



OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, as we gather today, we reflect on the words of your Son. His coming changed the world forever; his teaching still changes lives today. Help us to feel your Holy Spirit working within and through us. Guide us to a greater understanding of Jesus' teaching. Increase our faith so we can live out Christ's teachings for the transformation of our world. May Jesus' words change our hearts, minds, and spirits even as we invite others to hear the Gospel. Let your Kingdom come and your will be done. Amen.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

Mark 1:14-15 (NIV)

¹⁴After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. ¹⁵"The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!"

Luke 13:18-21 (NIV)

¹⁸Then Jesus asked, "What is the kingdom of God like? What shall I compare it to?" ¹⁹It is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his garden. It grew and became a tree, and the birds perched in its branches."

²⁰Again he asked, "What shall I compare the kingdom of God to?" ²¹It is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into about sixty pounds of flour until it worked all through the dough."

Matthew 13:44-46 (NIV)

⁴⁴"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.

⁴⁵"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. ⁴⁶When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.

SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Week 1 March 16, 2025
“The Kingdom of God is Near”

INTRODUCTION

The season of Lent offers Christians everywhere the opportunity to look inward and reflect upon our walk with the Lord. This year's we explore Jesus' "words that changed the world." We begin by looking at the repeating message of Jesus about the Kingdom of God. While we may vividly remember specific teachings or miracles of Jesus, Christ's teaching consistently invited people to see how the Kingdom was coming near and what the Kingdom was like via the parables. May our look into the Kingdom inspire us to narrow the gap between our world and God's Kingdom that is both here yet still to come. Amen?

QUESTIONS

1. What is your favorite quote? It can be from the Bible, favorite author, movie, book, etc. Why it is your favorite?
2. What are the first three things that come to your mind about Jesus? Are they sayings, teachings, miracles, concepts, or a combination therein? Where does the "Kingdom of God" enter your list? If it does not, why do you think that is?
3. Luke 13:18-21 (on page 1) describes the Kingdom of God in terms of small objects: a mustard seed and yeast. Both start off tiny but contribute to a wide-spreading plant and the key ingredient that make dough increase in size. How do you understand God's Kingdom growing from a small group of Jesus followers through today?
4. The Kingdom of God was described as coming, here, and still yet to come at Jesus' return. In what ways do you see the Kingdom of God on earth? How do you see the Kingdom of God partially here but not fully realized?
5. In our final passage from the Gospel of Matthew, the Kingdom is described to be so worthwhile that we would sell "everything" to attain it. What emotions do you think you would feel in a world that is completely in the Kingdom?

FINAL APPLICATION

The Kingdom was an intricate part of Jesus' ministry. It was the reality that he was brought to the world through his birth, expanded through his ministry, and continues on in the power of the Holy Spirit until his glorious return. As we reflect upon this incredible announcement, let us do our part to bring the Kingdom a bit closer to our world every day. By individual and collective efforts with our brothers and sisters in faith - empowered by the Spirit - may lives be changed; and our world too. What steps will you take this week to bring the Kingdom nearer?