

THE FREEDOM STUDIES | Part One | Encountering Jesus | STUDY 03

The Kingdom Jesus Brings

Understanding God's reign as an invitation to surrender, healing, and new life.

A Grace-Centered, Spirit-Led Journey with Jesus

KEY SCRIPTURES | NIV

Mark 1:14-20 | Luke 4:16-21 | Matthew 5:1-12 | Luke 17:20-21 | Matthew 6:9-10, 25-34

About 50-65 minutes | Individual or group study

AN INVITATION

Before We Begin

Jesus began His public ministry announcing good news: the kingdom of God had come near. He was not merely inviting people into a future destination or a human organization. He was announcing God's reign breaking into human life through Him.

The kingdom calls for a new direction, but it is first good news. In Jesus, the King comes near to restore, free, heal, forgive, and teach us a new way to live under the loving rule of God.

Opening Prayer

Father, help me see the kingdom Jesus came to bring. Free me from assumptions shaped by power, fear, or human ambition. Holy Spirit, show me what surrender to the loving reign of Jesus could mean in my life. Amen.

THE ANNOUNCEMENT

The Kingdom Has Come Near

Read Mark 1:14-20 (NIV)

Jesus announces the good news of God's kingdom, calls people to repent and believe, and invites ordinary fishermen to follow Him as He forms them for a new purpose.

Repentance here is a response to good news. Because God's reign has drawn near in Jesus, people are invited to reconsider the direction of their lives, trust Him, and begin following.

Jesus tells the fishermen, 'I will make you.' Transformation is His work as they walk with Him. They are not required to become fully formed disciples before they are allowed to follow; following is how He forms them.

PAUSE AND REFLECT

1. What does Jesus announce before He calls for a response?
2. How does good news change the way you understand repentance?
3. What does 'I will make you' reveal about responsibility for transformation?
4. What might Jesus be inviting you to leave, trust, or begin?

THE KING'S MISSION

Freedom, Healing, and Good News

Read Luke 4:16-21 (NIV)

In His hometown synagogue, Jesus reads Isaiah's promise of good news for the poor, freedom for captives, sight for the blind, and release for the oppressed-and declares it fulfilled in Him.

Jesus defines His mission in ways that touch spiritual, emotional, relational, and physical suffering. His kingdom is not built by burdening the vulnerable or protecting the powerful. It brings good news and release.

Following the King means learning to participate in His mission. Where His name has been used to imprison people in fear or silence the wounded, His own words call us back to freedom, truth, compassion, and restoration.

PAUSE AND REFLECT

1. Who receives particular attention in Jesus' announcement?
2. What kinds of captivity or oppression might Jesus confront today?
3. Does your experience of Christianity resemble the mission described here?
4. How could you participate in Jesus' work without trying to control another person?

LIFE UNDER GOD'S REIGN

The Character of the Kingdom

Read Matthew 5:1-12 (NIV)

Jesus blesses the poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, and those who suffer for righteousness.

Jesus' kingdom reverses many human measures of importance. He does not center the impressive, forceful, or self-sufficient. He sees those who grieve, hunger for what is right, show mercy, and make peace.

These blessings are not entrance requirements to earn the kingdom. They reveal the kind of people God sees, welcomes, and forms under His reign. Kingdom character grows from receiving the King's grace.

PAUSE AND REFLECT

1. Which blessing speaks most directly to your present season?
2. How do these values differ from common measures of spiritual success?
3. Where have you seen mercy, humility, or peacemaking treated as weakness?
4. What quality might Jesus be forming in you?

The Kingdom in Your Midst

Read Luke 17:20-21 and Matthew 6:9-10, 25-34 (NIV)

Jesus says God's kingdom is not identified by visible signs that allow people to point to a location. He teaches His followers to pray for God's will to be done and to seek His kingdom rather than live consumed by anxiety.

No church, movement, nation, or leader can claim exclusive ownership of God's kingdom. The kingdom is present in the King and wherever His will is welcomed and lived.

Seeking the kingdom is not anxious striving to secure our place. Jesus connects it with trusting the Father, releasing worry, and ordering our lives around what God values.

PAUSE AND REFLECT

1. Why might people be tempted to identify God's kingdom with a visible organization?
2. What does Jesus connect with seeking the kingdom?
3. How does trust in the Father challenge anxious religious striving?
4. Where could God's will be welcomed more fully in your life?

NO PRESSURE - ONLY HONESTY

Your Response

The kingdom is close because the King has come close. Responding may include trust, surrender, repentance, healing, or a renewed willingness to follow-but the invitation remains centered on Jesus.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

1. How has this study changed or deepened your understanding of God's kingdom?
2. Is there a human system you have confused with the kingdom itself?
3. Which aspect of the King's mission brings you hope?
4. What would it look like to welcome God's reign in one specific area this week?

A PRAYER YOU MAY MAKE YOUR OWN

Closing Prayer

Jesus, You are the King, and Your kingdom is good news. Teach me to trust Your leadership, receive Your healing, and surrender without fear. Form in me the mercy, humility, courage, and peace of Your kingdom. Let Your will be done in me and through me. Amen.

A Note for Anyone Walking Alongside Another Person

Avoid equating the kingdom of God with membership in a particular congregation or movement. Keep directing attention to Jesus, His mission, and His character. Allow participants to name ways religious systems may have distorted their understanding without turning the conversation into condemnation.

Continue when you are ready: Grace That Finds Us

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