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Week 1: JESUS' 'GOSPEL' & THE DYNAMICS OF HIS KINGDOM

Write down what you consider the gospel message to be.

Jesus came not only to die but to live an amazing life that successfully proclaimed, demonstrated, illustrated and explained the true nature and message of Father God's heart and Kingdom.

Matthew 4:17 and 23-24.

What was the good news of the Kingdom Jesus preached? To find out, look at some more scriptures.

Luke 6:5-19.

Luke 7:12-15.

Luke 8:27-36.

John 2:1-11.

In what ways did Jesus' 'gospel' message differ from what you wrote down earlier?

Because Jesus had not yet died, His message did not revolve solely around the Cross... The heart of Jesus' message was the present reality of the Kingdom of God. It was a dynamic power at work to change people's lives and it did exactly that.

What is Jesus teaching about the Kingdom of God in the following parables?

Matthew 13:31-33.

Matthew 13:44-46.

Matthew 11:12.

The word translated 'forcefully' means with something like centrifugal force. In other words, the Kingdom of God will be flung out to the extremities of the earth by a tremendously powerful, unstoppable force. This force is not armaments or holy war but love, humility and servanthood. This love is actually the Father's heart demonstrated through us to a hurting world.

GROUP CHALLENGE

Do something together this next week to demonstrate the nearness of the Kingdom of God to your community, e.g., litter picking, take flowers or chocolates into the shops or Council offices to say 'we appreciate you', tidy up some un-owned corner of the town or village that is untidy or graffiti-ed. Discussion over what, when, where, etc. can take place over coffee when the meeting is over.

LISTENING EXERCISE

How was Jesus able to do all of that He did when, whilst on earth, He was just a man?

Jesus knew where to go, what to do, who to talk to, who to heal – not because He was super-human but only because of the very close communication He kept with Father God. It was clearly a two-way dialogue and not just a one-sided monologue.

Read Appendix 1 *Listening to God's Voice*.

Week 2: GOD'S FAMILY: WHAT IS IT?

Right from the Garden of Eden Father God has placed His people in families... Historically, Gentiles have come to call our believing spiritual family our 'church'.

Matthew 16:13-18.

Petros [Peter] means:

Petra [rock] means:

What do you think Jesus meant by what he said to Peter?

Jesus was speaking 300 years before Constantine institutionalised the church; He cannot possibly be referring to what we have come to think of as the historic 'church' of Christendom.

V.16.

1 Corinthians 3:11.

It was faith in Jesus as Messiah that was to be the foundational building block on which the new community of faith was to be built NOT Peter himself.

The true church comprises...

What comes to mind when you hear the word 'church'?

Ekklesia comes from the verb *ekkaleo*, which means:

Ekklesia is itself a translation of the Hebrew word *kahal*, which means:

The root word is *kol* which means:

The church is those called [or invited] to gather together [as God's flock] by His voice.

What did we liken Israel's response in Exodus 19:8 to?

The *kahal* means:

The gathered community or family of God did not begin on the Day of Pentecost as is commonly taught by the Gentile church but two thousand years earlier on Mount Sinai when God vocally issued a call for a people to set themselves apart to Him in covenant [marriage] relationship with Him.

What does this insight teach us about Father God's true intention for the Jews?

What does this insight teach us about Father's true intention for the church?

Luke 9:2.

Where did Jesus send His disciples? What were they to do?

What was the result?

The concept of God's gathered family was born on Mount Sinai at the first Pentecost [Exodus 19:8]; but it was born again on the Mount of Olives, also at Pentecost [Acts 2].

Why is this continuity from the Old Testament to the New so important?

Think about this: The first people who received the gospel of the Kingdom were Jews. They received their Messiah. This meant they were already part of Father God's family, the nation He had chosen. They did not have to set out to find a 'church' to join; their community was already meant to be it! BUT, because the majority did not receive their Messiah, they were forced by both Jewish religious and Roman secular persecution to form their own believing communities – but they were still Judaic in their roots, teaching and practices. The only difference was that they now celebrated Yeshua Messiah as the fulfilment of all the rituals and biblical feasts in which He was foreshadowed.

PROPHETIC PRAYER MINISTRY TIME

Listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit for a word, scripture or picture for the nominated person. Write down what you are hearing.

Repeat the waiting, listening, sharing pattern.

Share what you have heard. Does what has been shared speak into their situation at all? Can they confirm this is Father God speaking?

Pray for them in line with what the Holy Spirit has said.

AFTER THE SESSION

Continue listening to God for your community during this week. Write down what you hear so you can share it in the next group session.
