

Life Group Notes 8/6/2023
Pastor Mark Warren The Kingdom Part 4

[No doctrine is a given unless it has been found in the Word given by the Holy Spirit and received by you. If you have observations or questions, feel free to send me an email with your comment or observations at tbeachhead@comcast.net. Thank you for taking the time—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.**

Note: I have highlighted suggested discussion questions that Pastor Mark has raised this week, 8/6. 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 "Lord's supper" in 1 Corinthians 11.](#)
2. [On C. S. Lewis, Narnia, the wardrobe, and the kingdom.](#)
3. [On "our debts" for which we are asking forgiveness.](#)
4. [On Proverbs 4 our hearts and the "springs of life."](#)

***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. ***

Charlie Temple began communion by looking at 1 Corinthians 11²³For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night He was betrayed, took bread,²⁴and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me." ²⁵In the same way, after supper He took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in

remembrance of Me.” ²⁶For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes.

1. How often are these verses applied in your own experience?
2. How often does Jesus say they are to be applied?
3. Is this part of a ritual? Or is it rather a part of a lifestyle?
4. When are they actually applied? How often?
5. What bread? What cup? What do they represent?
6. Look at the history of the church ([footnote one](#)). What was the original context?
7. What are you doing when you eat the bread and drink the cup?
8. Who benefits by this remembrance? Why do you think it’s “every time,” and not just once a month or so?
9. How does this connect to meeting Jesus face to face on this day and at this hour?

Pastor Mark begins by reminding us of the progressive nature of revelation. Look up 1 Corinthians 13: ¹¹*When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I set aside childish ways. ¹²Now we see but a dim reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.* How does what Paul describes here parallel your own experience? How does it reflect what is happening at Grace Capital? Looking back over these most recent months, describe what you have learned? What is new?

He repeats the primary theme of this series on the Kingdom: “We do not have to wait until we die to experience heaven.” **Recite the Lord’s prayer. Recite Matthew 6:10. ¹⁰Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.**

1. If Jesus taught you to pray this prayer, what are the chances that God say, “No!”
2. What are the odds that this is a prayer according to God’s will?
3. Look up 1 John 5: ¹⁴*And this is the confidence that we have before Him: If we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. ¹⁵And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we already possess what we have asked of Him.* What are the chances that God respond in the affirmative, when Jesus told us what to say?
4. What will an answer to this prayer look like? In your life? In your family’s life? In the community? In the nation? In the lives of politicians?
5. When can you expect the answer to this prayer? What is your next step when you don’t see the answer immediately?
6. Do you pray believing the answer is imminent? Or do you pray by rote?
7. How do you know what God’s will looks like? From the newspaper? Or from scripture? Can it be “from both?”

Pastor Mark describes this present age: “Fascism made the state supreme. Nazism made race supreme. Communism made the common good supreme. The oligarchy made money supreme. Socialism made society supreme. We, in our system, focus on capitalism. We make individualism supreme. We are self-sufficient with our own voice, and we are independent.”

1. How do these systems break down over time?
2. What is missing?

3. What system is all-sufficient and cannot break down?
4. What comes as benefits of the Kingdom?
5. How have the state schools failed us in training us to be a part of the Kingdom?
6. How must we then be trained? How must our children be trained?
7. Review Jesus' prayer for us: John 17: **15***I am not asking that You take them out of the world, but that You keep them from the evil one. **16**[They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.](#) **17**Sanctify them by the truth; Your word is truth. Jesus prayed for us. Will the Father answer Jesus' prayer concerning you personally? What does the answer to this prayer look like? How do you know that God is answering this prayer even now?*
8. Look up Matthew 6: **31***Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'* **32***For the Gentiles strive after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. **33**But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you.* How does this relate to the Lord's prayer?
9. What comes first in our seeking? Why? Does it come at once? When do you stop seeking the kingdom?
10. Does verse 33 say, "Do not seek..." the other things? What is the top priority? Why?
11. What **are** we specifically told **not** to do (v.31)? Do you have a testimony?
12. In Pastor Mark's analogy to Narnia (See [footnote 2](#) below) how does childlikeness grow in importance to this principle?

Pastor Mark points out that the church with its systems of rituals and behavior sometimes masks the essential nature of the Kingdom of God.

