

Life of Jesus

Session 8: A Glimpse of the Kingdom

Here in the West, Jesus is a familiar figure to Christians, dominating Sunday School lessons and sermons since our earliest memories. Yet, removed as we are by 2,000 years since he walked the earth, He remains somewhat mysterious. Why did He come? What did He teach? What was He really like? We will be exploring the Life of Jesus in 21 sessions; the first 14 will focus on Jesus' life and ministry in the 1st Century and will end around Easter. The last 7 will focus on Jesus' life and ministry in our own century and will take us through the month of May. Let's experience the Life of Jesus together!

Deep Hope: May we, together, (re-) fall in Love with the Messiah as we understand, imitate, and experience the Life of Jesus.

PART I: Review

1. 1st Century Jews were living in the Promised Land, but under Roman Rule.
2. Many believed that Messiah would free Israel and reinstate God's kingdom on earth.
3. Jesus announced (and proved with miracles!) that the Kingdom was at hand—not an after-death reality, but rather God's rule breaking into our reality.
4. Jesus' miracles **show** what God's kingdom looks like, and the Sermon on the Mount **tells** what it is like! Jesus defines the kingdom as those who seek to become people of mature love (even for enemies) who trust God as Father, with singular focus.
5. The parables of Jesus both hide a revolutionary message from the hard-hearted, and reveal it to anyone interested.
6. Jesus loved those at the margins of His society—spending time with the sick and the sinners.
7. Jesus' disciples imitated Jesus' ministry in both preaching and miracles

PART II: A Glimpse of the Kingdom

1. What exactly is the Kingdom of God?
 - a. Jews thought it was an earthly reign of the Messiah free of _____.
 - b. Christians often think of it as _____.
 - c. We've been saying the Kingdom is where _____ will is done!
2. The Kingdom has 3 phases—Its _____ through Jesus' life, death, and resurrection; its _____ through His reign in the church and its _____ when He returns. Jesus often blends these three phases together into the single phrase "Kingdom of Heaven/God."
3. Big Idea: The transfiguration sums up the whole _____ AND gives us a glimpse of the _____.
4. Moses _____ God's people and gave them the _____.
5. Elijah _____ and _____ God's people and was the foremost _____, calling them to repentance and faithfulness.
6. Jesus is a New Moses because His death is a New _____ from slavery and His Law of _____ fulfills the Commandments.
7. Jesus is a New Elijah because He calls people to _____ and covenant _____. He offers a choice between serving _____ and exile.
8. Jesus _____ the Kingdom! His whole life and purpose is seen on the mountain.

- a. The shining appearance and Voice confirm His _____.
- b. Moses and Elijah are talking of His _____.
- c. The shining appearance foreshadows His _____.
- d. The Voice confirms He is the one chosen to _____ and _____ to judge the world.

Part III: Small Group Discussion Questions:

1. What have you thought of the Transfiguration story in the past?
2. Briefly review, as a group, the Big Story of the Bible. Can you summarize it in a few sentences?
3. Jesus doesn't appear out of a vacuum. He's the culmination of where the story has been going all along! Jesus rescuing creation from evil, sin, and death is what the Big Story is all about. Do you see the Bible as One Big Story, or is that still difficult for you? Explain.
4. Review together how Jesus is a New Moses. Make those connections!
5. Review together how Jesus is a New Elijah. Make those connections!
6. What is the Kingdom of God? It is where God's will is done! But what does God's will being done on earth look like? It looks like Jesus. Where do you see God's kingdom around you today?
7. How would you summarize your view of the Transfiguration now?

Part IV: Gospel Reading: John 3-5

John loves to give us intimate portraits of Jesus interacting with everyday people. Jesus' conversations with these folks reveal the kind of man—and God—He is. What are some of your favorite "portraits" of Jesus in the Gospels? And here's a strange follow-up question: Have you ever seen a movie that gave you an intimate glimpse of Jesus (even if it wasn't a movie that was supposed to be about Him?)

Part V: Spiritual Discipline #1 (Prayer and Fasting)

How did fasting and prayer go? Debrief with your groups! If you didn't do it, feel free to renew the challenge of fasting 1, 2, or 3 meals with the purpose of praying about a specific person/situation/problem in your life.

Prayer: *"Father, Your Son Jesus is all You want to say to the world. He perfectly demonstrates what it looks like when a human being surrenders to "Your Kingdom Come, Your Will be done." May we get a glimpse of Him this Lenten season. May we fall in love with Him all over again and be pierced with a holy longing for more of You and Your will, even if this means sacrifice for us. We know you bring life from death. Amen."*