

KINGDOM CALLING

Home Group Series

June - July 2017



*FGA MELBOURNE
MEMBER'S NOTES*

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OVERVIEW

Series passage: *"But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you" Matthew 6:33 (ESV).*

FOR THE CAUSE OF THE KING

INTRODUCTION TO THE "KINGDOM CALLING" SERIES

The Kingdom Calling series is a four-part series aimed to help us see God's call and pursue Him in every arena of our lives. It calls us to develop a vision for what God's Kingdom looks like in our personal everyday activities, within our family, in developing our own church culture and as we move out to bless Box Hill and the nations.

In Acts, the church was known as the "Called Out Ones" (*Ekklēsia*). Even though they lived among the world's religions and political systems (under Roman rule) of their time, they understood God had called them out to be something different. They were citizens of God's kingdom and only temporary residents of this world. They had a clear perspective and lived with eternity in mind.

Today, we are still called to have the same heart and live purposefully for the Kingdom of God. To be a place, a people, living in this time, yet operating under God's rule. Through this series we answer the questions, what does this look like? How will you live out your Kingdom Calling?

In addition, for FGAM, we want to take the time to further develop the vision God has for us to be that "light on the hill" in Box Hill. What does God's kingdom look like as it comes at this place and this time? How can each of us personally contribute to see this vision come to pass?

Rationale and linkage to 2017 Anchor Verse

FGAM's theme for 2017 is "Move In FAITH". The anchor verse for this year is taken from Acts 1:8 "...you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." (ESV).

The Kingdom Calling series will aim to revitalise our passion for the Kingdom of God and show how we are to be living a Spirit-empowered life for the Cause of the King!

Keywords: Kingdom of God • Eternity • Provision • Vision • Kingdom Culture

F.A.I.T.H. emphasis: Active and Personally Involved

Session 1: Kingdom Vision & Provision

What is the vision for your life?

Key passage: "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field." Matthew 13:44 (ESV)

A. SCRIPTURE READING (Matthew 13:44, 10-12)

B. MAIN POINT

This session challenges us to seek God for his vision for our lives and to act on what is necessary to provide for it.

Although the Kingdom of God was central to Jesus' teaching, we are not able to find a simple definition for it in Scripture. Rather, we see Jesus speaking about the Kingdom using various parables and illustrations that challenge the issues hidden in our heart. His aim is to transform our thinking so we can view life from an eternal perspective, not just be stuck in the here and now.

Today's passage pictures the Kingdom of God as a hidden treasure. The clear message is that God's kingdom is hidden from sight and we need to seek for it. When we discover it's true worth it will be easy to give up things we once considered valuable, because we want to own the better option (Phil. 3:7-8). Here, we are challenged not to let the good become the enemy of the best.

In Matthew 6:33, Jesus exhorts us to "strive first" for the Kingdom of God. This means having our vision for the Kingdom of God central to our lives, and creating provision for this to come to pass. Wishing for something to happen without planning and making allowances for it is simply wishful thinking, or even foolishness. We are challenged to be deliberate about seeking the vision of God for our lives and taking steps to provide for it.

This Gospel of the Kingdom is available and you can come right in and join in with it. Don't let it be exchanged for the gospel of minimal entry requirements to get into heaven when you die. This is a powerless, cartoonish form of the Gospel that falls well short of the intended message. The King is calling you to go all in for his kingdom vision. How will you respond?

C. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. Go around the Home Group and discuss what is your vision of the "Kingdom of God". What is the Kingdom of God and how does it play out in your life? A good test of our view of the Kingdom is the prayers you have prayed recently. How do you think God would evaluate them in the light Matthew 6:33?**

- 2. If we have a vision for the Kingdom of God in our family/household of faith, how can we provide for that vision?**

3. OPTIONAL: What are some of the challenges of committing to a vision? How can the fear of missing out (FOMO) affect the decision-making process?

Reflecting on Building God's House at FGAM (BGH):

FGA's building project is one of the tangible ways in which we are providing for the vision that God has given our church. It is not the be all and end all, and neither is it our primary goal. Instead, it's a means to an end. A place where people can come and find God, worship Him freely and be loved by Him. A place that will feed and nurture the Kingdom of God in the lives of all who go there.

