

Further up, Further in

Resources for Continued Study



LOOKOUT
MOUNTAIN
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

“KINGDOM CHARACTER”

For individual study or group discussion

As our study in *Luke* continues, today’s passage outlines the character traits of the citizens in the Kingdom of God. These character traits are radically different from those of the world. By all measures, the world’s standards pale in comparison to the Father’s gracious example, “...that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8).

- Read Ephesians 2:1-10. Compare and contrast the character of the world and the gracious character of the Father.

In Luke 6:27-28, we note Jesus’ radical commands for Kingdom living were unlike those of any other kingdom: “Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.” The Kingdom character of God’s people was to bring to bear their family resemblance, and thus their behavior would reflect their paternity and purpose.

- In the Old Testament, Israel’s laws were unlike any other nation’s. Read Deuteronomy 4:5-8. What testimony did the character of God’s law and his people have on the nations around them?
- Read Matthew 5, the parallel passage to Luke’s account. Note what Jesus says in verses 17-18. The Beatitudes characterized the embodiment of God’s law in the person and work of Jesus Christ. What characteristics should you, as a citizen of God’s Kingdom, reflect to those around you?

The world’s insufficient standards of loving those who love you back and only doing good to those who do good to you (vv. 32-34) is not enough. We are to be “imitators of God” (Ephesians 5:1-2). And as we imitate God, the character traits of his people will seem foolish to outsiders. Who can be kind to those who mistreat you? Who gives to those who can’t give back? In today’s culture, the “blessed” are perceived as the elite, those who possess power and wealth.

- Do a quick Instagram search on *#blessed*. There are over 141 million posts, most of which are pictures of the wealthy, the powerful, and the beautiful. Jesus proposed a different set of standards. Ones that are unselfish, disinterested and uninfluenced by the world’s criteria of *#blessed*. Read Romans 12:9-21. What are marks of a true Christian?
- Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung once wrote, *There is a fine old story about a student who came to a rabbi and said, “In the olden days there were men who saw the face of God. Why don’t they any more?” The rabbi replied, “Because nowadays no one can stoop so low.”*¹ How does this relate to what Jesus told the rich, young ruler of his day? (Matthew 19:16-30)

The Father’s gracious example set before us at the end of today’s passage embodies mercy (v. 36). The Hebrew word for mercy is *hesed*, which echoes his covenant faithfulness, steadfast love, and devotion. The Greek word *eleos* means something very similar and encapsulates God’s forgiveness of sins and the misery that sin brings.

- What kind of mercy has the Father shown to you? How should this affect the way we respond to others? (Ephesians 4:32)
- Read Romans 5:6-11. Reflect on God’s forgiveness for you. Is it deserved? How then should citizens of the Kingdom of God respond to their enemies? Today, pray for someone who needs to know about God’s love and forgiveness.

“Let a man set his heart only on doing the will of God and he is instantly free. If we understand our first and sole duty to consist of loving God supremely and loving everyone, even our enemies, for God’s dear sake, then we can enjoy spiritual tranquility under every circumstance.” A.W. Tozer

DATE: February 20, 2022

SPEAKER: Aaron/Wil

SERIES: Gospel of Luke

PASSAGE: Luke 6:27-36

Family Dinner Table

In his book, *Here I Am: Now What on Earth Should I Be Doing?* Calvin College professor Quentin J. Schultze describes how our earthly callings can be redemptive as we envision the eternal work of the Kingdom. In working toward renewal and restoration within our stations, extraordinary love is the defining characteristic of Christ’s disciple. Even as we open our homes and hearts to others, “We are likely to learn that God is far greater than what we had imagined and that God’s love transcends our meager knowledge and limited experience. [Take for instance how,] John Perkins, an African-American pastor whose brother was killed by a white police officer, became a brother in Christ to Thomas Tarrants, a former member of the white-supremacist Ku Klux Klan. After Perkins and Tarrants first met, they began sharing their own life stories as well as their common faith in God. By grace, these individuals hosted each other across the nation’s racial divide. Eventually they even co-authored, *He’s My Brother: Former Racial Foes Give a Strategy for Reconciliation.*”²

- Read Romans 12:17-21. As a family, talk about the importance of loving those who don’t love us. Discuss why this is so difficult.
- Discuss God’s forgiveness for us. Is it deserved? How should we respond to our enemies?

PRAY FOR WORLD MISSIONS

Lifeway Mission International,
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¹ Jung, Carl. *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*. Vintage Books, A Division of Random House, Inc. 1989. 388.

² Schultze, Quentin J. *Here I Am: Now What on Earth Should I Be Doing?* Baker Books. 2005. 85