  - What does discipleship look like for us as a Lifegroup?
  - Is our Lifegroup culture conducive to raising up disciple-makers and leaders?
9. Read 2 Corinthians 5:18-21 and 2 Timothy 4:1-5.
  - What does this passage say about living on mission?
  - What does living on mission look like for us as a Lifegroup?

## Prayer:

Break into groups of 2-3 and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal one or more of the following:

1. What He desires **encounter** to look like for you in this season.
2. What He desires **discipleship** to look like for you in this season.
3. What He desires **living on mission** to look like for you in this season.

Pray for one another to walk out in obedience what the Spirit reveals.

## Dive Deeper:

Study the Parable of the Talents in Matthew 25:14-30. What does this passage say about living on mission?

## Additional Resources:

["Witness"](#) – Bible Project video

# T H E C H U R C H

Me &  
Jesus

Life-on-Life  
Discipleship

Lifegroup

Church  
Gathered

Live on  
Mission

The word translated "church" in the English Bible is *ekklesia*. This word is the Greek words *kaleo* (to call), with the prefix *ek* (out). Thus, the word means "called-out ones." However, the English word "church" does not come from *ekklesia* but from the word *kuriakon*, which means "dedicated to the Lord." A more accurate translation would be "assembly" because the term *ekklesia* was used to refer to a group of people who had been called out to a meeting. Church can thus be described as an "assembly or meeting of called-out ones, dedicated to the Lord."

Scripture further builds out the picture of the Church by describing it as the "Body of Christ." We, as God's people, are the parts of His Body. Moreover, scripture also describes the Church as revelation of the "manifold wisdom of God." In other words, Church is a big deal!

This week, we're going to consider how the world's view of church along with our own personal views can contrast with how God's Word defines Church. Armed with biblical truth, we can then align our hearts and beliefs with God's perfect design, function and purpose for the Church.

## Worship:

*Christ Alone* | Passion

*How Great is Our God* | Chris Tomlin

*King of Kings* | Hillsong

## Discussion:

1. Based on your life experience, what thoughts or memories come to mind when you hear the word "church"?
2. In general, what do you think the popular worldview of church is today?

## Let's dive into the Word! Read aloud:

Romans 12:4-5

Revelation 19:7-8

Colossians 1:15-18

1 Corinthians 1:2

1 Corinthians 12:12-27

Ephesians 2:19-22

1 Timothy 3:15

Hebrews 10:24-25

Acts 2:42-47

Romans 16:15

# THE CHURCH

Me &  
Jesus

Life-on-Life  
Discipleship

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Live on  
Mission

3. How do these scriptures describe God's design, purpose and function of the Church?
4. Considering these scriptures and what we've already discussed, what are some misconceptions you've perhaps carried regarding the Church?
5. As a representation of Church, how does our Lifegroup fulfill (or not fulfill, i.e., where do we need to grow) God's design, function and purpose for the Church?

## Prayer:

As a group, take a few moments to sit in silence and ask Holy Spirit how you can pray for:

- The world-wide Body of Christ
- Antioch Waco and the other gatherings that make up the Body of Christ in our city
- Your Lifegroup to be a more Biblical representation of the Church

Pray together for those things! *At the end, break into groups of 2-3 and share and pray for personal needs.*

## Dive Deeper:

*His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. Ephesians 3:10-11 (NIV)*

1. What is the manifold wisdom of God?
2. How is this made known through the Church?

## Additional Resources:

[What Does the Bible Actually Say About Church Fellowship? | BibleProject](#)