

Further up, Further in

Resources for Continued Study



LOOKOUT
MOUNTAIN
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

“AN UPSIDE-DOWN CALLING”

For individual study or group discussion

In Jesus’ teaching about the Kingdom of God, we find ourselves perplexed by his “upside-down” message. Under Christ’s benevolent reign, the humble are exalted, while the proud are opposed (1Peter 5:5-7).

The charter of the Kingdom of God that Jesus sets before us in Luke begins with the prayer-filled calling of the apostles. In his commentary, J.C. Ryle points out the “*deep significance in this special mention of our Lord’s praying upon this occasion. Do we desire to help forward the cause of pure and undefiled religion in the world? Then let us never forget to pray for ministers...the progress of the Gospel, under God, will always depend much on the character and conduct of those who profess to preach it.*”¹

- Jesus spent an entire night in prayer. Read Jeremiah 3:15 and Ephesians 4:11-12. Why was the selection of the twelve apostles so critical?
- Luke frequently shows Jesus praying (3:21; 4:43-44; 5:16; 9:18, 28-29; 11:1; 22:32, 40-46). How does Jesus’ example from these accounts impact how you think about prayer?

From the margins of society, Jesus called and appointed the twelve apostles. None were rich or noble or distinguished. In fact, we learned from our previous studies that four were fisherman and one a hated tax collector.

- What is an apostle? How is an apostle different from a disciple? (cf. Mark 3:14; Luke 9:1-2; Revelation 21:14)
- “The ancient Greek word for apostle is ‘ambassador.’ The Greek word is *apostolos*, which means ‘sent one’. It describes someone who represents another, and has a message from their sender. In this broader sense, Jesus was also an apostle according to Hebrews 3:1.”² Read Hebrews 3:1. In what way was Jesus also an “apostle”?

In Luke 6:17-19, we see Jesus coming down from the mountain with the twelve to meet a large crowd who were waiting to hear him teach and to be healed by him.

In Jesus’ encounter with the people, he embodies the upside-down calling he calls his disciples to by letting his disciples know that, in giving up their lives and the comforts of this world, they are embodying costly, life-spending discipleship, the kind of life-spending discipleship Jesus himself models and asks of his followers.

- How did Jesus embody being poor, hungry, despised, rejected, and sorrowful? See 2 Cor. 8:9; Heb. 12:2; Luke 4:24; 19:41; Is. 53:3; Matt. 16:21.

Not only did Jesus embody this upside-down calling, he also expresses this calling through his own work of welcoming sinners and outcasts into his Kingdom of grace. If one wishes to be a follower of Christ, verses 20-26 illustrate the King’s economy—seeking first the Kingdom of God through sacrificial living. We see in these verses that God’s economy is at odds with the world’s. As Jesus contrasted the blessings with the woes, the “woes” pose warnings to those who would seek to possess the Kingdom of God through autonomy and self-reliance.

- Read Mark 8:34-36. Describe the “upside-down” disciple.

C.S. Lewis illustrated in his book *The Last Battle* with the unicorn hero, Jewel, what it was like to be Christ’s disciple—one who embraces Kingdom living of self-sacrifice in the here and now, but also looks forward with anticipation to the glorious kingdom to come: “*I have come home at last! This is my real country! I belong here. This is the land I have been looking for all my life, though I never knew it till now...Come further up, come further in!*”

- How can you embrace your upside-down calling as you too move “further up, further in” toward the consummation of the Kingdom?

DATE: February 13, 2022

SPEAKER: Brian/Frank

SERIES: Gospel of Luke

PASSAGE: Luke 6:12-26

Family Dinner Table

Authors Robby Holt and Michael Rhodes describe in their book *Practicing the King’s Economy* how to practically live in the economy of God’s Kingdom:

“Our role is to swear allegiance to Jesus and become, as the church, an outpost, a colony of the Jesus kingdom, amidst the kingdoms of the world. We are to declare in our words, our actions, and our lives together that ‘there is no other king’ (Acts 17:7), and he’s on his way to reclaim what is his...Every earthly kingdom has its own way of doing things, its own customs and policies regarding food, sex, family, and religion...But when Jesus welcomes us into his alternate kingdom, something strange happens. We discover a whole new world. As we encounter this strange new world, we discover that the Jesus kingdom looks very different from the kingdoms to which we’ve grown accustomed.”³

- Discuss with your family ways in which your lives declare to others, “there is no other king.”
- How does being a disciple of Christ look “upside-down” in our current culture? Give examples.

PRAY FOR WORLD MISSIONS

Evangelism Project in Mongolia

International Justice Mission

(mobilization of Ghana churches),
world missions partners

¹ Ryle, J.C. *Ryle’s Expository Thoughts on the Gospels* Vol II. Banner of Truth, 1986.

² Guzik, David. “*Study Guide for Luke 6 by David Guzik.*” Blue Letter Bible, Blue Letter Bible, 21 Feb. 1970, https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Luk/Luk-6.cfm.

³ Rhodes, Michael, Holt, Robby with Fikkert, Brian. *Practicing the King’s Economy.* Baker Books. 2018. 39