1. See [footnote 1](#) on the Lord's supper.
2. How has the modern church in every denomination changed what first happened in Acts 2?
3. Who is the Head of the church?
4. What is the pastor's role?
5. Go back to the Lord's prayer in Matthew 6: *Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. **10**Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. **11**Give us this day our daily bread. **12**And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. **13**And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.'* **14***For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. **15**But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive yours.* What do you notice? How important is verse 15 to the answer to this prayer?
6. Does the Lord's prayer create a list of dos and don'ts?
7. Where is repentance in the Lord's prayer? How does repentance become a team effort?

Pastor sets out steps to approaching the Kingdom:

1. We have to unlearn a bunch of things. We cannot put Jesus on top of the world system. **Reflect and comment.**
2. We have to live in a separate system called the kingdom system while we live on this earth we were birthed into. **How long did it take you to learn to live in this world system? How many years until you were making choices on your own?**

3. We have to surrender our world and emotions to His kingdom ways. Pastor says, "We cannot say, 'Don't tell me what I can and cannot do.' As long as we choose to live our own way, we cannot enter the Kingdom of God." **Reflect and comment. How did Pastor's using Pastor Richie in a trust fall illustrate this principle?** He says, "When we want Jesus to catch us, and yet we want Jesus 'way over there' and not close enough to keep us from falling, we fall. If we keep our relationship tight with Jesus, He catches us ever time." **Reflect and comment.**
4. Describe the principles of surrender and trust. Are they the same thing? How does each begin? How do they grow? How does each relate to the other? What is the fruit of surrender and trust in Christianity? Do you have a testimony?
5. Mark says, "The kingdom of God begins to produce fruit." What is the expectation you have when you plant seeds in your garden? What steps do you take so that the seeds you plant produce the fruit you desire? What fruit do you expect in you as the Kingdom grows in you?

Pastor Mark says, "When you ask, 'What does the Kingdom look like?' it begins to look like Jesus' life. He was the Kingdom, incarnate." **Reflect and comment.** He says, the nineties fad bracelet, "WWJD—What would Jesus do?" was a profound statement of how to consciously develop the kingdom mindset.

6. Look up Proverbs 4: [20](#)*My son, pay attention to my words; incline your ear to my sayings.* [21](#)*Do not lose sight of them; keep them within your heart.* [22](#)*For they are life to those who find them, and health to the whole body.* [23](#)*Guard your heart with all diligence, for from it flow springs of life.* From where does the heart receive instruction. See [footnote 4](#) below.
7. Lastly look up John 16: [12](#)*I still have much to tell you, but you cannot yet bear to hear it.* [13](#)*However, when the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all truth. For He will not speak on His own, but He will speak what He hears, and He will declare to you what is to come.* [14](#)*He will glorify Me by taking from what is Mine and disclosing it to you.* [15](#)*Everything that belongs to the Father is Mine. That is why I said that the Spirit will take from what is Mine and disclose it to you.* Why could not Jesus tell the disciples everything? Who gets to hear "the rest of the story?" How? What is happening right now, today, as you think about this message? Why is it so essential, then, that you guard your heart? How noisy is your heart? Why did was the Holy Spirit sent? How is He doing?
8. Pastor spoke of the passing of his dog as a trust fall, where the Spirit of God told him he had to learn to let go. Do you have a similar testimony, where you learned to let go?

The Follow-up Application

1. Use the [SOAP journal studies](#) below throughout the week.
2. Try to remember the Lord's death at each meal. What do you notice?
3. Look at the Lord's Prayer, and list in one or two words each request you are asking of the Lord. How many are there? List them in order of priority for you. Are there any requests you would add?
4. Make a list of the fruit you expect as the Kingdom takes over.

Take the time to pray.

Scribe's Notes:

1. **On the “Lord’s supper” in 1 Corinthians 11.** First take the time to read Paul’s admonition to the church at Corinth in 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 from beginning to end. To fully understand what Paul is speaking of let’s review some details that are too often overlooked:
 1. Paul is writing to friends. He lived in Corinth for three years, and taught them from the ground up the basics of kingdom principles and meaning of communion.
 2. Paul is answering questions that he had received from the elders of Corinth in a letter.
 3. When you read the passage, answer this: How is communion in Corinth like what we received this Sunday?
 4. How is it different? Did anyone “go hungry” on Sunday at Grace for example?

