

Life Group Notes 7/16/2023  
Pastor Mark Warren: The Kingdom Part 2

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[If you have observations or questions feel free to send me an email with your comment or observations at [tbeachhead@comcast.net](mailto:tbeachhead@comcast.net).—Pete Mehegan, the Scribe.]

Remember: Be good to one another. Be sensitive and kind. Let God heal our hearts...and guide our discussions. **PLEASE PRE-READ THESE NOTES AND CHOOSE THE DIRECTION THAT IS APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR GROUP. The purpose is to unite, not divide; to facilitate discussion and to discern the freedom the gospel brings. Any part of these notes might be appropriate as a crowd breaker for your own group. The goal is to create memories from Sunday that will serve for a long time.** BE COGNIZANT OF YOUR GROUP'S TIME AND BE SENSITIVE! **Some groups would like to dwell on a single idea. Let the Spirit be your guide. Never feel obligated to complete this study. This study is also a great devotion, taken slowly through the week.**

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Note: I have highlighted suggested discussion questions that Pastor Mark has raised this week, 7/16. Let's allow the Holy Spirit to guide all our discussions, using the highlights as trail blazes. **The purpose is to minister to one another.** Do not be daunted by the number of pages. As an editorial decision, I include each of the passages mentioned in full to facilitate the enjoyment of these notes, rather than having you, the reader, look up each reference. If your Bible is open beside you, you can transfer and annotate from these pages with ease. This week has several footnotes on vocabulary, doctrines and principles of the church. Footnotes are not meant to distract, but enhance the reading, and to help find answers to questions that arise. This week's footnotes include:

1. [On the Gospel of the Kingdom \(From last week.\)](#)
2. [On Sodom and manmade global warming.](#)
3. [On how the Trinity relates to our spirit and soul and body.](#)
4. [On wheat and tares/weeds.](#)
5. [On what is gathered to be burned at the end of the age.](#)

\*\*\*Please **Note:** At the very [end of these notes](#), I've included passages that were mentioned in this week's message for deeper study using SOAP journaling and further study during the week. \*\*\*

Pastor Mark read global impact of disastrous weather from the *Washington Post*. **Is this the most disastrous weather we've experienced in one thousand years? Do you believe this is an example of "manmade global warming?" Do you believe Sodom was also maybe an extreme form of "manmade global warming?"** See [footnote 2](#) below. **How does Pastor Mark's suggestion that we "continue looking to Jesus Who is able to guide us," solve the problems we are facing? What kind of guidance have you received? Do you have a testimony? Pray now that the Holy Spirit give us ears to hear and eyes to see.**

Pastor Mark reviewed last week's message, where the word was sown in our hearts, and where the soil was fertile and receptive, where weeds and stones did not interfere, the heart yielded fruit. **What do you remember. He asked:**

1. What are those things that you need to reconsider?
2. What do you cultivate to allow the seed to do what the Spirit is doing?

**What did you discover?**

Pastor Mark makes several background points:

1. The kingdom of God is here and now. We do not look for it afar off. We live it now. Life itself in all its aspects functions according to the pre-established Laws of the Kingdom, written in all creation.
2. We ourselves live now as three separate expressions of our being: (See [footnote 3](#) below) Some have taught, "We are a spirit. We live in a body, and we have a soul." That is, we have our spirit and our soul and our body, just as God is expressed as the Holy Spirit and the Father and the Jesus the Son. Mark notes, as the soul is composed of the mind, the will, and the emotions, we need to recognize that our emotions are a vital part of our created being, not to be medicated away. God has emotions expressed throughout the Bible and we should expect no less. **Look up James 1:** *2Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, 3for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. 4And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.* (Notice the impact dealing with emotions has on our effective living and fruitfulness.

