



SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Week 1 February 19, 2023
“The Kingdom of God”

OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank you for Peter and his incredible testimony about Jesus. And thank you for John Mark who wrote all this down. Father, sometimes we get so caught up in looking for the application, inspiration, and direction when reading scripture, that we forget the big idea presented by Peter. So help us to not lose sight of the fact that your kingdom is near and that everyone is invited to participate. And help us to respond to this invitation by repenting and believing the good news. We pray this in the name of Jesus. Amen.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

Mark 12:28-34 (NIV)

²⁸ One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, “Of all the commandments, which is the most important?”

²⁹ “The most important one,” answered Jesus, “is this: ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. ³⁰ Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ ³¹ The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”

³² “Well said, teacher,” the man replied. “You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him. ³³ To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.”

³⁴ When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” And from then on no one dared ask him any more questions.

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INTRODUCTION

Many times we read the Bible for application, inspiration, or direction. However, there are times when the author wants to simply point the reader to a big idea - an idea that fits together with God's grand story. In the Gospel of Mark, he documents Peter's experience with Jesus that led Peter to believe in one big idea: the kingdom of God is near, and everyone is invited to participate. So how do we respond to the invitation?

In Mark 1:14-15 we read “After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. ‘The time has come,’ he said. ‘The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!’” Our response to the Kingdom being near is to repent and believe the good news.

QUESTIONS

1. What does the phrase the “Kingdom of God” mean to you?
2. How does the version of Christianity you embrace now compare to the version you were taught when you were younger?
3. Did the version of Christianity you first were exposed to emphasize membership in an invisible kingdom? If not, what did it emphasize?
4. Have you ever felt far from God? Why?
5. Read Mark 12:28–34 on page 1.
 - What stands out to you?
 - What is the connection between the teacher’s response to Jesus and Jesus’ assurance that he was “not far from the kingdom of God?”

FINAL APPLICATION

This week, attend an Ash Wednesday service* and publically ‘repent and believe the good news,’ with the imposition of Ashes.

**Asbury’s Ash Wednesday services will be at 12 PM and 7 PM in the Sanctuary. The 7 PM service will be live streamed at live.asburylv.org.*