

Thy Kingdom Come: The Path to the Kingdom

Reflect

1. When you hear the word “Christian” what do you think of?
2. What does “sacrificial love” mean to you?

Read Your Bible

1. Philippians 2:1-11
2. Matthew 16:21-28

Apply God’s Word To Your Life

1. Read Matthew 16:21-28. Peter loved Jesus and wanted to protect Jesus from the suffering He was going to face at the hands of the religious leaders, even though Jesus also told Peter that He would be raised on the third day. Jesus’ response to Peter’s desire to protect was to rebuke him, saying Peter does not have in mind “the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.” What are the concerns of God and the human concerns Jesus is referring to?
2. Where have you wrestled with placing priority on human concerns over the concerns of God in your own life?
3. Jesus tells His disciples that the path forward as His followers is to deny themselves, take up their cross and follow Him. In other words, practice sacrificial love. What does “pick up your cross and follow me” look like to you?
4. Jesus says, “For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it.” How can this be possible?
5. Read Philippians 2:1-11. In order to realize and live out Jesus’ call to lose our life for His sake in order to find it, Paul spells out what it looks like to find life through service and sacrifice for “the other.” What is one thing you can do this week to “value others above yourself,” putting someone’s interest/need above your own?
6. Paul encourages us to look to Jesus for our mindset in our relationship with one another. What inspires and encourages you most when you look to Jesus to follow in His path of sacrificial love?

Conclusion

The path of the kingdom of God is not the path of earthly kingdoms and empires, where self-interest and preservation reign. Instead, the path to the kingdom of God is sacrificial love. The path to the kingdom is through the One, “Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage” and “humbled himself by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross!” Jesus laid down His life to save the world, for the redemption and salvation of our souls, so that we may have eternal life through Him. It is the sacrificial love of God in Jesus that turns our worldly understanding of power and influence upside down. It is the sacrificial love of God that changes hearts and lives for eternity. It is the sacrificial love of God that can move us from our earthly course to walk on the kingdom path. To begin to find the courage to do something as radical as laying down our human concerns to pick up our cross and the concerns of God and follow Him.

Pray

Heavenly Father, You have shown us that the way to salvation and life is through the sacrificial love of Your Son, Jesus. We confess there are many times we lose our way. Help us to once again place our hope and faith in Jesus and trust in His promise that when we lose our life for His sake, we will find it. Reveal to us how to walk in the way of Your Son this week, loving and serving others the way He did so more people can know of Your goodness and mercy and You will be glorified. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.