**Comments?)**

3. Our bodies, he says, are what they appear to be, connected to what the Bible calls "the flesh," with all its natural lusts, desires, appetites, and physical needs. He notes that our flesh can be moved toward sin or moved toward righteousness according to what our own will obeys. Paul notes that our flesh is constantly at war with the Spirit as to which will dominate the soul.
4. Our soul informs us according to the spirit that instructs us and manifests and enforces our will and emotions in the body, moving us deliberately toward depression or a place of peace according to whom we ascribe lordship, namely that spirit whom we allow to be informing the soul at that time. Our own spirit can live in the heavenly kingdom of light or the hellish kingdom of darkness, gathering its own guidance from the kingdom where it dwells, feeding on what it dwells on, which information it feeds the rest of our being, bringing that guidance back to the soul. Mark asks, "Can we live in both realms at the same time?" (**Look how James describes this war: James 4:** *1What causes conflicts and quarrels among you? Don't they come from the passions at war within you? 2You crave what you do not have; you kill and covet, but are unable to obtain it. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask.3And when you do ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may squander it on your pleasures. 4You adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility*

toward God? Therefore, whoever chooses to be a friend of the world renders himself an enemy of God. **What do you see? How does this relate to what Mark is talking about?**

5. Mark says that the evil one is looking to kill steal and devour, and when we come to Jesus, our good Father, by His Spirit, comes to take away our guilt and shame, and deliver us into the realm of light. What, then, are the choices we still face? How do you make those choices? How is it possible to stumble? Where do the stumbling blocks come from?

**Now look up Matthew 13: 24** He put another parable before them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, **25** but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. **26** So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also. **27** And the servants of the master of the house came and said to him, ‘Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have weeds?’ **28** He said to them, ‘An enemy has done this.’ So the servants said to him, ‘Then do you want us to go and gather them?’ **29** But he said, ‘No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. **30** Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, “Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.””

1. What do you see?
2. What is the kingdom of heaven compared to?
3. What is the man doing? Is there any bad seed in his bag?
4. Why are his servants sleeping? Is that evil? Sin? Could it be natural and expected that the servants sleep from time to time? (Remember, the five wise virgins slept. Why?)
5. What did the enemy sow? Why would an enemy do this? Where do the stumbling blocks come from?
6. See the [footnote 4](#) on wheat and tares. What do you notice? Why would it be a bad idea to pluck the tares before all is ripe?
7. Which gets taken away first? The good guys or the bad guys? Is this counterintuitive? Which did you expect to be taken away first? What have you heard in the teachings you’ve heard?
8. What is the destiny of the wheat that is “put in His barn?”

**Look up Jesus’ explanation of the parable in Matthew 13: 36** Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples came to him, saying, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.” **37** He answered, “The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. **38** The field is the world, and the good seed is the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, **39** and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. **40** Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. **41** The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, **42** and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. **43** Then the

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righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.

1. Who is the sower?
2. Where does He sow? (Remember, "Go into all the world and make disciples." Who was the first to sow? Who was the first to be sown? Explain.)
3. Who exactly are the good seed? Who are these sons (and daughters)? Can you name any by name?
4. Who is the enemy and what is he sowing?
5. Look again at verse 25. At what time of day did the enemy sow this seed? Who's watching? What evidence tells us that the enemy stopped by and sowed?
6. After sowing, what does the enemy do? Why? Why is this typical behavior for him?
7. What do sons of the evil one do in the field? Are you aware of any "sons of the evil one" at work today? Be careful with any specific accusations, which could be harmful. How are they recognized? What is the fruit of their labor?
8. If the enemy is "darnel," ([footnote 4](#) below) poisonous to the crop and deadly to the eater, as seen above, how dangerous is that enemy? What does Jesus say our response must be and who must direct that response?
9. Why will there always be unpleasant people in good churches? Why are they not just thrown out? When do they finally get thrown out?
10. What is the fruit of our patience?
11. If a disruptive, divisive person is evicted from fellowship too soon, what can happen to that fellowship? Do you have a testimony?
12. Why is it instructive to note that you CANNOT differentiate wheat from darnel until the harvest, when the heads change color: wheat from green to gold, and darnel from green to black? What does that speak to us in terms of patience and hope?
13. What is the destiny of the weed when the right time comes?
14. What is the destiny of the sons of the kingdom? Why?

**Look up 1 Corinthians 3: 10** By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one must be careful how he builds. [11](#) For no one can lay a foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. [12](#) If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, or straw, [13](#) his workmanship will be evident, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will prove the quality of each man's work. [14](#) If what he has built survives, he will receive a reward. [15](#) If it is burned up, he will suffer loss. He himself will be saved, but only as if through the flames.

1. In the context of the parable above, what did Paul sow? What was the result?
2. What do the sons of the kingdom do here? If they do anything else, what are they sowing? Are they still "sons of the kingdom?"

