

PPT Title

Kingdom Life

Main Point: The kingdom of God is very different than this world.

Key Verse: *Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world."* - John 18:36a

Props: wrinkled trash bag (that can be put over a volunteer's shoulders, scarf-like), a cookie tin or plate of cookies, brown paper bag of groceries, scale, soccer ball, large gift-wrapped box

BACKGROUND/REVIEW

Say: God had promised the Jewish people that He was going to send them a King. The Jewish people waited for this King, Messiah, for hundreds of years. They wanted a King to set them free from their enemies. When Jesus first came forward to begin preaching and teaching, He was 30 years old. His cousin, John, had been living in the wilderness, across the Jordan River, teaching that the long-awaited King* was about to come. When John saw Jesus, he told everyone that Jesus was the One they had been waiting for (John 1:29-30). Some men left John's side to follow Jesus (John 1:35-39). As Jesus taught, more men began to follow Him. These men were called the disciples. They remained with Jesus. They heard His teachings and watched Him perform miracles. Matthew puts it this way:



*Jesus went all over Galilee. There He taught in the synagogues. He preached the good news of God's kingdom. He healed **every** illness and sickness the people had.* - Matthew 4:23

Ask: How many illnesses did Jesus cure? *Every illness.* **Say:** Jesus did so many amazing things that it would have been impossible to write everything down (John 21:25), but Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John tell us many examples of the miracles that Jesus did. For example, Jesus healed a man with a terrible skin disease called leprosy, healed a paralyzed servant just by speaking, healed Peter's sick mother-in-law, and drove evil spirits out of many people (Matthew 8). During all these miracles, Jesus' disciples were right by His sight. They were witnesses of all the amazing things He did. Jesus was careful to explain everything to His disciples (Mark 4:34).

POOR IN SPIRIT (Matthew 5:1-3)

Say: Jesus taught in a way that no one had ever heard before. When Jesus spoke, people knew that He had authority (Matthew 7:29). He was unlike any other teacher, and He taught a message that was different than anyone had ever taught. Jesus taught about the kingdom of God. Remember, we said last week that the kingdom of God includes more than heaven. It is anywhere the will of God is done. Jesus came to bring God's kingdom to earth. Jesus taught that in His kingdom, things were **very different** than in this world. In fact, most things are **opposite**.



I remember an episode of *The Andy Griffith Show*. A friend of Andy's invited Andy and Barney to visit his fancy country club. When Andy and Barney arrived, it was obvious that they were a little out of place among the wealthy businessmen. Andy and Barney



were simple, small town guys. They were more the type to go fishing than play golf or tennis. But Barney was determined to fit in. He joined into a conversation that two men were having about golf. Of course, Barney didn't know anything about golf, but he thought he did. When the two men gave their golf scores, one man said that his best score was 100. The other man grinned modestly and said that he golfed an average of 95. Barney piped up to tell the 95-golfer that he could improve his game by getting some tips from the 100-golfer. Barney was so proud of his words of advice. But what Barney didn't know is that in golf, the lower score is better!

Barney had an **incorrect understanding** of how the game was played. Do you think it would make a big difference on the golf course if you were trying to get the **highest** score instead of the **lowest** score? If you don't understand the goal of the game, you'll never win, no matter how good your intentions or how hard you try.



Similarly, but far more serious, the people in Jesus' day had an incorrect understanding of how to live their lives. They had been living their lives by the wrong rules. They were living with the wrong goal in mind. Jesus came to teach them the correct way to live (Mark 1:38). It would be the opposite of the way they had understood it to be.



Open your Bibles to Matthew 5:1. It's important to know that Jesus was speaking to Jewish people. They believed that if they worked REALLY hard, and obeyed all of God's commandments, God would accept them. They even added extra laws that they tried to follow. They thought the more rules they followed, the closer they would get to God. The problem was, **this was all wrong!** Just like Barney Fife had the game of golf all wrong, these people were ALL WRONG about how to enter God's kingdom. The truth was that no one could obey all of the commands that God gave to Moses. It was impossible to keep all the laws perfectly! God actually gave the His commandments to His people so they could see that they were nowhere close to God's perfection. No matter how much the people tried to be perfect, they always failed.

At just the right time, Jesus came to teach the good news: God would do for them what they could not do for themselves. Jesus gave many promises about the Kingdom of God. Let's look at the first one.