Now look up Acts 2: [42](#)*They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. [43](#)A sense of awe came over everyone, and the apostles performed many wonders and signs. [44](#)All the believers were together and had everything in common. [45](#)Selling their possessions and goods, they shared with anyone who was in need. [46](#)With one accord they continued to meet daily in the temple courts and to break bread from house to house, sharing their meals with gladness and sincerity of heart, [47](#)praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.*

1. Match the tradition begun in Acts at the dawn of the church with what Paul is describing. Match it to what we did this Sunday with so many of the Christian churches around the world who have taken the first Sunday of every month for communion.
 2. Why was the teaching of the Apostles so important in Acts 2 that they took time to review it? Why do you take the time weekly with these notes?
 3. Who was left out in Acts 2? What steps were taken to prevent anyone from being left out?
 4. What was disrupting the feast at Corinth? How does a celebration become a ritual, and then get disrupted. (Look at what Jude says about disrupters at what was called the “Agape”/Love feast: “[12](#)*These men are hidden reefs in your love feasts, shamelessly feasting with you but shepherding only themselves. They are clouds without water, carried along by the wind; fruitless trees in autumn, twice dead after being uprooted.*” What was disrupting Jude’s love feasts? Where do weeds come from? Look at 1 Cor 11:19 “[19](#)*And indeed, there must be differences among you to show which of you are approved.* Explain. How does error also teach the wise?
2. **On C. S. Lewis, Narnia, the wardrobe, and the kingdom.** Pastor Mark made several references to a children’s book series turned movie known as *The Chronicles of Narnia*, written in the post-WWII era by Clive Staples Lewis, a prominent twentieth-century Christian apologist. In the first book of seven written in the series, *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, the four Pevensie children, Peter, Susan, Edmond, and Lucy adventure into Narnia through a wardrobe purely by Lucy’s accidental curiosity when exploring their

temporary foster home while the bombing rages in London. The series is a childlike study and discovery of faith and its power to influence life and world powers. The Lion, Aslan, is of course the Christ figure, son of the Emperor overseas, with whom a loving, lasting relationship is also life changing. In another of his works of fiction, called *The Space Trilogy: Out of the Silent Planet, Perelandra* and *That Hideous Strength*, Lewis explores God's work through relationships with Him in all of creation, angelic, human, and extra-terrestrial. *Perelandra* is a modern day re-telling of the fall, where fallen man becomes the tempter on Venus to the newly created man-like species there. *That Hideous Strength* is a sobering prophetic look at today's news, as the "deep state" empowers itself with dark, satanic powers to impose global governance. Written in 1943 by sheer audacity, *That Hideous Strength* has been acclaimed to be "by far superior to its contemporary dystopian novels, *Brave New World* and *1984* which it preceded." In fact, *That Hideous Strength* came out the same week *Animal Farm* hit the stands, and the same week that the bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. George Orwell wrote a review:

<https://apilgriminnarnia.com/2020/09/10/george-orwells-review-of-c-s-lewis-that-hideous-strength-throwback-thursday/>

3. **On our debts that for which we are asking forgiveness**—In the English-speaking church, there has always been a discrepancy in the Lord's prayer as to what we are being forgiven depending on the denomination where the prayer is being recited. Episcopalians traditionally ask that their "trespasses" be forgiven "as we forgive those who trespass against us." Reformers and indeed most protestants ask that debts be forgiven, "as we forgive our debtors," those who owe us anything. Which do you prefer? The Greek word is ὀφείλημα, *opheilema*, and it does, indeed, mean "legal debt/a thing owed." It is also frequently applied to offense and sin, as in that which requires payment.
4. **On proverbs 4, our hearts and the springs of life**—When Proverbs 4:23 admonishes us to guard our hearts with all diligence, because the "springs of life" flow from there, the word "springs" means source, as where a river begins, and, also, "borders/boundaries." All our moral decisions, day to day, begin there with the heart. If the barrier is strong against immorality, resistance to temptation is assured. If the barrier is broken down like a southern border, a new heart means new boundaries.

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: 1 Corinthians 11:18-21
Tuesday: 1 Corinthians 11:23-26
Wednesday: Acts 2:42-47
Thursday: John 17:15-17
Friday: John 15:18-20
Saturday: Matthew 6:31-32
Sunday: Proverbs 29:17-18

(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. At times, I might include more verses 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+ already because you are reading these words.)