3. In the context of verses 11 and 12, what foundation did Paul lay? How well did he do? How can you tell? Do you know anyone who has benefited from the seed that Paul sowed? Today, who is the prime beneficiary of the foundation Paul laid?
4. And what is your next step, being that beneficiary? What tools do you have to work with? Did the Corinthians have more tools than you? Or fewer?
5. What is the “gold” and the “silver” here? Are there good methods and less effective methods of sowing? How can one differentiate the good from the less good?
6. What is the “fire” here? Why is it good to be careful with one’s own effort and ministry?
7. Is a person being judged here? Or are his works being put into the light of judgment?

**Look at Matthew 6:** 1“Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. 2“Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. 3But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

1. Who benefits when what you do is done for show? Do the needy benefit from your gift? Do you benefit at all in the end? (Why does Jesus say, “I never knew you,” when you gave so much to the poor?)
2. Who benefits when what you do is done in secret? Do the needy benefit by your gift? Do you?
3. Look at verse 4: What exactly is being done in secret?
4. Do you blow your trumpet when you are doing a good job, so that everybody looks?
5. (Who blows the trumpet when God works wonders? Does God ever blow the trumpet? Did Jesus ever blow the trumpet in the days of His ministry? Why is it godlike to give in secret? Why is it fun to blow the trumpet for God?)
6. What is the reward for things done in secret? Why ever seek rewards by your show?
7. Explain the Proverbs 19:7, “He who gives to the poor lends to the Lord, and He will recompense the lender.”
8. How do you put your treasure in heaven where moth and rust do not corrupt? Who watches over that treasure? How much worry comes with that treasure?

**Look up Ephesians 5:** 1Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. 2And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

<sup>3</sup>But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. <sup>4</sup>Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. <sup>5</sup>For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. <sup>6</sup>Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. <sup>7</sup>Therefore do not become partners with them; <sup>8</sup>for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light <sup>9</sup>(for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), **<sup>10</sup>and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord.** <sup>11</sup>Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. <sup>12</sup>For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. <sup>13</sup>But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, <sup>14</sup>for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says,

“Awake, O sleeper,  
and arise from the dead,  
and Christ will shine on you.”

<sup>15</sup>Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, <sup>16</sup>making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. <sup>17</sup>Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

1. Contrast the offspring of the kingdom with the offspring of the evil one in their behavior. Whom does each imitate? Are you imitating anyone? Whom do you say you are imitating? If you say you are trying to imitate Jesus, would your family agree?
2. Do you see both families, that of the kingdom and that of darkness, in your surroundings? In the church? In you? What is your response when you do?
3. Who decides whose child *you* are and how do you know?
4. What does your behavior suggest? (You don't need to answer this question out loud, but you must answer it truthfully.)
5. Why must one be born again?
6. Look at verse 10 above, highlighted. What pleases the Lord? Do you understand that something you do can please the Lord directly? How is that?
7. If *you* don't do those things that please the Lord, who will?
8. How do you know when the Lord is pleased?
9. What are some common “fruitless works of darkness?” How much part do you take in them?
10. How do you expose these “fruitless works of darkness” without appearing judgmental and condemning? Do you have suggestions?
11. Look again at verse 5. Describe what you see.

Look back again at Matthew 13: **<sup>40</sup>Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. <sup>41</sup>The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, <sup>42</sup>and**

throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

1. What *is* gathered to be burned? (See [footnote 5](#) below.)
2. What is *not* gathered to be burned?
3. What is the difference between one who stumbles and one who continually practices?
4. How does how we live today carry something forth to the future, for better or for worse?
5. Look again at what Paul told the Ephesians from above: *4Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. 5For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. 6Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.* What does this say in your own words? Can we ignore what Paul is saying?
6. What happens if we let filthiness, foolish talk and crude joking out of our mouths instead of thanksgiving?
7. Is it difficult to switch from the former to thanksgiving? Why or why not?
8. If we switch, and follow Paul and ultimately Christ, what happens to the foolishness of our past?
9. Have you ever been a stumbling block to someone else? What have you done about it? Have you prayed?
10. Review the parable of the sheep and the goats in Matthew 25:31-46. Look closely. How important is what we do in this life? Whom do we serve when we are serving? Whom do we ignore when we turn our backs on the least? What reward do we gain when we act like Jesus toward the least?
11. Mark says, "Seed will always produce something." What are you sowing?
12. He adds, "If you have righteousness in your life, keep feeding that, because it will produce something." How do you do that, practically? What is new in you that you can feed?
13. Look up psalm 103: *11For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His loving devotion for those who fear Him. 12As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. 13As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him. 14For He knows our frame; He is mindful that we are dust.* Describe the hope these verses inspire.
14. If he has removed our transgressions what is left to fear? How does our love for Him compare to His love for us?

