



“The Kingdom and Mountains”

Theme: The kingdom of heaven in the gospel of Matthew

Sermon Scripture: Matthew 9:35-38

Family Activity for the Week

What you will need: two sheets of blank paper per person and coloring utensils

Have everyone in your family draw a picture of what they think the kingdom of heaven is like. At the end of this week, after you have read about what the gospel of Matthew says about it, have everyone draw an updated picture on a new sheet of paper of what they think the kingdom of heaven is like. Place the two drawings next to each other and have a discussion about any updates and differences between the two!

Monday, March 30 – Read Matthew chapter 17.

- ▲ Give special attention to Matthew 17:14-21. This is a story of a father, desperate to help his son who is very sick. The disciples have become complacent in their faith and have not leaned into the authority God gave them to heal the sick. They are rebuked for their lack of faith. This story mentions a mustard seed, just like in Matthew 13:31. Even the smallest, mustard seed sized amount of faith in God is promised to bear enormous fruit. In this case, the fruit of the father’s faith was the miraculous healing of his epileptic son.
- ▲ The kingdom of heaven broke into this world when Jesus used his divine authority to heal the epileptic boy. In that moment, heavenly and earthly realms were one.

Prayer: *God of heaven and earth, allow me to lean into my faith during this season. Partnering with you makes the impossible possible. Help me to not be complacent in my relationship with you but to confidently approach you every day with the desires of my heart. Amen.*

Tuesday, March 31 – Read Matthew chapter 18.

- ▲ “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of God?” the disciples asked (v. 1). You’ve probably heard this question before. Your kids might ask “who is your favorite child?” or you may have had a friend ask, “who is your best friend?” These questions stem from insecurity. Jesus’ response to the disciples is shocking. Rather than comforting them by saying something like, “you’re all my favorites!” he instead confronts them.
- ▲ This confrontation comes in the form of a child. While the disciples were concerned about who had the highest value amongst them, Jesus placed a young person who had next to no value in that society in their midst. Jesus was inviting them to move from ‘competing against’ to ‘inviting into.’ While they were competing to be best in the kingdom of heaven, they failed to invite young people into the fold. The kingdom of heaven is not for the self-important and self-absorbed. It is for those who never expected the invitation- like the child- in the first place.

Prayer: *God of all, confront everything within me that places my own worth above my neighbors. Thank you for encouraging me to grow in my love of others and you every single day. Amen.*

Wednesday, April 1 – Read Matthew chapter 19.

- ▲ Give special attention to Matthew 19:13-15. This story lends an image that has become one of the most beloved images in Christianity. You know the painting- it has a child sitting on Jesus' lap with other children gathered around. If you are drawing a blank, google "Jesus and the Little Children" by Vogel von Vogelstein.
- ▲ Remember the popular children's song "Jesus Love Me?" It goes like this: Jesus loves me! This I know, for the Bible tells me so. Little ones to him belong; They are weak, but he is strong.
- ▲ This song is telling of why Jesus is so adamant that children are destined for the kingdom of heaven. They openly acknowledge themselves as weak and dependent on the love of Jesus. Hallelujah.

Prayer: *Lord of love, thank you for loving me unconditionally. I am weak, but you are so strong. Thank you for always interceding for me in love. Amen.*

Thursday, April 2– Read Matthew chapter 20.

- ▲ "That's not fair!" How many times have you heard this in your life? Well, this story is knocking that phrase off its feet. Using the metaphor of laborers of a vineyard, Jesus says that what is 'fair' in the kingdom of heaven will violate our logic and leave us disoriented. This parable is encouraging us to stop asking for what is fair and to start asking for what is holy.
- ▲ This parable pairs well with the story of the prodigal son. The response to and welcoming of others isn't dependent upon their actions. It's dependent upon reflecting the love of God that knows no bounds or limits. The kingdom of heaven looks like a life lived with love that knows no bounds.

Prayer: *Dear God, thank you for always extending grace and mercy to me. You don't give me what I deserve- you give me better. Help me to extend this same grace and mercy to others every day. Amen.*

Friday, April 3– Read Part I (attached below) of kingdom of heaven references in the gospel of Matthew.

- ▲ Which scriptures about the kingdom of heaven were the most challenging?
- ▲ Which scriptures did you find comforting and encouraging?
- ▲ In what ways do these scriptures influence how you imagine heaven?

Prayer: *God in heaven, allow my life to be like a seed that is planted in good soil. May my actions bear fruit for the kingdom of God and may I let go of what I imagine heaven to be like in order to receive the image of the heaven you have given us. May your kingdom come, and your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.*

Saturday, April 4 – Read Part II (attached below) of kingdom of heaven references in the gospel of Matthew.

