

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Review the series on the gospel of grace because it is the prerequisite of this new series in the Sermon on the Mount.
- B. Jesus called his disciples to “Follow Me!” This took place in a different pattern according to rabbinic tradition than what was the “norm” in Jesus’ day.

19 Then He said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.” 20 They immediately left their nets and followed Him. Matt. 4:19-20

- 1. The first disciples to be called were Simon-Peter and his brother Andrew.
- 2. The last disciple added to the core group was Matthew.

9 As Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, “Follow Me.” So he arose and followed Him. Matt. 9:9

- C. Jesus selected his disciples after prayer and the leading of his Father. The norm in Jesus’ day was for the disciple to pursue his rabbi, not the reverse.
 - 1. A rabbi would put a prospective disciple through a grueling set of tests and questions. And if the disciple showed promise, and the rabbi thought the disciple able to live by his teachings, then the rabbi would solidify the appointment by telling the disciple, “Follow Me; take my yoke upon you.” A rabbi’s teachings were known as his ‘yoke’.

- D. Jesus did not call men and women based on what they could initially give but based on what he knew he could put into them if they sincerely agreed.

28 Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” Matt. 11: 28-30

- E. Jesus didn’t just come with a set of teachings. He came as the representative of the Father’s kingdom (kingdom of God). Jesus came not just to call us to a set of teachings but as we looked at last week to call us out of the kingdom of the father of lies (Satan), and into our true Father’s kingdom.
 - 1. In essence Jesus was announcing a hostile take-over of the general trajectory of human life (identity, behavior) on the earth, identifying it for what it was (lies), and shifting the spiritual power base back to his Father’s kingdom. A greater kingdom with greater power invaded the earthly kingdom of this age and overpowered it.
- F. Paul tells us in Rom. 8:15, that our bonded relationship to the father of lies (Satan) has been broken and we have been given the Spirit of Adoption and we recognize who our father is—God.

- G. From this moment of salvation, or adoption, we are brought into a new spiritual kingdom that impacts the earthly realm. Our spiritual lives are now radically changed and a new behavior set begins to grow by the power of God's grace through the indwelling Holy Spirit.
- H. Jesus identified this new spiritual behavior set in his teaching found in Matthew 5-7. It is more commonly known as the Sermon on the Mount.
- I. It is the defining teachings or 'yoke' of Christ representing the behavioural values of how to live as a Christian disciple (Christ follower) in this present age.

II. WHY THIS TEACHING AND WHAT TO EXPECT

- A. Jesus taught his disciples through living with them. This brings us into relationship with Christ.
- B. Jesus was introducing us to the value set of the kingdom of God. If you are a believer then this is how you demonstrate your love for the Father...this is how you put in effort with a relationship you value.

¹⁵ "If you love Me, keep My commandments. ¹⁶ And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever— John 14:15-16

⁹ "As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. ¹⁰ If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. John 15: 9-10

- C. Jesus was giving us insight into the dynamics of the Father's kingdom.
 - 1. As we live closer into the teachings of Christ, putting in effort to show how much we love God by how we behave, we find the grace and strength of the kingdom enabling and empowering us in this present age. We have greater connection to the pleasure God has for us because Holy Spirit enables our hearts to experience the love of God. Our confidence grows in the love of God.
 - 2. The farther away we live from the teachings of Christ, compromising or cutting corners in the name of "freedom or grace", the less we experience the empowerment of the Holy Spirit and more we must live by our own strength. Our confidence in God's love is weak and we question his love for us. Accusation attacks us and fear sets in. Passive faith (unbelief) begins to lead our lives instead of the empowerment of God.
- D. By walking in the Spirit, we demonstrate that we love God and are willing to change our lives for the sake of knowing God.
- E. The greatest purpose of God through living the teachings of Christ is to bring us into greater oneness with the Godhead, and deeper mature love. (John 17:20-26)

21 that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us... that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.” John 17:21, 26

1. As we seek this greater oneness and deeper mature love, God empowers us by Holy Spirit, and the spirit of the age resists us. Our bonded relationship to Satan the father of fear is challenged and God empowers us to overcome our bond to fear.
- F. Because God is seeking greater oneness and deeper mature love, fear is going to be challenged. However, as we lean into the grace of God and take the first few steps along this journey, God will empower us by his grace and we will begin to see an increase of faith, greater levels of grace and fear will dial down.