### **The Follow-up Application**

1. Use the [SOAP journal studies](#) below throughout the week.
2. When you sit down to do SOAP, describe the nature of the choices you are offered this week. How did you do?
3. Look carefully at how you walk this week, not as unwise but as wise. How did that work? Did you make the best use of the time? Note improvements you can make.
4. Pray daily, "God I want to discern what is pleasing to You and walk in that way." Note what changes with that prayer.

### **Take the time to pray.**

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### **Scribes Notes:**

1. **On the gospel of the kingdom**—Jesus "...went everywhere preaching the gospel of the kingdom." What does this even mean? What exactly did He teach, and why is this so relevant today? If it were that important, would that message not have continued through Acts? Well, in fact, the doctrine of the Kingdom does continue throughout Acts right up to the last chapter, with Paul teaching everything about the kingdom in Rome. One of the most important treatises ever written on the gospel of the kingdom was written in [The Unshakable Kingdom and the Unchanging Person: Jones, E. Stanley: 9781974132935: Amazon.com: Books](#) by E. Stanley Jones. His thesis begins by reminding us all that Jesus told us that the Kingdom does not come with observation, saying look here or look there, because *the kingdom of God is within us*, just as Pastor Mark said. Without the Laws of the Kingdom of God working, our very bodies would cease to function. As it is written, He holds all things together by the Word of His Power. Understanding this is absolutely key to understanding the gospel.
2. **On Sodom and "manmade global warming"**—Global warming, or climate change caused by human affluence and consumption is an issue that enjoys heated debate even in Christian circles. Is the weather actually caused to any degree by our own consumption of today's unparalleled conveniences? Some scoff, accurately reminding all who are still listening that the "...best wines of the Roman Empire were imported from Scottish vineyards." The world has seen cycles of extreme heat and extreme cold. It is said that the Black Death in the Dark Ages was actually caused and exacerbated by successive years of extreme cold. Whole mastodon carcasses have been found in the melting ice packs of Siberia flash frozen with tropical vegetation in their stomachs. There is an example of extreme heat that was indeed caused directly by man in his inattentive behavior. Archeologists have recently published reports that they have found the remains of the biblical cities of Sodom and Gomorrah: (<https://theamericantribune.com/archeologist-believes-to-have-found-the-remains-of-biblical-city-sodom/>) Artifacts have been found in these ruins, in particular potsherds, that "look like they've been glazed." They were subjected to such a high degree of heat, that they have been "turned to glass." The story of Sodom is well known, and the cause of its



destruction made clear as one of the most extreme examples of “global warming” caused by man. But Sodom’s downfall in unprecedented heat was not attributed to their carbon emissions, gas stoves or air conditioners and yet, the cause was manmade. As always throughout history, some think they know what caused Sodom’s downfall, and they might not understand the root of that downfall. Ezekiel explains Sodom’s fall clearly in chapter 16, when he warns Judah that they will also likewise perish if they do not repent: *46Your older sister was Samaria, who lived with her daughters to your north; and your younger sister was Sodom, who lived with her daughters to your south. 47And you not only walked in their ways and practiced their abominations, but soon you were more depraved than they were. 48As surely as I live, declares the Lord GOD, your sister Sodom and her daughters never did as you and your daughters have done. 49Now this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: She and her daughters had pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness; they did not help the poor and needy. 50Thus they were haughty and committed abominations before Me. Therefore, I removed them, as you have seen.* The root issue was not carbon emissions, but behavior over which we have total control. Clearly, today is not the first time that the human race has put itself first, overeaten, binged on “PrideFlix,” and neglected the poor and the needy, instead acting abominably. But the resulting “global warmings” history relates should at least act as a global warning for us all.

