

STUDY 2



Sunday 22nd April 2018

The transforming touch of Heaven

2. THE STRATEGY OF THE KINGDOM.

There is the continual '**call of the kingdom**' expressed throughout Jesus' ministry. The kingdom of God refers to the sovereign rule of God. This is the active presence and power of God that is all about the transforming touch of heaven. The sphere of heaven (where God is) touches the sphere of earth establishing transformation.

The call of the kingdom in the perfect environment under God's rule.

Genesis introduces us to the rule of God in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2-3). God was king and therefore heaven filled the earth. It was the perfect scene of:

'God's people in God's place under God's rule enjoying God's blessing.'

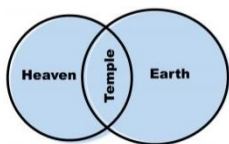
- Reflect within your groups how the Garden of Eden expressed the rule of God.

Adam and Eve made the choice to be their own King. This caused sin to enter and disrupt the rule of God bringing disconnect with the spread of division, discord, disease and death.

The call of the kingdom in the Temple, that became the hot spot of God's presence.

The meeting place with God was the tabernacle (Exodus 25.22) and later in the Temple.

- Think about some of the furnishings within the temple that were all part of inviting people to meet with God.



The Temple expresses the overlap of the two spheres of heaven and earth.

Heaven comes down and God meets with his people. The glory of God descends from heaven and fills the place, 2 Chron 5.14, 2 Chron 7.2-3, 1 Kings 8.11.

- In what way do we see ourselves living 'life in the overlap'?

The call of the kingdom in the living Word becoming flesh and dwelling among us.

John 1.14 affirms the living Word taking on flesh. Jesus was the living, walking temple through whom God's presence could be encountered. When Jesus cleanses the temple (John 2.12-22) he points to himself being the living temple.

- Think of some of those people whose lives were powerfully transformed by encountering Jesus.

Mark 1.15 *"The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!"*

- What is Jesus indicating when he says, 'the kingdom of God is near?'
- Take the great manifesto of Jesus in Luke 4.18-19. What are the elements in the manifesto and what application do they have for us today?

The call of the kingdom to REPENT

Entry into the kingdom is through repentance. Lk 5.32; 15.7; Acts 2.38; 17.30

- How would you explain what repentance means and involves to a person who has never heard of the word?

- What has repentance meant in your own commitment to Jesus?
- Why is repentance an essential requirement?
- Take the illustration of Zacchaeus (Luke 19.1-10) and see repentance being demonstrated.
- In what way is repentance not just entry into the kingdom but essential for living in the kingdom?

The call of the kingdom to BELIEVE.

The call is to believe and to go on believing. John 20.30-31 expresses the purpose behind his gospel *that by believing you may have life in his name.*

We repent, but then we believe new things about ourselves, God, Jesus, Holy Spirit etc.

- What principles are involved in believing?
- John frequently refers to believing – John 5.24; 6.40; 12.45 offers a snapshot of verses on the theme of believing.

The call to repent and believe was followed by a commitment to following Jesus in Mark 1.15-20

FOR YOUR NOTES