

One Kingdom

One Divided Kingdom (August 23rd, 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: (1-2 minutes)

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

Thank the Father for loving us so much that He came to us in the person of Jesus to sacrifice Himself on our behalf while we were still sinners! Pray that as we navigate the chaotic waters of our cultural moment that we would humbly listen and obey the promptings of the Holy Spirit as we seek to love one another, just as you have loved us! Pray that the Holy Spirit would give us the words to speak, show us opportunities to serve our neighbors, and continue to transform us into the likeness of Jesus so that we might lay down our lives for one another and experience abundant life through your kingdom!

Discussion: (45-60 minutes)

What's Going on This Week

This Sunday, Pastor Danny introduced us to our new series titled *One Kingdom*. Pastor Danny kicks off the series by looking at the early movements of Genesis to show us that God intended His people to live in loving harmony with one another as they unite to rule over the earth on behalf of God. He then points to the problem of sin and how it has infected the human heart of mankind both inside and outside of the church causing problems of disunity and divisiveness. Pastor Danny sets the tone for the series by pointing to Jesus as the solution to sin and encouraging the church to approach the issues we encounter in this series with humility, knowing that we are God's creatures created from the dust of the ground!

“If the love and unity of the church is the greatest proof that our God is real, our division and disunity will be the biggest reason people disbelieve our message.” – Pastor Danny Strange

Suggested Questions

Check-In: *Icebreaker* – What are the issues that are in our world today that you are excited to wrestle with in this series? What conversation topics are you the most nervous about approaching in this series?

Study Tip: The creation story is a crucial starting point because it unpacks God’s original kingdom picture. In this kingdom, God calls everything he has made *very good* suggesting that there are no flaws in the heavens and the earth. On the earth, God plants a special garden as a place in which human relationships could thrive, food is perfectly accessible, harmony exists between humans and nature, and God dwells with His image-bearers! In this space, God gives the humans specific orders to be fruitful, multiply, express dominion over all creatures, fill the earth, and subdue it (Gen. 1:26-28). Furthermore, we see God placing Adam into the garden so that he might be able to “work it and keep it” while the woman is created to help (Gen. 2:15). This poses questions: *If God’s creation is flawless, what need is there for man to rule, work, and keep? Why continue to populate? What can the woman “help” with if everything is already perfect?* Since humans were created in God’s image, we should expect to see them doing something similar to what God does. Genesis shows that God starts creation from nothing and speaks to bring order and life to formlessness and chaotic entities! The reason why God calls humans to tasks such as *be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it* is so that His image-bearers would walk alongside of God to *keep / maintain* what He has already brought into being and *work* to bring new order and life into the world. The example we are given is how God rounds up all of His created animals and permits Adam to bring new order into the world by choosing their names (Gen. 2:19) These tasks are how we, as His image-bearers, glorify God in His “perfectly undeveloped” creation! As you reflect on this study guide, consider how Jesus has reconciled you back to these purposes! *Keep and maintain* what God has created by the way you show love and humility toward the church, the non-believer, and the world! Finally, *work* alongside of God to bring new order and new life through your job, your relationships, your children, and your mission to make disciples!

Objective #1: Reflect on your perception of the church and what it is meant to be known by.

Primary Texts: John 13:34-35; Mark 2:13-17 – Pastor Danny kicks off the series by pointing out how the church of Jesus ought to be known for qualities such as our deep love for one another, a humble set of godly values, our relationship with society and its leaders, and our passion for the renewed future of humanity. In reality, the church can be seen as hypocritical, judgmental, overly political, hateful, narrow-minded, deniers of truth and science, or prone to conspiracy theories. In fact, many people correctly note that the church is itself divided along political, racial, denominational, and theological lines. **What do you think the church in the Bay Area is “known for” by folks on the outside (non-believers)? How about by folks on the inside (believers)?**

Objective #2: Explore how sin corrupts this vision of the church and how you are a part of that.

Primary Texts: Genesis 1:26-31, 3:1-13, 6:5-8 – Pastor Danny notes that God’s desire for humanity was to unite as one kingdom under God’s rule that would fill the earth with God’s glory as they work to build an amazing society in harmony with one another. However, when Adam and Eve sin, it dismantles this kingdom vision as the hearts of each proceeding generation are hardened more and more. **Have you ever had an experience where you felt the hardening effects of sin creeping into your life or community?**

Supporting texts: (Man’s Role in the Garden) Genesis 2:5-9, 15-24; (Cain to Lamech) Genesis 4:1-24

Objective #3: Identify how Jesus is the solution and how we can humbly approach God’s word and others!

Primary Texts: Genesis 3:14-24 – Pastor Danny concludes by reminding us that Jesus is the one who cancels the penalty of sin, softens the human heart, creates a new covenant people, and works to reconcile all things back to His beauty and righteousness! With this in mind, he points to the curses of Genesis to remind us that we are ultimately His created beings from the dust and should approach all situations with humility. **How do you believe humility relates to spiritual growth and vitality? How have you seen humility work in a powerful way?**

Jesus is the Solution: (Penalty) Rom. 6:20-23; Col. 2:13-15; 1 Tim. 2:1-6 (Soften Heart) Jer. 17:9-10; Ezk. 11:19, 36:26; Rom. 5:1-5; Eph. 3:14-20 (New Covenant) Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 4:14-16, 9:11-15 (Reconcile) Rom. 5:9-11; 2 Cor. 5:16-21; Col. 1:15-20; Rev. 21:5, 22:1-5

Closing Prayer: (5-10 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 our Heavenly Father for revealing His love through his selfless life and his sacrificial death on the cross! Ask that the Holy Spirit would continue to equip us to live, love, and forgive like Jesus in the various hardships and situations we face daily. Finally, pray that we as a church would unite as a people who are *known by* our love for one another as we humbly interact with one another under the banner of One Kingdom!

THROUGHOUT THE WEEK

-Host a Watch Party: At 3Crosses, we are excited to introduce [Watch Parties](#) for our Sunday Services. If you already have a social bubble meeting on Sundays, great! Be sure to let us know about it! Feel free to take a picture and send it in to AJ at avanegas@3crosses.org. If you are interested in launching a new Watch Party and *safely* opening up your home to new guests and those looking for community, let us know [HERE](#)

-Stay up to date with Coronavirus Ministry Opportunities: Help us out by pointing the people in your Community Group to 3Crosses.org/coronavirus. If you or anyone in your group is looking to serve food in our pantry, access spiritual care, or seek financial assistance, you can find all you need at 3Crosses.org/neighborhood

- Find out how to pray for two people in your group this week! Pray that the members of your group would find a way to love beyond what is expected of them and love their enemies!

-Community Group Fall 2020: We will be launching a new Community Group Season starting August 23rd, 2020! For more information about joining a group, leading a group, or general inquiries, contact AJ at avanegas@3crosses.org