3. **On how the Trinity relates to our spirit, our soul, and our body.** We live now as three separate expressions of our being: It has been said, “We are a spirit. We have a soul that lives in our body, just as it is written God is Spirit. Then the Father, the Will, directs His Power to be expressed directly by, in and through His Word, Who is Jesus the Son. that is the Breath of Life (that Breath of Life that breathed into Adam’s nostrils so that he became a “living soul”) and the Will and the Word Who Himself forms and shapes all that has ever been created. Remember we are the only beings in the story of creation to which the Bible ascribes the image and likeness of the Creator Himself. To be godly, that is to be Christlike, our soul, our mind, will and emotions will always want what the Father wants. “He will give you the desire of your hearts.” Our life and our breath will always be dependent on the Spirit of God in us, and our words and our actions will always be according to and in imitation of His Word, Jesus Christ. Where with God, the Word only ever does what He sees the Father do, in perfect agreement as One with the Spirit, in contrast, our own flesh is at war with the Spirit in us, and the battleground is our soul. Who wins the war of the will decides the degree of oneness we have with the Spirit of God. Explain why this is so important. Look again at Roman 7 and Romans 8. Take the time to see how Paul won the very real struggle between the flesh and the Spirit.
4. **On wheat and tares/weeds**—In this parable, some translations say the enemy comes behind the sower and sows “tares” among the wheat. The plant of this parable is *Lolium temulentum* or “darnel,” a deadly plant very similar to the wheat as it grows, until the time of harvest when its fruit can be easily distinguished from the food grain. Wikipedia describes it like this: Darnel usually grows in the same production zones as [wheat](#) and was a serious [weed](#) of cultivation until modern sorting machinery enabled darnel seeds to be separated efficiently from seed wheat.<sup>[1]</sup> The similarity between these two plants is so great that in some regions, darnel is referred to as “**false wheat**”.<sup>[2]</sup> It bears a close resemblance to wheat until the ear appears. The spikes of *L. temulentum* are more slender than those of wheat. The spikelets are oriented edgewise to the [rachis](#) and have only a single [glume](#), while those of wheat are oriented with the flat side to the rachis and have two glumes. Wheat will appear brown when ripe, whereas darnel is black.<sup>[3]</sup> Darnel can be infected by an [endophytic fungus](#) of

the genus *Neotyphodium* and the endophyte-produced, insecticidal [looline alkaloids](#) were first isolated from this plant.<sup>[4]</sup> The French word for darnel is *ivraie* (from Latin *ebriacus*, intoxicated), which expresses the drunken nausea from eating the infected plant, which can be fatal.<sup>[4]</sup> The French name echoes the scientific name, Latin *temulentus* "drunk." [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lolium\\_temulentum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lolium_temulentum) Those studying the madness of the young girls during the days of the Salem witch trials suggest that the girls who were afflicted manifested all the symptoms of the behavior caused by eating darnel.



**WHEAT:** before it is fully ripe.



**TARES:** *Lolium Temulentum*

5. **On what is gathered to be burned at the end of the age**—In Matthew 13:41, the original Greek says, [the angels will gather] "...all *skandalon*, (stumbling blocks/scandal/"properly, the trigger of a trap (the mechanism closing a trap down on the unsuspecting victim); (figuratively) an offense, putting a negative cause-and-effect relationship into motion.") and all those who are deliberately practicing lawlessness [*anomia*—having no law].") Lawlessness is the behavior of everyone who is a law unto themselves, declaring, "It is only wrong if I say it's wrong." This was the litany at the end of the book of Judges, where "Everyone did what was right in his own eyes."

**For further study:**

Take a moment each day this week to apply the SOAP... (**S**cripture—Copy the scripture. / **O**bservation—Write what you see. / **A**pplication—What is God saying? / **P**ray—What is your response?) ...method to some of the scripture we looked at this week:

Monday: Ezekiel 16:46-50
Tuesday: Matthew 13:24-30
Wednesday: Matthew 13:37-43
Thursday: James 1: 2-4
Friday: James 4:1-4
Saturday: 1 Corinthians 3:11-15
Sunday: Proverbs 19:17

(Scribe's note: I have been told that the SOAP method is most effective when limited to two to four verses. Study is most effective when context is clear. I have included more verses this week in several cases for the purpose of clarity and context. You are free to take the verses that speak to you and respond in the context of that verse. As with the notes themselves, this task is to be a joy for you. If at any point you feel you are not doing it correctly, your grade has already been determined. You ARE A+ because you read this far.)