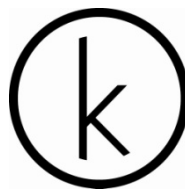


life groups' sermon guide

a picture of heaven on earth



LIFE GROUPS

doing life together

Life Groups exist at Kingsway to provide authentic relationships for the life application of the Core 4 elements of worship, grow, serve, and share.

“...your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven”

– Jesus (Matt. 6:10).

On August 31, 1997, the death of Princess Diana shocked the world. Spontaneous memorials were created in front of Buckingham Palace and at various locations across the globe as millions of people tried to come to grips with the tragic loss.

Lost amid the shadow of Diana's death, another woman died five days later. She was quite poor, and yet very rich. She had won the Nobel Peace Prize some 18 years earlier for her work in Calcutta, India and died in the leprous surroundings to which she had dedicated her life. Her name was Mother Teresa.

Ironically, we didn't hear nearly as much about the passing of Mother Teresa, because the news coverage was so saturated with stories of Princess Diana's death.

Q:: In what ways were these women similar?

Q:: In what ways were they different?

Q:: Why was there such a contrast in the coverage of each woman's death?

Discussion:

In her work in the slums of Calcutta, Mother Teresa represents both a mystery and an inspiration to the watching world. Why would anyone give up their life to do that?

Throughout this current sermon series, Pastor Matt has been emphasizing the idea that Mother Teresa demonstrated through her life. We the Church are God's chosen instrument for reaching the world for Him.

Being an active part of God's redemptive plan in the world is not option. For example, Jesus did not tell His disciples in the almost-Great Commission to “go and make disciples of all nations, *if you want to*, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey *nearly* everything I have commanded you” (Matt. 28:19-20).

Q:: What does the Great Commission mean? How might we apply it to our current day and circumstances?

Q:: How well do you think the Church here in the United States is carrying out the Great Commission?

Q:: What things may get in the way of our more actively pursuing the Great Commission?

How Big Is Your God?

In his book, *The Knowledge of the Holy*, renowned preacher A.W. Tozer poses the idea, “What comes into your mind when you think about God?...What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.”¹

Q:: What does Tozer mean by this idea?

Q:: How does our view of God affect how we live our lives?

Q:: For example, what might change in our lives if had a bigger view of God?

Q:: How would it affect our worship of Him?

Our worship of God is intimately tied to our beliefs about God. The tendency, for example, is to forget that we are created in God’s image, and instead, create God more in our image.

Q:: How do we see examples of people—even Christians—doing that?

Q:: How does this impact our faith?

Trust and Obey:

This tendency lends itself to the age-old challenge of TRUST. The reality of Trust affects virtually every area of our lives. That is why we’ve come up with the term “Back-seat Driver,” to describe the person who has trouble not being in control of the car. How many of us have suffered from this tension?

EXAMPLE: My cousin, a Commander in the U.S. Navy, used to be a fighter pilot, flying the F/A-18 Hornet off the aircraft carrier USS Constellation in the Indian Ocean. He described to me the challenge for pilots, if/when they are ever riding in the back seat of a two-seater fighter jet. Typically, in the back-seat sits the Navigator, while the pilot is in the front seat at the controls. There must be unshakeable trust for the Navigator in his pilot, that when they are quickly descending to land on a pitching carrier deck in the middle of the ocean, the pilot knows exactly what he’s doing in order to safely land the plane on a postage-stamp sized landing area. For our military men and women, unlike most of us, those trust-based decisions can mean the difference between life and death.

If it is difficult for us to trust those around us sometimes, how much more do we struggle to trust in an unseen God, a God who we only really follow based on faith? Is

¹ A. W. Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy*. (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1961), 1.

God really there? Is He really sovereign over this planet? Is He really good? Does He really love me and have my best interests in mind?

Q:: Why is it so difficult to trust God at times?

Q:: When are times in your life when God has tangibly demonstrated His power and goodness in your life?

The issue is SURRENDER. God asks us to surrender ourselves to Him completely. Nothing held back. Ironically, it is in surrender that we find true freedom. And worship of God comes naturally for us in such a state.

Q:: Practically, what does it tangibly mean to surrender ourselves to God?

Q:: Why is it so difficult for us to surrender ourselves to God?

Q:: How do we find freedom in surrender?

Q:: How does this idea run counter to what the world would tell us about surrender?

Q:: What would change in our lives if we really took Him at His Word?

Through that, God opens the door for us to be in a position of availability for Him. We are ready to let Him take us wherever He wants us to go. Then, amazing things happen!

Application:

We are God's hands and feet here on earth. We are the Army of the Available...if we are willing to be used by Him.

Mother Teresa was once quoted as saying, "The dying, the cripple, the mental, the unwanted, the unloved, they are Jesus in disguise." As we referenced earlier, that is the emphasis of Matthew 25. But, beyond ministering to the least and the lost as if they were Jesus Himself, we must also recognize that we too are Jesus to other people. The Church is the physical manifestation of Jesus in the world.

Or, at least, that was God's intent. Unfortunately, we don't always live up to God's (or, even the watching world's) expectations of what followers of Christ should be. But the last chapter of God's Story hasn't been written. We still have the opportunity every day to worship God by loving the people He has put around us, just like Jesus would.

In this way, we become a picture of heaven on earth...

Question for Reflection: When people see you, who do they see? Do they see Jesus? If not, what parts of your life might need to change?