Lifegroup Study – 18th Feb 2018

**Seek First – Spreading Kingdom Love**

**INTRODUCTION**

We have been studying **Matthew 6:33** ‘*Seek first the kingdom of god and His righteousness, and all these other things will be given to you.’* God’s love is relentless, beautiful, patient, and passionate. In the Parable of the Lost Sheep (Luke 15) we see God place supreme value on those who are far away. God’s love pursues those who are far away, and as Christians we are swept up in this love towards those who are far away from Him. God’s love for those who don’t know Him takes at least two forms, according to Matthew 6:33. First, God desires that these people would be told about Him, come to know Him, and so be reconciled back to their loving Father. This is the spread of God’s kingdom, His rule and reign over every heart that belongs to Him. We spread God’s kingdom through verbally sharing the good news about Jesus. Second, God desires righteousness, wellbeing, justice, and peace in every society. Beyond the borders of God’s kingdom (the world we live in) “righteousness is more pleasing to God than unrighteousness, justice than injustice, freedom than oppression, love than hate, peace than war.” Spreading God’s righteousness, in this sense, means helping the poor, promoting development, defending human rights, righting for justice, being peace-makers, and so on.

**KEY POINTS**

1. Seek first God’s kingdom through sharing the good news of Jesus (words).
2. Seek first God’s righteousness through practically demonstrating the good news of Jesus (deeds).

**KEY SCRIPTURES (Choose one)**

**Read Luke 15:1-7 “**Now the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering around to hear Jesus. **2**But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.”

**3**Then Jesus told them this parable: **4**“Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn’t he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? **5**And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders **6**and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbours together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.’ **7**I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.”

**Read Mark 6:30-34 “30**The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. **31**Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, “Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.”

**32**So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place. **33**But many who saw them leaving recognized them and ran on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. **34**When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So, he began teaching them many things.

**35**By this time it was late in the day, so his disciples came to him. “This is a remote place,” they said, “and it’s already very late. **36**Send the people away so that they can go to the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat.”

**37**But he answered, “You give them something to eat.”

They said to him, “That would take more than half a year’s wages[[e](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+6&version=NIV#fen-NIV-24445e)]! Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?”

**38**“How many loaves do you have?” he asked. “Go and see.”

When they found out, they said, “Five—and two fish.”

**39**Then Jesus directed them to have all the people sit down in groups on the green grass. **40**So they sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties.**41**Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to distribute to the people. He also divided the two fish among them all.**42**They all ate and were satisfied, **43**and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish. **44**The number of the men who had eaten was five thousand.

**EXTRA QUOTES**

“There is something inherently inappropriate about cherishing small ambitions for God. How can we ever be content that he should acquire just a little more honour in the world? No.” (Bible scholar John Stott)

 “We present Christ for the sole sufficient reason that He deserves to be presented.” (Scholar Kenneth Cragg)

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. If you heard the sermon, was there anything God spoke to you about personally from this message?
2. What do these passages teach us about God?
3. What do these passages teach us about how we can be more like Jesus?
4. Bishop Lesslie Newbigin said: *“Deeds of love which are permanently disconnected from witness to Christ evoke belief in the wrong thing.”* i.e. someone/thing other than God is glorified. What do you think this means for us as disciples of Jesus?
5. What are some reasons we continue to spread the kingdom of God, regardless of the outcome we might see?
6. **James 1:22** says“Don’t just listen to God’s word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves.” What is the next step you need to take in response to God’s word?

**SUGGESTIONS FOR PRACTICAL APPLICATION**

How you can be involved in sharing the good news of Jesus

1. Invite to Lifegroup
2. Invite to Church
3. Share the good news about Jesus
4. Share a personal God-story
5. Give away *Elim Stories*
6. Join outreaches (talk to Dion or Tony)

**PRAYER POINTS**

* For each individual to have a personal revelation of what these scriptures mean for them
* For God's help to engage with any specific challenges your member may have raised
* For us to have a confidence to ‘not hold back’ and boldly proclaim the name of Jesus.