

# COLLOQUIES with Pastor Brian

## What Does the Kingdom of Heaven Look Like For You?

<sup>1</sup> O give thanks to the Lord, call on his name, make known his deeds among the peoples.

<sup>2</sup> Sing to him, sing praises to him; tell of all his wonderful works.

<sup>3</sup> Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice.

<sup>4</sup> Seek the Lord and his strength; seek his presence continually.

<sup>5</sup> Remember the wonderful works he has done, his miracles, and the judgements he has uttered,

<sup>6</sup> O offspring of his servant Abraham, children of Jacob, his chosen ones.

<sup>7</sup> He is the Lord our God; his judgements are in all the earth.

<sup>8</sup> He is mindful of his covenant for ever, of the word that he commanded, for a thousand generations,

<sup>9</sup> the covenant that he made with Abraham, his sworn promise to Isaac,

<sup>10</sup> which he confirmed to Jacob as a statute, to Israel as an everlasting covenant,

<sup>11</sup> saying, 'To you I will give the land of Canaan as your portion for an inheritance.' Praise the Lord!

— Psalm 105:1-11

<sup>31</sup> He put before them another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field;

<sup>32</sup> it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.'

<sup>33</sup> He told them another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened.'

<sup>44</sup> 'The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

<sup>45</sup> 'Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls;

<sup>46</sup> on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

<sup>47</sup> 'Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind;

<sup>48</sup> when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad.

<sup>49</sup> So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous

<sup>50</sup> and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

<sup>51</sup> 'Have you understood all this?' They answered, 'Yes.'

<sup>52</sup> And he said to them, 'Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.'

— Matthew 13:31-33, 44-51

**W**e are continuing our discussion about Jesus' understanding of the Kingdom of Heaven throughout Matthew this week, and it made me wonder, "How have you viewed the Kingdom of Heaven?" For some of us, it is answered in how we see those we know or love passing from this world to the next. Thus the Kingdom of Heaven is that place we go to or enter when we die.

Others, including some of the very oldest witnesses of faith, considered the Kingdom of Heaven to be an environment we enter into when we are baptized. Thus, the Kingdom of Heaven is a set of values, practices and beliefs that we hold in the life of faith, and made full or perfect when we pass away fully.

Finally, there are modern scholars as well as ancient mystics who considered the Kingdom of God to be



both a mindset but also a mystical realm that might come near even without expectation or preparation. In this way, we become aware of the Kingdom of Heaven, but it then is all around us and we can practice seeing it for what it is, but without God's help, it might go unnoticed.

What do you think the Kingdom of God looks like? One of these? Some mixture of two, or maybe even all three? Maybe you really haven't thought about it?

Certainly, at times, I've thought about Jesus's teachings around the Kingdom of Heaven. But these last two weeks, I have thought more than a little about my mortality. And the question I kept coming back to was if I were to pass away now, would my children still know the Kingdom is near? Would they approach it? Would they find ways to participate in it, even if I'm not leading them?

I'll admit, this type of thinking isn't for every day as it is strong and serious and sobering and a bit dire. But all the thought and belief I have in God's Kingdom doesn't make a whit of difference if I haven't lived and guided in such a way that others know of the Kingdom and their very obvious place within it as well.

So, if you'll permit me, share this question with me? What does the Kingdom of Heaven look like for you?

Finally, I have a second follow-up question. If you have an idea of what the Kingdom of Heaven looks like for you, what needs to happen so that you can invite others?

As we consider restarting in the most unusual of times, I would love to ask our congregation to ask these two questions going forward and then ask God's inspiration in helping us decide what needs to happen so that we CAN invite others into God's Kingdom. I believe God wants us to enter. How might we share it?

Peace to you all in the days ahead.

Pastor Brian