

## Small Group Discussion Guide

### KINGDOM – Part 1 – Kingdom Growing

Northern Hills Community Church

January 15, 2012

Matthew 13:1-9; 18-23

This guide is to help facilitate discussion with our Small Group. Use it as a resource in discovering and owning the truths of God's Word. There may be questions you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions in some and cause people to dwell on their relationship with God. The purpose of this guide and this experience is not to complete every question. Use this as a flexible learning tool not a rigid task list.

#### Connect . . .

- How important do you think it is to have an understanding of the kingdom of God? Why?
- As a group, list words that come to mind when you hear the phrase, "kingdom of God."

#### Review the Message . . .

### KINGDOM PERSPECTIVE

#### ■ God is **KING**

*<sup>8</sup> God reigns over the nations;  
God sits on his holy throne.*

*<sup>9</sup> The princes of the peoples gather  
as the people of the God of Abraham.*

*For the shields of the earth belong to God;  
he is highly exalted! (Psalm 47:8-9)*

#### Discussion Questions

- The most basic idea of the kingdom of God is "God in control." God is the sovereign over the whole universe, but when sin entered the world a rebellion began against His kingdom. What is God's plan to make this right?
- Where are we in the history of this redemption plan?
- In what ways do we ignore the fact that God is King in everyday life?
- How can we be more intentional about recognizing the reign of the King and living for His purposes?

#### ■ Jesus brought His Kingdom to **EARTH**

*<sup>20</sup> Being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, he answered them, "The kingdom of God is not coming in ways that can be observed, <sup>21</sup> nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There!' for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you." (Luke 17:20-21)*

#### Discussion Questions

- Jesus lived a life of perfect obedience to the Father, in what way was the presence of Jesus himself the kingdom of God on earth?
- Think about how the kingdom of God plays out here on earth now. How is the presence of Jesus manifest on earth in our present time?
- How do others sometimes react to the idea of Christians advancing God's kingdom? By its nature, the kingdom of God will be misunderstood by those who are not a part of it, what does this mean for us?

## ■ Two choices:

<sup>13</sup> He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, <sup>14</sup> in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. (Colossians 1:13-14)

- Oppose God's Rule: remain a rebel of the Kingdom
- Surrender to God's Rule: become an agent of the Kingdom

### Discussion Questions

- What is our primary purpose as agents of the kingdom?
- What should our attitude be toward those who are still rebels of the kingdom?
- Discuss the idea of the kingdom of God being "already...but not yet." ...started but not finalized ...inaugurated but not consummated.
- When the Kingdom of God is consummated and history comes to an end, sin will be dealt with ultimately. How are we to live in the meantime? What should our perspective be?

## KINGDOM GROWING THROUGH THE TRANSFORMING POWER OF THE GOSPEL

## ■ Proclaim the Gospel GENEROUSLY

<sup>3</sup> And he told them many things in parables, saying: "A sower went out to sow. <sup>4</sup> And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path,... <sup>5</sup> Other seeds fell on rocky ground,... <sup>7</sup> Other seeds fell among thorns,... <sup>8</sup> Other seeds fell on good soil... (vv. 3-8)

### Discussion Questions

- Read 2 Corinthians 5:18-20. Jesus is the sower, but his mission of proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom has been passed on to us. Discuss this in light of the passage you just read in 2 Corinthians.
- How confident are you in the word of God to do its work when it is sown?
- What is the significance of the sower scattering seed so liberally?
- Do you find yourself sharing the gospel generously or sparingly? Frequently or infrequently?
- Are there people you assume will be less likely to receive and obey the gospel?
- Share a time when you saw a life transformed that you never thought would change.

## ■ Expect different RESPONSES:

- Hard soil – unresponsive hearts (vv. 4, 19)
- Rocky soil – superficial hearts (vv. 5-6, 20-21)
- Thorn-infested soil – worldly hearts (vv. 7, 22)
- Good soil – receptive hearts (vv. 8, 23a)

### Discussion Questions

- Read through the parable and Jesus' explanation of it in Matthew 13:1-9 and 18-23. Discuss the different types of soil/hearts, what are the distinguishing factors of each?
- As a group discuss different scenarios that you can think of that illustrate each type (think through real life examples that you've observed).

- Think through the condition of your own heart before you obeyed the gospel. Did you hear the gospel proclaimed and reject it at some point? Which soil best described your heart at that time?
- Which of the soils best represents your heart right now?
- When you've experienced one or all of the 3 "bad" hearts, what circumstances caused your heart to become receptive again? What is our role as agents of the kingdom to help prepare hearts to be receptive to the gospel of the kingdom?
- Read 1 Corinthians 3:5-7. Discuss this passage in light of the parable of the sower.

### ■ Anticipate **GOD-SIZE** results

*He indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty. (v. 23b)*

#### Discussion Questions

- The yielding of a crop or fruit is evidence of a genuine response to the gospel. Why do you think Jesus gave differing amounts of crop yielded by the good soil?
- If the gospel is the power of God (Romans 1:16) and the Holy Spirit causes transformation in the heart, what is our responsibility?
- When we sow God's word as indiscriminately and liberally as the sower in the story, what are we expressing about our belief? What does this commitment communicate about our faith in the power of God?

Spend time as a group praying that God would use us to advance His kingdom.