- ▲ Which of the parables best helped you grasp what the kingdom of heaven is like?
- ▲ If you were to add a parable of Jesus to help others understand what the kingdom of heaven is like, what would it be about?
- ▲ Do you live your life as if heaven is an urgent matter?

Prayer: *Dear God, light a fire in my soul. Don't allow me to be complacent in my faith. Help me develop a servant's heart that is eager to invite others into the faith. Thank you for keeping your promises to me always. Amen.*

Part I

Matthew 3:2- the coming kingdom of heaven is a call to repentance

Matthew 4:8- worldly kingdoms are a human temptation

Matthew 5:3- the kingdom of heaven is for the poor in spirit

Matthew 5:10- the kingdom of heaven is for those persecuted for righteousness

Matthew 5:19- those who are 'great' in the kingdom of heaven practice and teach God's commands and those who do not are called 'least'

Matthew 5:20- the kingdom of heaven is for those more righteous than the pharisees and teachers of the law

Matthew 6:10- (Lord's Prayer) God's will is done in heaven, the kingdom of heaven is invited into the realm of earth along with God's will

Matthew 7:21- the kingdom of heaven is for those who follow the will of God, calling upon God's name won't get you into heaven

Matthew 8:11- many will enter the kingdom of God and they will be from all different geographical locations

Matthew 8:12- some Jews will not enter the kingdom of heaven

Matthew 9:35- the kingdom of heaven in the primary proclamation of Jesus

Matthew 10:7- the dawning kingdom of heaven was the commanded proclamation of the disciples

Matthew 11:11- John the Baptist is lower than the persons who make themselves least

Matthew 11:12- the kingdom of heaven is subject to opposition

Matthew 12:25- divided kingdoms will fall- a call to unification

Matthew 12:26- division within oneself will cause a person to fall

Matthew 12:28- the powerful work of God is the kingdom of God- the kingdom of God can come upon us in the earthly realm

Matthew 13:11- there are 'secrets' about the kingdom of God that are revealed to some

Matthew 13:19- hearing without understanding will keep us from knowing about the kingdom in our hearts

Matthew 13:24- the kingdom of heaven= good seed sown in a field

Matthew 13:31- the kingdom of heaven= mustard seed

Matthew 13:33- the kingdom of heaven= yeast that makes good dough

Matthew 13:38- the people of the kingdom of heaven= seeds sown in field

People who are not of the kingdom of heaven= weeds

Part II

Matthew 13:41- those who cause sin and do evil will be weeded out of the kingdom

Matthew 13:43- the righteous shine in the kingdom of God- a call to listening and hearing

Matthew 13:44- the kingdom of heaven= treasure hidden in a field

Matthew 13:45- the kingdom of heaven= a merchant searching for fine pearls

Matthew 13:47- the kingdom of heaven= a net let down that catches a variety of fish

Matthew 13:52- disciples of the kingdom of God= owning a home with old and new treasures

Matthew 16:19- the disciples are gifted keys to the kingdom: what they deem lawful and unlawful on earth is reciprocated under the authority of God in heaven

Matthew 16:28- the son of man will return in the kingdom; some will die before that happens

Matthew 18:1- there is a human desire to be first in the kingdom of God

Matthew 18:3- we must become like children to enter the kingdom of God

Matthew 18:4- lowly positions on earth (like children) = great in the kingdom of God

Matthew 18:23- the kingdom of God= a king settling accounts with servants

Matthew 19:12- some will choose to be celibate for the kingdom of heaven, this should be accepted

Matthew 19:14- the kingdom of God is for little children

Matthew 19:23- the kingdom of heaven= hard for rich to enter

Matthew 19:24- next to impossible for the rich to enter the kingdom of heaven

(Message Notes and Meditation Moments for March 28-29, 2020 – For more, go to www.summitdurango.org)

Matthew 20:1- the kingdom of heaven= landowner who seeks workers early for the vineyard
Matthew 20:21- mother pleads for her sons to sit next to God in the kingdom of heaven
Matthew 21:31- tax collectors and prostitutes enter the kingdom of God ahead of some who perceive themselves as correct and righteous
Matthew 21:43- kingdom of God is not for those who don't produce fruit
Matthew 22:2- kingdom of God= king who prepared a wedding feast for son
Matthew 23:13- false teachers keep themselves and others from the kingdom of heaven
Matthew 24:7- earthly and divine kingdoms will battle
Matthew 24:14- the gospel of heaven is a testimony for all nations
Matthew 25:1- the kingdom of heaven is urgent- it wastes no time
Matthew 25:34- the kingdom of heaven in the inheritance of the faithful
Matthew 26:29- communion is potentially practiced in the kingdom of heaven- in other words God's promise endures into eternity