

Becoming

Becoming Kingdom Minded (March 29th, 2020)

PREPARATION

- Familiarize yourself with this Study Guide.
- If you missed it, watch the sermon online [HERE](#).
- Spend some time in prayer before your group gathers.
- You **always** have the option to use some or all the questions and/or prepare your own questions.
- Review the learning objective to focus the conversation, read the primary scriptures as a group, summarize the main points, ask the questions, and use supporting texts to enhance the concepts.

DISCUSSION

Opening Prayer: (1-5 minutes)

In light of what God is saying through this week's message, here's some suggestions of how your group can invite God into your time together.

Thank Jesus for coming to this world and showing us the ways in which we were called to set our eyes on God's kingdom! Thank Jesus for the ability to approach the Father's throne in confidence covered by His shed blood. As we shelter in place, pray that God would remain close to us so that we would always remember His kingdom and be reminded of our hope for eternal life with Him! Finally, pray that the kingdom of Jesus would transform this world plagued by the Coronavirus and would renew our hearts with God's love for those who are suffering!

Discussion: (30 minutes)

What's Going on This Week

This Sunday, Pastor Danny led us into the seventh week of our series titled *Becoming*. Pastor Danny challenged us to become more like Jesus by shifting our minds towards the kingdom of God during this season of personal and communal suffering. We were specifically directed to Jesus' words in Matthew 5:1-16 so that we could be reminded that Jesus intimately knows our various ailments in this world.

Pastor Danny reminds us that in our suffering, God has declared His blessings upon us since we have a future reward in His kingdom! Finally, when we approach a season of suffering with the right kingdom-mindset, we preserve our community and bring God's glory directly into the world around us!

“One of the reasons that God allows us to go through a season of suffering as Christians is so that the world can see that we are in the same boat as them, but something is different about us because of the presence of God in us and the perspective he has given us on the kingdom *after* we live in this world!” - Pastor Danny Strange

Suggested Questions

Check-In: *Matthew 6:31-34* – Last week, our discussion addressed the problem of worry in our lives, the various ways in which it manifests, and the kingdom perspective we want to develop to decrease our fear. What were some of your observations as you leaned into becoming *fearless* this week?

Study Tip: *If there is a loving God, then why would He allow suffering like the Coronavirus?* While we do not have all the answers to suffering in this world, we can always point to our Lord Jesus who suffered alongside of us and the disciples who exhibited a kingdom mindset in the midst of severe trials. Pastor Danny also recommends that we can look to our rich tradition of church history to find many followers of Jesus have suffered in a way that brings salt and light to the community. A great example is a man name **Polycarp**. Polycarp was a prominent 2nd century church leader who faced tremendous opposition from the Roman empire. 2nd century Christians refused to worship the gods of Rome, exhibited a countercultural lifestyle, and unabashedly shared a gospel message that undermined the mandatory confession of the Roman citizen, “Caesar is Lord.” The 86-year-old stood faithful against the Roman authorities, the threat of beasts, and was sentenced to be burnt alive (aligning with his vision). Under compulsion to submit to Caesar and disavow Christianity, he says, “For eighty and six years have I been his servant, and he has done me no wrong, and how can I blaspheme my King who saved me?” As you read this study guide, remember that like Polycarp, your kingdom response at this time might be, “especially remembered by all, so that he is (you are) spoken of in every place, even by the heathen.”

- **Objective #1: Identify your specific trial and how it has affected your relationship with God.**

Primary Texts: Matthew 5:1-12 (Focus: Who is blessed?) – Pastor Danny begins his sermon by pointing out all of the ways in which the disciple of Jesus might suffer in this world. However, we can rest assured that God knows our suffering and considers us to be blessed in light of God’s kingdom blessings that await in our future. Looking at this passage, which state of being do you relate to the most in this season and why? How has suffering affected your relationship with God?

Supporting Texts: (Expect Suffering) Ps. 34; Matt. 10:16-31, 38-39; 1 Pet. 4:1, 12-19; Phil 1:29; 2 Tim. 3:10-17

- **Objective #2: Look towards Jesus, the suffering servant, and the hope of His kingdom!**

Primary Texts: Matthew 5:1-12 (Focus: What is their reward?) – Next, Pastor Danny uses the same passages to point out how Jesus takes our suffering status and views it through a kingdom lens. Jesus is the ultimate example of someone who underwent suffering yet came out on the other side supremely blessed! What does it look like to live with a kingdom-minded perspective in the midst of your suffering? Where can you cling to God’s current (or future) blessings in this time of uncertainty?

Supporting Texts: (Jesus: Suffering Servant) Is. 52:13-53:12; Matt. 4:1-11, 27:27-44; Mk.10:45; Jn. 13:3-17; 2 Cor. 8:9; Heb. 4:14-16 (Hope) Rom. 5:1-5, 8:18, 28-39; 1 Thess. 4:13-14; Heb. 11:1-12:2; Js. 1:2-4; 1 Pt. 5:10; Rev. 21:1-8

- **Objective #3: Identify ways you can become God’s kingdom agent during the Coronavirus.**

Primary Texts: Matthew 5:13-16; 2 Corinthians 4:7-18 – Finally, Pastor Danny points out that we preserve the world and bring God’s glory into the world (salt and light) whenever we approach suffering with a kingdom mindset. With this in mind, Pastor Danny challenges us to utilize our attitude and whatever resources God has put into our hands in this season for God’s glory. How do you think God might want to use you as a powerful agent of His Kingdom during this time in our society? What praises can we lift up in prayer together based on the glimpses of God’s power you have seen in this season?

Closing Prayer: (5-15 minutes)

In light of what God is saying through this week's message, here's some suggestions of what your group could talk about with God in prayer.

Thank Jesus for being the way, the truth, and the life in our world today! Ask that the Holy Spirit would reveal to us the courage we have received when our minds are set on His eternal kingdom! Finally, pray that the Holy Spirit would continue to transform our minds so that we would continue to recognize our own faulty beliefs and worldviews that hinder our progress toward becoming more like Jesus!

THROUGHOUT THE WEEK

-Stay up to date with our Coronavirus webpage: Help us out by pointing the people in your Community Group to 3Crosses.org/coronavirus

-Follow Along with our Pray Podcast: For the next 30 days, our challenge for you is to step into the prayer movement around 3Crosses by listening to our [Pray Podcast](#).

-Further Reading and Exploration! *Read 1 Peter* This book is a great way to engage with a 1st century church that was experiencing suffering at the hands of the Roman Empire. While the situations may be different than ours, the principles of endurance and suffering pop out in this text written by Peter, who was himself expecting to be persecuted at the hands of Nero and the Roman empire.

- Find out how to pray for two people in your group this week! Pray that the members of your group would be kingdom minded as they share the message of God's kingdom to those who are hurting!