

Week Four: What is the Kingdom of God like?

February 24 - March 1, 2008

A Bird's Eye View

Read Luke chapters 13 through 16. As you read, consider the cost of following Jesus and the cost of not following. What do these chapters show you about the Kingdom? About the King?

For the last few weeks we have been looking at the idea of Kingdom in Luke's Gospel. But what is this Kingdom like? How can it be explained? If you wanted to explain something to a friend or coworker, you could describe it several ways. You could use a PowerPoint presentation with bullet points explaining it; you could draw a picture or create a sculpture. But when Jesus goes to explain the Kingdom, he often uses parables. In this week's Vine, we are going to dig in to a few small parables describing the Kingdom.

Again, enjoy both the swift reading of the four chapters and the digging into the smaller section. Are you seeing any ideas that go all the way through Luke? How are you feeling about the time when you concentrate on a smaller portion of scripture? It is more work, yet it is worth the effort. Take full advantage of the privilege of studying God's Word this week.

*First Encounter***Read Luke 13:18-21**

What are the similarities between the two explanations of the Kingdom? What modern day parable could go along with these two? If you had to guess, what would the percentage growth be?

What do we learn about the Kingdom from these parables?

Does the Kingdom of God come with power? What kind of power?

How would these parables be encouraging to the people following Jesus in His day?

How effective are small pockets of the Kingdom? How can you be a small island of the Kingdom in the lives of the people around you? What kind of effect can your seemingly small act of service have?

Prayer Reflection: Lord, help me to see Your Kingdom more clearly each day. Help me to see how Your Kingdom grows. And help me, Lord, to see the places right around me where I can be a seed for Your Kingdom.

Second Encounter

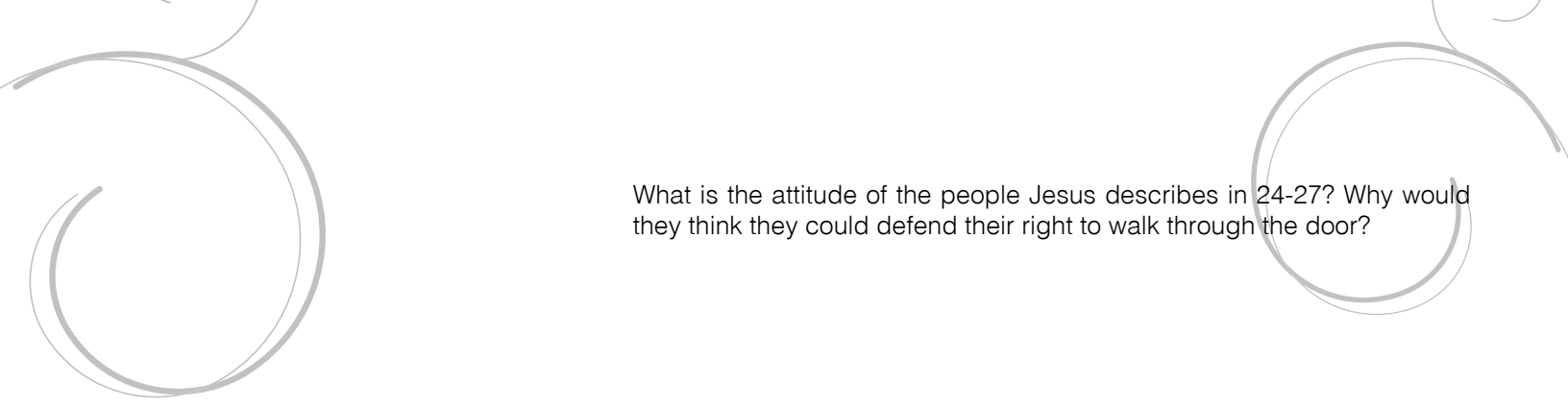
Read Luke 13:22-30

What would cause someone to ask the questions they asked Jesus in verse 23? Is this still a relevant question today?

Jesus is asked a “yes” or “no” question, but gives a more robust answer. The culture in which Jesus is teaching would pride itself on being hospitable. What about Jesus’ answer would shock listeners? How would you explain Jesus’ answer to a friend?

Why isn’t the door a huge door? What is the characteristic of the people who are at the feast? Who are not at the feast?





What is the attitude of the people Jesus describes in 24-27? Why would they think they could defend their right to walk through the door?

Prayer Reflection: Praise God for sending Jesus to die on the cross. Know that He loves you more than you will ever know. Know that nothing will separate you from Him. If you have never prayed and given yourself to Jesus, do so today. If you have, praise the Lord for your salvation and ask Him for more and more of the joy of salvation.

Third Encounter

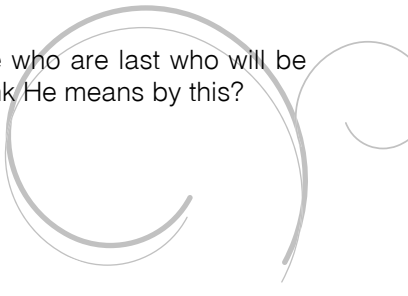
Read all of Luke 13.

What are some ideas repeated in this chapter?

What does repentance have to do with the parable of the fig tree in verses one to nine?

What does Jesus show about Himself in the healing in verses 10 - 17? How does this tie into the small parables in verses 18 - 21?

Verse 30 is the famous verse, "there are those who are last who will be first, and first who will be last." What do you think He means by this?



In this series so far, what are we learning about the Kingdom? About the King? About your place in the Kingdom?

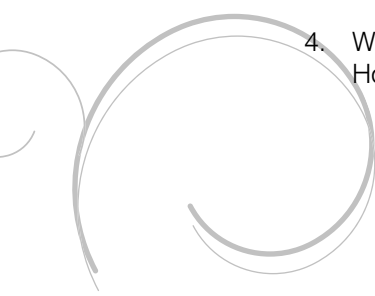
Prayer Reflection: Lord, prepare my heart for worship. Lord, prepare my heart for the King to have sway in every part of my life ... in how I speak, how I make decisions at work and at home and in how I spend my money and my time. Lord, take my small offering of my life and grow it into something remarkably grand.


Small Group Guide

NOTE: This is a guide. The following questions are designed for you to choose the ones that best apply to your group. Feel free to add to these questions or reword them as you prayerfully prepare for your small group.

Look at the parables in 13:18-21.

1. What is the best modern day parable that would go along with the concept here?
2. For the crowd listening to Jesus, what kinds of opposition would they face as the Kingdom grew? What kind of earthly Kingdom does Jesus have as He's telling these parables? How would these parables be encouraging?
3. What kinds of opposition does the Kingdom of God face in the world today? How about in your life and in the lives of those around you? How are these parables encouraging to you?
4. What are some active ways in which you see the Kingdom being like a seed or yeast around you? How can your group actively participate in the growth of the Kingdom?



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5. What do these parables teach about Kingdom effectiveness?

Look at Luke 13:22-30

6. Discuss why the door is not a huge door.
7. Some people who do not make it to the feast say to Jesus, “we ate and drank with you.” What is missing? What does it look like to know Jesus?
8. What gives people the impression that they have a right to get in the door? How can we protect ourselves from falling into that mindset? How would you make an appropriate argument to gain entry?

Spend time praising the King and asking where you can be most effective in the Kingdom.

Written by The Vine Team.
Email thevine@kcconline.org
with comments or questions.
We would love to hear what
you think about it. We are also
looking for people willing to
help create The Vine, so if this
interests you, let us know.

