



Kingdom Culture

Sunday, February 14, 2021 – Don Froese
Kingdom Fulfilled (Matthew 5:17-20 & 38-48)

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

(These are to be used personally, with family, or with your Small Group)

Matthew's emphasis is about the kingdom of God and Jesus is the King! This remarkable kingdom culture is one that Jesus not only teaches, but ushers in through his life, ministry, death and resurrection. We are invited to live into this kingdom culture in every area of our lives. This week, we look at the 'kingdom invitations' that Jesus gives each one of us.

1. This quote is attributed to Mark Twain: "It ain't those parts of the Bible that I can't understand that bother me; it is the parts I do understand." Take a quick look at the last half of Matthew 5 (21-48). Which portions bother, alarm, or confuse you? Why?
2. Now read Matthew 5: 17-20. What does Jesus mean when he says that he came to fulfill the Law and Prophets? New Living translation says: "I came to accomplish their purpose." – The Message says: "complete." Does this mean that Jesus followers should value the Old Testament less than the new?
3. Jesus seems to assume that he has the authority to re-interpret Scripture. Scholar Scot McKnight, suggests that Jesus' fulfilling the Old Testament means "radical revisioning without abolishing." Do you agree or disagree? How does the lens of Jesus help us read, understand, and apply the Old Testament?

4. How do you imagine the Pharisees? Typically, they are simply seen as hypocrites, but they were the Jewish group who demonstrated the most devotion to God and the Scriptures. If their devotion and commitment was so strong, how is it possible for us to surpass them? (vs. 20)

*Matthew 5: 21-48 are 6 examples given by Jesus to illustrate his authority to re-interpret the law. "...an approach that doesn't rely on tradition but rather a pure heart." (Rodney Reeves). This week we will consider the last 2 examples that concern "loving your enemies."

5. Read 5: 38-42. "Eye for eye and tooth for tooth," is called the law of retribution. It simply means that punishments are to be equal to the crime – a value of lawmaking that still forms our justice system today. How do Jesus' explanations point to a whole new way of kingdom thinking and living? Discuss how extreme these ideas would have sounded in Jesus's day and how they sound in our culture today?

6. Read 5: 43-48. Discuss how the Old Testament (and especially the Psalms) has us understand how we see and treat enemies? Considering how Jesus commands us to treat our enemies, how does this set us apart as His followers?

Next Steps

So, who are our enemies? Consider who we typically put in this category: those who promote evil, people who have hurt us, people who oppose us. Consider how we view people who live differently or have opposing views – do we think of them as enemies? Ask God to open your heart and ask for strength to reach out to someone who is on your enemy list.

"There is only one approach to living the words of this text. It begins when we confess who is our enemy and it ends when we learn to love them as our neighbor." (Scott McKnight)