

CELL NOTES
For Pete Osborne's talk on 8 June 2008
'The Way of the Kingdom'

Matt 13:44

The Parable of the Treasure

Jesus used parables to communicate something different.

In talking about the Kingdom of God he was contrasting it with both the ideas the Jews had about the Kingdom; and the mighty Kingdom of Caesar.

At the time the disciples could not understand why Jesus had to go to the cross. To them it was failure, defeat. Their temptation was to use the ways of the world (power, violence) to achieve the aims of the Kingdom of God (see Matt 16:21-28, 1 Cor 1:18).

When Jesus talks about the Kingdom of God, he is talking about a completely new way of living – one orientated around God, and one that is in line with the ways and character of God. He calls us to not merely 'put on new clothes', but to be 'reborn' – complete transformation from the inside out.

A temptation for us is to avoid this transformation, and settle for a 'Christian-coated' existence (i.e. one that is the same at its heart, but with a different external appearance).

To enter God's Kingdom, we must wholeheartedly embrace it. As in the parable of the hidden treasure, it is all or nothing – we cannot sit on the fence, or dip our toe in the water. We cannot 'serve two masters' (Matt 6:24). To do that we must grasp a vision of God's Kingdom – something that will sustain us through difficult times.

We must also not look for God's Kingdom in the way the world does – it is not to be found in money, power or fame – but in the hidden places that the world ignores.

I believe in a kingdom where people do not trample over each other to get to the top.

I believe in a kingdom where money is not the ultimate prize.

I believe in a kingdom where the natural world is not exploited in the pursuit of profit.

I believe in a kingdom where healings and miracles are more common than disease and death.

I believe in a kingdom where the least are not left till last.

I believe in a kingdom with wide nets that reach out to everyone.

I believe in a kingdom where those who trust in God are considered wise.

I believe in a kingdom where the smallest act of love has impact.

I believe in a kingdom where 800 million people do not go to bed hungry each night.

I believe in a kingdom which turns our world upside-down, and eradicates poverty.

I believe in a kingdom that is about resurrection and restoration – not death and destruction.

I believe in a kingdom where both the oppressed and the oppressor are set free.

I believe in a kingdom where love triumphs over hate.

I believe in the Kingdom of God.

Questions:

1. What do you understand the 'Kingdom of God' to be about?
2. Read the whole of 1 Corinthians 1. In what ways does the wisdom of God contrast with the 'wisdom' of the world?
3. In what ways do you think we in the church act like 'the world'? What can we do to change this (make it personal)?
4. Read the following quote. Do you feel you have a vision/heart for God's Kingdom? Do you need God to restore/renew it? Pray through this together.

“If you want to build a ship, don't drum up the men to gather the wood, divide the work and give orders. Instead, teach them to yearn for the vast and endless sea.”