



Week 4: Counter Counter Culture || How Nationalism Warps Faith

Ice Breaker:

What state/country/region did you grow up in? Share one thing you love(d) about it, and (if there is one) something you don't.

Group Discussion and Questions:

1. Share what stood out to you from the message, and discuss with your group how you understand the two kingdoms – the **“Kingdom of the Sword”** (power over / authority / coercion) and the **“Kingdom of the Cross”** (power under / love / heart change) that Josh described. **How do you see the tension between these concepts in our culture today?**
2. Scripture makes clear that God established authority – review 1 Peter 2:17, 1 Thess. 4:11, 1 Peter 2:12-13, Romans 13:7. **How does the “Kingdom of the Sword” co-exist with your understanding of God’s love for us demonstrated through Christ?**
3. What do you think of the idea that Christians should have a healthy skepticism of all “power over” kingdoms or leaders? What are some ways we can be **both skeptical and supportive** of authority? How can we keep from being manipulated, while still being respectful of authority?
4. As a group, read Matthew 20:25-28 and consider: Like everyone, Christians continue to struggle with thoughts of **greatness**, which **can blind us to the needs of others**. Think of one specific example of how you've seen this play out in your family, in the church, and/or in our culture.
5. Read John 13:3-8, 12-17. Jesus’ foot washing may seem extreme, but he was actually demonstrating His **willingness to serve others** in a very common way.

When we follow His example, it might look like:

- Taking on a menial task or accepting a lesser role
- Meeting others’ needs before our own
- Focusing on the results, not who is getting credit
- Not insisting on our “rights” or privileges
- Looking for a job no one else will do and doing it cheerfully

Which of these is **most applicable** to your relationships – at home, at work, with friends – right now? What would you **add** to the list? Is there anything about your service to others that needs to **change**?