

Community Groups are used extensively as the primary vehicle for discipleship at The Gathering and run on a quarter system. There is one in the fall, one in the winter and one in the spring. During the summer weeks we don't meet in Community Groups but we still offer the Growth Guides as a tool to help you grow personally. The Growth Guides are designed to help you dig deeper into the weekly sermon on your own or with your family and are available each week along with the note sheets at church as well as online.

COMMUNITY GROUPS ARE BETTER WHEN MEMBERS COME PREPARED. THIS GUIDE HAS BEEN PROVIDED AS A TOOL FOR THAT.

Consider...

Use the summary and discussion below to review and apply this week's message:

Message Summary

All of us have looked forward to things that we're excited about, haven't we? A vacation, a new job, the arrival of a new baby, a visit from an old friend. It's perfectly normal to look forward to future events, but it's not normal to live in the future so much that we miss what's actually happening right in front of us. In the final section of Luke 17, we find the Pharisees and the disciples asking questions about the end of all things and the kingdom of God, and we find Jesus trying to help them see that what they were waiting for was happening right in front of them. The Big Idea warns us: **don't miss the Kingdom here by looking for the Kingdom there**, and here are 3 marks of the Kingdom to help us recognize it and bring it here on earth:

1. **Patience.** Jesus told His disciples in Luke 17:22 that there would be times when they would want nothing more than to see the established Kingdom of God and that, if they weren't careful, that desire could cause them to run all over the place searching for it. Instead, Jesus was telling them that the Kingdom is marked by patience that allows us to live with certainty even in uncertain times. In fact, our patience is rooted in God's patience. While we may want this world to end, we can wait patiently knowing that the delay is an opportunity for more people to come to Christ (2 Peter 3:9).
2. **Preparation.** Guess what we can do when we're patient? Allow our everyday situations to help prepare us to be kingdom citizens! Jesus said in verses 26-30 that His coming would be sudden and sure, but instead of panicking about it, He said that our patient preparation would allow us to live normal lives marked by preparation instead of procrastination.
3. **Pro-life.** And the winner of the "Weirdest Verse In the Wait What Series" goes to..... verse 37!! What in the world do vultures and dead bodies have to do with any of this?? Simply this: Jesus knew that the cross would be the place where His kingdom would begin (He even said so in verse 25) and that the religious leaders were the vultures that would feed off His death. But His kingdom isn't marked by death, but by life! We bring His kingdom to earth when we are pro-life, and that is so much more than just being anti-abortion. In every situation, as we wait and prepare for His coming, we bring life!

Discuss

Use the following questions to review and apply the points learned in the message.

- Have you ever missed something obvious? What was it? How did you feel when you finally saw it?
- Why do you think so many believers are in a hurry to get to heaven?
- Have you ever heard the expression "so heavenly minded you're no earthly good?" What do you think it means? How does it relate to our passage in Luke 17:20-37?
- Which mark of the kingdom (patience, preparation, pro-life) is most evident in your life? Least evident?
- What are some everyday ways that you can bring God's kingdom on earth through these 3 marks?
- Read John 3:16; John 10:10; Romans 6:23; Genesis 2:7; and John 6:35. The kingdom of Jesus is marked by life. Read the following passages and discuss how believers can be pro-life in today's culture.