D. APPLICATION

We ask you to take time between now and the next session to look at your own vision for your life. How much of it is building your own kingdom or building the Kingdom of God? Pray and seek God for his input into your vision.

Next, put legs on you vision (demonstrate your commitment) by asking God what are the next steps? Share your thoughts with one of your leaders or a close friend and follow through on what God shows you.

If the process of developing a godly vision or being able to discern if it is of the Lord challenges you, talk to a leader or a Pastor. Having your vision clear is essential to being able to commit to it and know how to make provision for it.

E. LOOKING FORWARD

In the next session, we will look at the culture of the Kingdom and what are some of the practical things we can do that brings the Kingdom of God into our daily lives.

Session 2: Kingdom Culture

What culture are you building?

Key passage: "For the Kingdom of God is not about food and drink but about righteousness [right living], peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." Romans 14:17 (ESV)

A. SCRIPTURE READING (Romans 14:1-17)

B. MAIN POINT

The kingdom of God is not theoretical. As we experience right living, it bears the fruit of peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Culture is a natural part of life. It is unique to each family, workplace, group of friends and even the local church. It is something that binds us together and reveals our values. Culture is founded on our history and is shaped by our current actions, thoughts and words. As Christians we are challenged to look at who are our primary influencers? And what culture are we building?

Jesus lived and breathed kingdom culture, and he taught about in a way that asks us to join in. When we seek the kingdom of God we are seeking more and more of him, allowing his presence to permeate everything we are and all that we do. We allow him to act and overrule, guide and help us. Seeking God is fundamental to building a personal kingdom culture.

It doesn't stop there. As we follow the Spirit's leading and biblical teaching, we make choices to live rightly and bear the hallmarks of peace and joy. In turn, this influences the culture around us. Living rightly is not in the mechanics of the every-day e.g. eating healthily or exercising often. It is going beyond actions to live in a way that expresses a right heart. Building a kingdom culture is to put legs on our heart posture.

If we are self-seeking, closed and manipulating we won't experience the liberation that living in God's kingdom can bring. There will be no joy and little, if any, peace. The person who has the easiest, the happiest, the strongest life is actually the one who walks in yoke with Christ. This is living in kingdom culture. This is what makes us a true citizen of heaven.

Stepping into the kingdom of God is a gift, but living it is a choice.

C. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What about the kingdom of God is different from the kingdom we are currently in?

2. What elements will build a kingdom culture in your home and in the church? (i.e. How will you create Kingdom Culture?)

3. OPTIONAL: Read 1 Peter 2:10-12. What does it mean to be a temporary resident of this world?

Answer Guide: It means that we live for a life beyond this time and place. Our whole life is not our earthly life, it lasts for eternity. The choices we make in this life will impact ourselves now and those around us, but also have eternal implications. By reminding ourselves we are temporary residents, we have a greater capacity to make choices that are wise and offer an eternal reward.

Reflecting on Building God's House at FGAM (BGH):

Places and spaces can have a profound impact on Culture. It can either segregate and distance or it can bring together and enable relationships. So much thought goes into the creation of a place so that it encourages the right culture. In developing the new FGA Building, we need to invest in things that will enable Kingdom Culture to grow. It's worth thinking about how we should be building that into our design.

D. APPLICATION

Be honest with yourself and with God today: Are there ways in which you have settled for, and Christian-ized, selfish living? Accept his invitation to developing a culture that reflects God. One that will show the fruit of peace and joy.

Will we be too busy building our own kingdom of self to notice, or will we be like Jesus and invite those around us to taste the Kingdom of God's goodness? Be encouraged to answer this question before God today.

E. LOOKING FORWARD

Next session we will look at the place for partnership in the body of Christ in building the Kingdom of God.

Session 3: Kingdom Partnership

How do we work together?

Key passage: "The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ." 1 Corinthians 12:12 (NLT)

A. SCRIPTURE READING (1 Corinthians 12:12-21)

B. MAIN POINT

The kingdom is not about going solo, but about building strong partnerships that complement and honour one another. This ushers in the Kingdom of God.

Part of God's design and purpose is for the church to live as a flourishing community. We were called out by God to demonstrate what God is like in the way we live and treat one another. This community is meant to exist in a variety of forms: sibling, parent, spouse, neighbour, friend, teammate, co-worker, as well as in a church community. This web of ongoing relationships requires us to live for more than just ourselves.

