

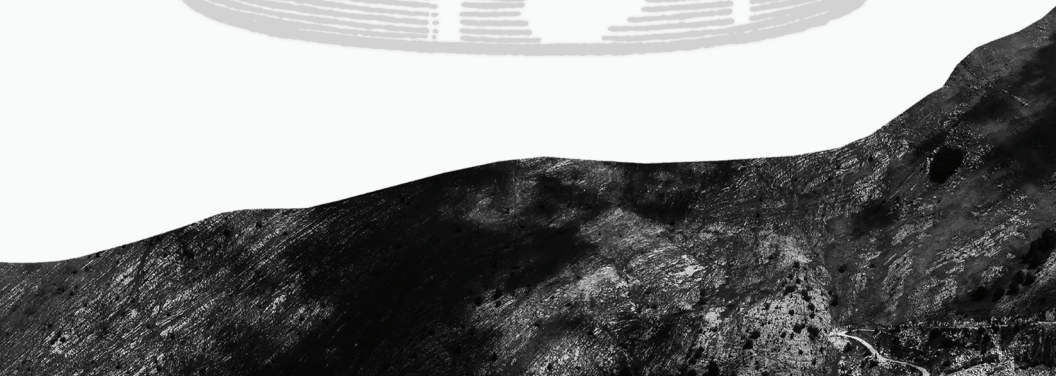
KINGDOM CULTURE



Second Baytown Small Groups



WEEK 4



SERMON NOTES

WEEK 4: INVITES A DIFFERENT KIND OF TREASURE

Looking Back: What did God teach you this past week as you read the daily devotionals? What opportunities did you have to apply what you learned?

Looking Up: Play the video and go through the discussion questions.

1. Why is it uncomfortable for many of us to talk about money? Why should we talk about it?
2. The Bible teaches about money and possessions in many places. What are some of the scriptural truths about money you've learned?
3. Read 1 Timothy 6:10. What does it mean that money is the root of all kinds of evil?
4. Why is it so easy to get caught up in the material stuff of this world? How do you guard against that?

5. Read Matthew 13:44-46. In your own words, what is the point of these two parables that Jesus told?

6. Have you ever thought of sacrifice as something joyful? Explain. Based on these two parables, in what sense does sacrifice produce joy?

7. Read Matthew 19:16-26. Why did Jesus make such a difficult requirement on such a seemingly good guy?

8. What about us? How can we know whether we are prioritizing the kingdom of earth or the kingdom of heaven in our daily lives?

Looking Forward: How will you take what you learned today and apply it to your life this week? Take a few minutes to plan your next meeting and spend some time in prayer together.

WEEK 4: LET'S TALK ABOUT MONEY

DAY 1—READ MATTHEW 13:44

“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.”

Good news! Jesus answered a question most people want to know: What is the kingdom of heaven like? In fact, “The kingdom of heaven is like” is exactly how Jesus began several of the parables He told. That’s because the kingdom He ushered in is so very *different*. It is completely counter to the world people know, so Jesus explained it in as many different ways as possible. In this short parable about a hidden treasure, we are reminded of the incomparable worth of life with Jesus.

Here in Matthew 13:44, the kingdom of heaven is compared to a man who discovered a great treasure hidden in a field, recognized its great value, hid it again, sold everything he owned, and bought the field. Why would anyone do that? There is only one reason—the field must contain something of unsurpassable value.

Do you see God’s kingdom in that light? Is knowing and following Him more valuable to you than your free time, upcoming raise, or house? Don’t misunderstand. Jesus wasn’t suggesting worldly possessions are evil or that we should list everything we own for sale online. But He was saying nothing is more valuable than knowing Him and making Him known. The kingdom of heaven is so extraordinary that it is worth sacrificing everything. Philippians 3:7-8 puts it this way: total earthly loss is the ultimate gain when it means you get to know Jesus. There is no greater treasure than Christ.

How does the kingdom of heaven encourage joyful sacrifice?

Do you truly view Jesus as the most valuable treasure in your life? What would be most difficult for you to give away for His sake?

Jesus promised that if we lose our lives for His sake, we will actually find them (see Matthew 10:39). What do you need to lose, lay down, or give away to see Jesus more clearly?

Ask the Lord to give you joy in Him like the man in the parable. Ask Him to remind you of the joy you had when you first knew Him—joy that frees you to give up everything to follow Him.

DAY 2—READ MATTHEW 19:21

Jesus said to him, “If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.”

In yesterday’s “The kingdom of heaven is like” parable, Jesus told a story to teach there is nothing in this world better than knowing and following Him. In today’s passage, Jesus challenged a man to put that truth into practice. Why would Jesus tell this man to sell everything he owned and leave it all behind? It’s not because the man needed to earn God’s kingdom; it’s because his earthly possessions and the comfort he found in them were keeping him from that kingdom.

So how should we apply Jesus’s words here to our lives today? The question we need to ask ourselves is: What happens if our property burns or fades away or gets stolen? Would that wreck us to the point that we no longer have peace? Think about it this way—the person who has everything plus Jesus has the *same thing* as the person who has nothing plus Jesus. They are equally blessed, because Jesus alone is the source of true peace and comfort.

