

# One Kingdom

## *Jesus and Politics (September 13<sup>th</sup>, 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 as your kingdom representatives!

#### **Discussion:** (45-60 minutes)

#### What's Going on This Week

This Sunday, Pastor Danny led us into the fourth week of our series titled *One Kingdom*. Pastor Danny focusses on *Jeremiah 29* to give us a picture of how God's kingdom people function in a hostile environment. Using the context of the scripture, he compares our living situation in the Bay Area to the Israelites who found themselves in captivity in Babylon. Pastor Danny looks at God's command for Israel to plant their roots in Babylon and seek its prosperity as a challenge for 3Crosses to seriously take into consideration God's mission of spiritual and social revival in hostile areas when we inevitably entertain thoughts of moving away from the Bay Area

**“If you are a Christian, you are a citizen of God's kingdom living within an earthly kingdom. You are free not to find your identity or your emotional well-being in the kingdoms of this world. You are free to live as a citizen of God's kingdom and carry that mindset with you as you live within the world's system.” – Pastor Danny Strange**

## Suggested Questions

**Check-In: Icebreaker** – If you could change one thing about the Bay Area, what would it be?

**Study Tip:** During the last stages of his ministry, we find Jesus going toe-to-toe with the chief priests, elders, Pharisees, Sadducees, scribes, and lawyers facing many questions that were intended to trap him. In Mark 12, we observe two of these influential political parties in Jerusalem. *Here is a closer look at the parties.* First, the Herodians were a part of the Jewish ruling class who desired full integration with Rome under the Herodian dynasty. This party would have formed near the first century when Herod the Great was deemed king of Israel in 30 B.C. and showed favor to Israel (besides hunting down Jesus when he is born) by rebuilding much of their cities and expanding upon the temple. After the Judeans would revolt against the brutal reign of Archelaus, Herod the Great's son, Judea would become a Roman province under Pontius Pilate. Meanwhile, Herod Antipas, Herod the Great's other son, would rule over the territory of Galilee (4 B.C. – 39 A.D.) and maintained peace by respecting Jewish traditions. In short, these two Herodian figures brought some semblance of peace and prosperity to Israel. However, when Jesus tells his followers to beware of the yeast of the Herodians (Mk. 8:15), some went so far as to suggest that the Herodians would become messianic figures by bringing favor and fortune upon Israel as a representative to Caesar (Augustus and Tiberius). Second, the Pharisees are portrayed throughout scripture as another ruling class of Jews who were most likely formed as a reaction to the Greco-Roman takeover of culture and sought out to conserve a strict adherence to a Jewish way of life as they interpreted the law of Moses. This party sought a messianic figure who would come to Jerusalem and overthrow the Roman government and establish a Jewish theocracy. *So what does this all mean?* Jesus is put in a difficult situation between these two parties when he is asked about the controversial Roman poll tax. The Herodians saw this tax (requiring the payment of one denarius) as a symbol of submission to Rome whereas the Pharisees and Jewish Zealots in Galilee (Lk. 13:1-5) saw as abominable. A “yes” to the tax would have solidified the Herodian and discounted the Jewish movements. A “no” would have solidified the rebellions of the Jewish zealots suggesting a disregard for Roman authorities. In this study guide, spend some time *marveling* at Jesus' response and how he navigates the hyperpolarized political situation and harmonizes his dual citizenship to the earthly and heavenly kingdoms!

**Objective #1: Identify the state of your group as it pertains to discussions around politics.**

*Primary Texts: Philippians 4:6-7* – Pastor Danny opens the sermon by discussing the church's hesitant relationship with the political sphere. Throughout the sermon, he challenges us to reflect on our own posture towards politics. If we become stressed or wound up while engaging in political discussions, then perhaps we ought to pause and reflect on how deeply connected we are to our political opinions and thoughts. **How “political” do you consider yourself to be? Where do you see politics getting Christian folks in trouble?**

*Supporting texts: Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13-17*

**Objective #2: Marvel at Jesus' response to political questions and observe anything that may stand out!**

*Primary Texts: Mark 12:13-17* – Next, Pastor Danny uses this scripture to show that on the one hand Jesus didn't seem to be tethered to the political situation of the day. Yet at the same time, Jesus was also very political in the sense that he takes the throne of a new and better Kingdom by way of a Roman cross (Herodians) and suffering persecution in the Jewish capital city (Pharisees). **Take a moment to “marvel” at Jesus' response in Mark 12. What is so refreshing to you about his answer to this political question?**

**Objective #3: Commit to praying and humbly fixing what grieves you rather than complaining.**

*Primary Texts: Philippians 3:20; 1 Peter 1:17-20; 1 Timothy 2:1-4* – Pastor Danny concludes the sermon by reminding us that as a Christian, you are a citizen of God's kingdom living within an earthly kingdom. This entails a freedom from finding your emotional well-being on earth and freedom to live as a citizen of God's kingdom as you interact with the governmental systems of this world. **What would it look like for you to live as a citizen of the kingdom of God this week? How is that different than living as a citizen of the kingdoms of this world?**

**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 the church and our surrounding community 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](mailto: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](https://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](https://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 bring God's kingdom to the place in which they live this week!

**-Community Group Fall 2020:** For more information about joining a group, leading a group, or general inquiries, contact AJ at [avanegas@3crosses.org](mailto:avanegas@3crosses.org)