Likewise, the Kingdom of God is expressed in the church as a relational reality. It is a place where Jesus reigns, and we express that reign in the body by using the different gifts and talents God has entrusted to us. The infrastructure required for our ministries to function well, such as media and maintenance, are some of our hidden parts. Or perhaps it is someone who faithfully comes each week to connect with people after service, looking out for those in need. Today we ask, how do we honour those who are hidden?

As we live the kingdom of God in community, one to another, we create a culture with potential to transform in world with which we interact. Authentic transformation is only possible if we all contribute and demonstrate the practices and life that Jesus led. To do this, we demonstrate humility and honour towards one another, and those in leadership commit to serving others well.

It takes all of us working together to demonstrate the diversity and fullness of the Kingdom of God.

C. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are some of the key attitudes we can show one another that build up the body of Christ?
2. What makes it hard for us to connect and work with others in the Kingdom of God?

3. OPTIONAL: What are the weak areas of our Household of FAITH that need to be specially honoured and encouraged? (See 1 Corinthians 12:22-25) How can we support and encourage them?

Reflecting on Building God's House at FGAM (BGH):

The new church building will be a place that reflects the diversity of Ministries and Gifts within the Body of Christ. It will be a place where all different generations and parts of the Household of FAITH can thrive. This will mean that resources will go into areas that aren't necessarily your cup of tea. An understanding of all the different functions of our FGA household of FAITH is crucial in seeing Kingdom Partnership thrive in our church.

D. APPLICATION

If you are serving the body of Christ in some capacity know that you are appreciated and acknowledged before the Lord. If you would like to serve speak to your leader or a pastor who can put you in a place you desire to serve. Let us pray together "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

E. LOOKING FORWARD

Next, in the next session, we look at the place a building takes in fulfilling God's kingdom calling.

Session 4: Kingdom Place

The place for God's building

Key passage: "You yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." 1 Peter 2:5 (ESV)

A. SCRIPTURE READING (2 Chronicles 7:11-22)

B. MAIN POINT

The kingdom of God exists in a time and place. It is a place where people can come freely to experience God's manifest presence.

Places hold great importance for us as people. For so many of us, a place is more than just functional value. Think of your favourite place(s), maybe it's your home, your retreat, your coffee shop? What is its purpose and why does it hold such a special piece of your heart?

Places are important to God too, because it grounds us in reality. Think of our body as a place through today's verse, we are the "temple of the Holy Spirit" and "living stones in a spiritual house". If we have set aside our body as belonging to God, God's rule in our body becomes much more tangible and it begins to affect our morality, our conduct and even how we value our body. When we don't see that physicality as important, we begin to think we can do whatever we want physically with our body. In the same way, many, many other places can be made into Kingdom Places.

When a place is set apart for God (consecrated) it can carry the tangible manifested presence of God. However, this presence is only when (as seen in today's passage) God's people carry the Kingdom of God with them (His Rule). God's rule always needs a place to be located for it to manifest in reality!

What has happened in our age is that while we have moved away from physical places for God, but we have not moved away from physical places being important to us (read that carefully). So we have high value in property, buildings, favourite locations and even the most sacred of places (our body). But if it is no longer serving God we need to reclaim that. We need to prioritise the kingdom of God (seek it first), that means in all things and that includes people, time and place.

Let us make this place one that shines for God's glory.

C. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why are places important to the Kingdom of God?
2. What makes a place a Kingdom Place and how can you create Kingdom Places?

Reflecting on Building God's House at FGAM (BGH):

Building FGAM for the glory of God. Let us build 38 Lexton Road for the Kingdom of God. Let us also build our own homes as a kingdom place too.

D. APPLICATION

Let us have a considered response to this session. Some may feel uncomfortable with the discussion physicality and building. Let's be honest, we express our love for God and citizenship of Heaven by the way we treat things that are important to God. Let us be led by the reign of Christ in every area, whether that be spiritual, relational or physical.

For our building at 38 Lexton Road to be completed we need physical resources. Let us continue to be prayerful until we can joyfully consecrate this place for the glory of God.

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NOTES: