
TALK IT OVER

The Upside Down Kingdom

Pastor Stacie Wood

May 11-12, 2024

If you would like to watch the weekend message, visit www.saddleback.com/watch.

Open your group in prayer and remember that this is only a guide. Feel free to discuss each of the provided questions, or simply dive deeper into just one. Before you close with prayer, take a few minutes to look over the Three Essential Questions toward the end of the document.

Scriptures Used

Matthew 4:17 (NIV 84); Matthew 5:1 – 10, 22, 28, 32, 40, 44 (NIV 84);
Matthew 6:3 – 4, 6, 15, 24, (NIV 84) 2; Matthew 7:21 Timothy 2: 20 – 21 (NIV 84)

Questions:

1. Matthew 4:17 (NIV84) “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.” We need a spiritual awakening because the kingdom of heaven IS near. The philosophy of this age and the ways of the world are not working for us. How are some ways we have tried to live the ‘kingdom life’ without the King?
2. In Matthew 5:1-10, Jesus’ statements in the Sermon on the Mount were counter-cultural. He said that those who seek, love, and serve him are ‘blessed’ because even in their hardships, they recognize their need for him. How are you blessed? What area of your life would you like to have blessed?
3. Of the ten statements read from the Sermon on the Mount, which challenged you the most? Please refer to: Matthew 5:22, 5:28, 5:32, 5:40. 5:44; Matthew 6:3 - 4, 6:6, 6:15, 6:24 and Matthew 7:21.
4. Matthew 5:44 says to “love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.” Is it possible to love and pray for those who have hurt you? When you hear this statement, does a specific person’s name come to mind? How does forgiveness help us heal, move forward, and begin to love like Jesus?
5. The world contradicts God’s values. We were raised with the ‘wisdom of this age’, so God’s ways are foreign to us. We’ve ‘drifted’ and need to come back to the purity of the way of Jesus. Are we potent and pure - offensive and attractive? How can we stand firm in the ways of the Lord so that others will notice a difference between our lives and the ways of the world?

6. 2 Timothy 2:20 - 21 says, “In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for noble purposes and some for ignoble. If a man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work.” We are made holy and useful to God by cleansing ourselves and by being transformed through the work of the Spirit. We prepare ourselves in order that God may do something incredible in our lives. What are you willing to give up to be an ‘instrument for noble purposes’?
7. In Matthew 5:8, Jesus said, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.” God is calling us to consecrate ourselves to do great things for His kingdom. Romans 12:2 admonishes us to “not be conformed to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.’ As we consecrate ourselves to God, what do you expect him to do? What do you need to surrender for his will to be done?

Three Essential Questions

The following questions are intended to be open-ended and encourage members to consider how they felt and what they, or the group, can do as a result of hearing the message.

1. **What did you hear?** *What point in this message was most impactful for you?*
2. **What do you think?** *How did this message challenge, change, or affirm your thinking?*
3. **What will you do?** *How will you or your group put into practice what you've learned today?*

Small Group Action Steps

1. Consider taking the Group Health Assessment in your small group. This assessment will help you see how your small group is balancing the five purposes and will give you suggested next steps for each purpose. Click here to take the Group Health Assessment:

<https://saddleback.com/connect/smallgroups#spiritualCheckup>

2. Did you know that Saddleback produces many new small group studies each year? Visit <https://saddleback.com/studies> to check out Saddleback’s ever-growing library of small group curricula.

Are you interested in the Bible and in helping small groups benefit from the weekend message? Well, you are in luck! Saddleback members like you create these discussion guides each week. If you are interested in joining the team, please email Maturity@saddleback.com