III. SEEK FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD

9 In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. 10 Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven. Matt. 6:9-10

32 For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Matt. 6:32-33

- A. The term ‘kingdom’ is used 308 times in the Bible. The main meaning for ‘kingdom’ comes from two words: *malkuth* (Hebrew-OT) and *basileia* (Greek-NT). In the NT, 90 times it is used as ‘kingdom of God’ and 41 times as ‘kingdom of heaven.’
 1. The *primary* meaning of **kingdom** is *the authority to rule, and the sovereignty of the king (moral permission)*.
 2. Power gives us the physical capabilities to carry out an action and authority gives the moral permission to act legally.
 3. Spiritual Realm – The kingdom of God (heaven) holds both the highest power and authority since it was this realm that created the earthly realm. What you create you have power and authority over.
- B. The “kingdom of God” describes the power (ability) and the authority (moral permission) to operate in any realm or place where God wants to be.
- C. The concept of kingdom. Every kingdom has specific elements that identify it as a kingdom. There are three main aspects of a kingdom that are primary elements defining kingdom.
 1. *Every kingdom has a king*. Autocratic, authoritarian leader who holds all power and authority. By its very nature, a kingdom does not elect its king. Kings are born into a royal line.

2. Every kingdom has a physical space for the king to govern. This physical space is land or property that the king has power and authority over to decide how best to use this space and its resources to advance his rule (domain or dominion).
 3. Every kingdom has people (subjects) who are governed by the king. The people under the leadership of the king are those who have sworn allegiance to the leadership of the king and seek his good.
- D. Paul tells us that the kingdom of God is “righteousness, peace and joy...” (Rom. 14:17).
- E. Jesus describes the grace empowered heart when he testifies of John the Baptist. Jesus was pointing to the grace of God made available to John the Baptist as he lived out his life in his generation. Jesus was telling us that John had the grace for radical decisions because of his choices motivated by love for God. This was John putting in effort and God empowering him with greater grace to help him.

¹² And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers [makes allowance for] violence, and the violent take it by force. Matt. 11:12

1. John got “violent” with his heart making radical decisions on how he would live in his generation.

² “Now, therefore,” says the LORD, “Turn to Me with all your heart, With fasting, with weeping, and with mourning.” ¹³ So rend your heart, and not your garments; Return to the LORD your God, For He is gracious and merciful, Slow to anger, and of great kindness; And He relents from doing harm. ¹⁴ Who knows if He will turn and relent, And leave a blessing behind Him—A grain offering and a drink offering For the LORD your God? Joel 2: 12-14

2. John’s love for God empowered his decisions and this grace enabled him to offer his life as a gift to reach for greater depths of oneness and love that God made available.
 3. Because these decisions were motivated by God’s grace empowering John’s decisions, the pleasure of God’s love rested on John, empowering him more and more.
 4. John became hungry for more of God, he devoured the word of God available in his day, and lived a clean life because cleanness enhanced his experiences in God.
- F. Jesus calls us to himself and is connecting us to our Father who is the king of a powerful spiritual kingdom that has yet to fully manifest on the earth. What has been made available now, we live out in this present age knowing that the fullness of God’s kingdom is coming in the future.

IV. READING THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

- A. For the next season read through the Sermon on the Mount often. You can find it in Matthew 5-7.

- B. James the brother of Jesus gives one of the greatest commentaries on his brother's yoke so please include the book of James as you read through Jesus' teaching.
- C. Prayer read. Pray it. Journal it. Create songs from it. Ask Holy Spirit to help you come under the leadership of the word of God.
- D. Ask for a spirit of wisdom and revelation. Eph. 1: 16-19
- E. Show gratitude for this teaching of Jesus. Agree with it. Ask for greater insight on how to walk it out in your life.