This encounter ends differently than Jesus’s parable in Matthew 13:44. The man in this passage didn’t joyfully leave everything behind in celebration of receiving the kingdom of heaven; he walked away from Jesus, sad and unfulfilled.

Possessions and material comforts are not evil in and of themselves, but they become evil when we prioritize and depend on them more than we prioritize and depend on Jesus. Like the man Jesus spoke to here in Matthew 19:21, the pursuit of wealth and possessions keeps us from fully trusting and following Christ.

Knowing the man's heart wasn't where it needed to be, why did Jesus say, "Follow me"?

Couldn't the man have kept his possessions and followed Jesus too? Why must following Jesus be an all in, whole life commitment?

How do you figure out those places where your things are keeping you from knowing and following Jesus as you should?

Pray that Jesus would uproot your desire for comfort provided by your possessions.

DAY 3—READ PHILIPPIANS 4:11-13

Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. ¹² I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. ¹³ I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

Most of us spend our lives looking for happiness and contentment in the wrong places. We think contentment will be on the other end of a job, house, relationship, salary, or status, but those things prove to be dead ends every time. Once we acquire the next thing, it never makes good on its promise to fulfill us. That's because anything this world has to offer lacks the power to provide all we need. In and of ourselves, true happiness and contentment are impossible.

Paul experienced both ends of the spectrum. He knew what it was to have money, resources, and power. He knew what it was to go without food, shelter, and physical strength. And no matter where he found himself on the spectrum, he did not let circumstances determine his contentment.

So why do we keep looking to a hypothetical or future reality to bring us peace and contentment? Why do we hope for a new outward reality to give us inner peace?

Ultimately, contentment comes down to trust—trust that God will provide exactly what you need, He will not leave or turn His back on you (see Hebrews 13:5), He will give you strength you don't possess, and He is faithful to you and His promises.

Will you believe God is enough? Will you come to the end of yourself so that you might echo Paul's declaration that true contentment comes only from Christ at work within you?

Looking at the context of Philippians 4:13, what did Paul mean when he wrote, “I can do all things through him who strengthens me”?

What are the people, things, or circumstances you look to for contentment?

**What are you not trusting God to provide for you?
How are you relying on your own power and ability in that area?**

Thank God for His presence in you in every circumstance. Ask forgiveness for the ways you have sought security and contentment outside of Christ. Ask Him to sustain you fully and faithfully, regardless of your outward reality.

DAY 4—READ HEBREWS 13:5-6

Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."⁶ So we can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?"

Money is widely recognized as a major stressor in life, impacting the way we obey the Lord and relate to Him and other people. This problem is not new, and it won't go away anytime soon.

At first glance, verse 5 might seem strange because it couples a statement about money with a promise about the presence of God. We need to see the link between the two. Stress about money usually boils down to wanting to be in control. We may see our money-related stress as fear or concern for need or responsibility, but stripped down, all of those feelings come down to the fact that we want to have command of our lives.

The problem is money is temporary—it offers no lasting control because it is an earthly, man-made form of security that is here one day and gone the next. God offers us hope and trust in something far more wonderful and secure. Even when our money leaves us, the promises of Christ remain.

Do you want to keep your life free from the love of money? Trust God in all circumstances. You can always depend on Him to give you contentment, be present with you, and give you the help you need.

What does your relationship with the Lord have to do with your view of money? If you're chasing after money, what might that say about your relationship with the Lord?

What is your greatest fear regarding wealth or possessions?

How does knowing God is with you help overcome that fear?

Praise God for being near to you. Call to Him in your current circumstance or fear, so that He may reveal Himself to you.

DAY 5—READ ISAIAH 41:10 AND 1 PETER 5:6-7

Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. —Isaiah 41:10

Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you,⁷ casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. —1 Peter 5:6-7

Everyone is afraid of something—going to the dentist, killing a spider, speaking in public, losing your job, getting robbed, failing, or losing someone you love. There is a phobia for just about anything rational or irrational you can think of. It's no coincidence that fear is referenced over three hundred times in the Bible!

The enemy loves a fearful Christian because fear paralyzes us. We can't move forward when we live in fear. Isaiah and Peter tell us that we don't need to live that way. We aren't meant to carry it all. God cares for us. He doesn't demand our greatest achievements. He doesn't tell us to try harder, do better, get stronger, make more money. In fact, because He cares for us, He wants us to take all of that and throw it at His feet. This includes everything that worries us, everything that burdens us, everything that scares us, and everything in between. He wants all of it. He wants to carry it, because we weren't meant to bear the weight. Our burdens are not a burden to God. He delights in us; therefore, He delights in caring for our every need.

Fear is everything that freedom in Christ is not, and the solution to fear is the presence of God. These verses give us so much hope! God is with us. We can trust Him. He will help us. He will give us strength. When we truly believe this, we will experience the abundant and victorious life He has planned for us. So let's face today with humility, boldness, and confidence. Almighty God is who He says, and He is with us always.

What keeps you from fully trusting that God will help you?

How can you cast those feelings and circumstances at the feet of Jesus?

Why is it so important to fully trust God? How can fear damage our witness?

Thank God for caring for you fully. Thank Him for bearing the burden of all of your anxieties and worries. Take some time to cast those at His feet. List them out and declare the truth of Scripture over them.



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