

THE BIG IDEA: Don't miss the kingdom here by looking for the kingdom there.

The Take-Off

What a series, right?

One of my greatest takeaways from our "Wait What" series has been that we often learn the most precisely because Jesus doesn't shy away from the hard things!

We may think that we want an easy faith, but the reality is that we don't need an easy faith.

We need a Savior who will challenge us, because if it doesn't challenge us, it won't change us.

And my, how it's challenged us! Just think back through the topics that we've covered: money, divorce, eternity, offense, entitlement, and now, on the last week, Jesus deals with the end of all things (and I'm glad because I think I'm done!).

But seriously, He does talk about the end of time in Luke 17:20-37 and, more specifically, the how His kingdom and the end of time go together.

Let's take a peek at the first 2 verses in order to get an idea what's going on and then we'll continue:

- Pharisees asked about when the kingdom of God would come
- They may have been hoping to "cheat" by doing as they pleased right up until the last minute, but remember that these are devout religious leaders asking
- More likely, they bigger point here is that they were asking the King of that kingdom about the future kingdom and missing what was right in front of them!
- They looked past the present trying to see the future, and that's what Jesus is going to address over the next few verses
- The Big Idea warns us: **don't miss the kingdom here by looking for the kingdom there**
- In other words, remember what Jesus prayed in Matthew 6:10 / Your kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven

Our job is to recognize and establish the kingdom more and more on earth, and to do that, we need to look for and live out 3 distinct marks of the kingdom that we find here in Luke 17.

1. Patience

- a. In verse 22, Jesus told the disciples that there would be times that they would "long" for the end of time
- b. What types of things have you longed for? A date? A visit with a friend? A wedding? A birth? A Panthers Super Bowl championship?
- c. It's normal to look forward to future things, but it's not okay to live in the future.
- d. Verse 23 / Jesus tells them not to chase after the future
- e. He's reminding them to be patient, to trust the certainty of the kingdom even in the uncertainty of the moment
- f. Why? Because our patience is a reflection of God's patience, and He is patient so that all can come to salvation (2 Peter 3:9)
- g. If we got saved and begged God to "get us out of here" then we're saying only our salvation matters!
- h. But the kingdom is bigger than our individual salvation - God wants more!
- i. He sees the big picture, and verse 25 reveals that the cross had to come first
- j. We can't bypass the cross to get the kingdom. Jesus didn't, and we can't either, because the cross is part of how God reveals the 2nd mark of the kingdom...

2. Preparation

- a. There are things that we need to learn where we currently are.
- b. Jesus references the days of Noah and the days of Lot and His point is clear: people weren't prepared.
- c. Have you ever had a pop quiz that you weren't even remotely ready for?
- d. Remember the panic? The instant regret that you'd not done more day to day learning because you knew in that moment how much that would have helped?
- e. The kingdom is marked by preparation, not procrastination.
- f. What I love about this teaching from Jesus is that He didn't advocate the crazy end time things that we've all read about.
- g. He didn't say sell it all and move to a mountain and wait.

- h. He said that our preparation would allow us to simply live side by side with others doing normal, routine tasks like home repair, work, resting in bed and fixing meals.
- i. Our preparation for the future is happening every day in every thing we experience.
- j. The kingdom is here, all around us, in chores and work as much as in Sunday morning worship.
- k. Lives marked by patience recognize that every day of delay is another day of preparation in us and in those around us.

3. Pro-life

- a. All of this brings us to verse 37.
- b. If we were giving out awards, verse 37 would win the award for “Weirdest Verse in the Wait What series!”
- c. The disciples asked “where?” Not when!
- d. Jesus responded by talking about a dead body and vultures. Wait, what?
- e. Let’s deal with 2 important things: one, Jesus is pointing us to the cross.
- f. He’s telling His disciples that the vultures (the religious leaders) would gather around His body, and that the cross would be the beginning of the kingdom because that’s why He came.
- g. Two, He’s challenging them, and us, to not be part of a kingdom that feeds off of death, but off of life
- h. The third mark of the kingdom? Pro-life.
- i. Don’t read some political agenda in that, because pro-life is so much more than anti-abortion.
- j. In fact, if we’re only marked by anti-abortion, then we’ll treat the lives of the moms and dads harshly.
- k. Pro-life means that we bring life to all kinds of situations: special needs, adoption, single parents, refugees, and the list could go on.
- l. Patient and prepared citizens of the kingdom bring life everywhere they go because they feed off of the resurrected life of Jesus!

The Landing

Let’s reflect as we close: if the kingdom is near us (and it is!), how well are you recognizing it?

Is your life marked by patience, preparation and being pro-life? Or are you so busy looking for a future kingdom that you’re missing what God is doing right here and right now?

Don’t miss the kingdom here by looking for the kingdom there.

Be patient. Be prepared. Be pro-life.

Oh, and don’t be a vulture.

Let’s pray.