*"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."
Matthew 5:1-3*

Now when (Jesus) saw the crowds, He went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to Him, and He began to teach them saying, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." - Matthew 5:1-3

Ask: What is the first word in the promise? *Blessed*. **Say:** Blessed means joyful, deeply happy, and favored by God. In Jesus' list of promises, Jesus put first things first. The first promise is the key to kingdom. In this promise, Jesus explained **who would be accepted into the kingdom of heaven**. Listen very closely to this promise.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Ask: When you hear the word **poor**, what do you think of? *Listen for answers*. **Say:** We usually think of someone without money. But listen carefully! Jesus did not say, "Blessed are the poor." He said, "Blessed are the **poor in spirit**." Let's look at these 3 words, because in this case, the words absolutely go together. The word for poor, here, means needy, powerless, unable to get what is needed, helpless. Jesus linked "poor" with the words, "in spirit." The spirit is the part of you that relates to God, and to eternal things. Jesus was saying, "Blessed are those who are completely helpless to come to God." These are the people who realize that God is perfect, and no matter how hard they try, they cannot be perfect. They are sinners who have nothing to offer God. These people say, "I am helpless. I can't get to God on my own. I really need God's help!" How could these imperfect people ever be blessed, or completely joyful? Jesus surprised everyone in the crowd by saying that these are the people who would belong to the kingdom of God!

Say: Let's look at how this might look if we could **see** spiritual things. **Teacher, call up a volunteer.** **Say:** Just like everyone since Adam and Eve, _____ has a problem. She has sinned, and her sin keeps her from our perfect God (Romans 3:23). We'll let this trash bag be a symbol of her sin. **Place trash bag on her shoulders, like a scarf.** But what if _____ thought she had a lot of good things to offer God. What if _____ thought, "I baked cookies for my sick neighbor, so God should accept me." **Hand volunteer a cookie tin, or plate of cookies.** And then she remembered, "Oh, I gave groceries to the poor last Christmas, so that must bring me closer to God." **Hand her a brown paper bag of groceries.** And, she thought, "Honestly, I'm not as bad as some people. God must think I'm okay." **Hand her a scale.** And, she thought, "I am good at sports, so that must earn some points with God." **Hand your volunteer a soccer ball.** **Say:** Now, _____ thinks she has all this to offer to God, but in truth, NONE of these things will take away her sin; none of the "good" things she does can bring her to the perfection that God requires! Isaiah 64:6 says that compared to God's holiness, all of our good deeds are like filthy, dirty rags. We are unholy, so we are separated from our holy God.

But God created _____. He's crazy about her, and He does not want to be separated from her! **Pick up large, gift-wrapped package.** When Jesus came to die on the cross, He did EVERYTHING God required to take away our sin and make us perfect. He offers forgiveness and new life to all who have faith in HIM, but _____ does not have room for this gift. **Show that volunteer cannot accept gift.** **Ask:** What is the only way _____ can receive Jesus' free gift? *She has to lay down all the other things.* **Say:** She must realize that the things she does will not take away her sin and bring her to God. She falls short of God's perfection. She has to realize that she is poor (helpless, powerless, bankrupt) in her spirit (in relating to God). **Ask volunteer to lay down all her items, keeping "sin" trash bag on.** **Say:** Now _____ is able to receive Jesus' gift of forgiveness and enter into the kingdom of God. **Hand large gift to volunteer, and take "sin" trash bag from her and place it on your own shoulders.** This is exactly what God's grace is all about. It is God saving us even though we don't deserve it.

Say: This teaching was completely opposite of what the Jewish people had been taught by their leaders (Matthew 23:4). Just imagine the relief that Jesus' teaching was to His listeners! With love and compassion, Jesus told them, "You can't do this. Rest in Me, and I will carry your burden of sin. I will bring you to the Father. I am the way to God." **Thank your volunteer.**



Jesus' teaching was the BEST NEWS ever! Some people trusted Jesus and became His disciples. Other people thought that His promise was too good to be true. Sadly, they would not give up trying to earn their way to God, so they did not follow Jesus. Those people remained separated from God. And then there were the Jewish leaders, called Pharisees and Sadducees. They became angry with Jesus because Jesus taught the opposite of what they taught. As we learn more about Jesus' life, we'll keep our eye on these leaders.

Application: This opposite-teaching applies to you today! In our world, people have to work hard to be valued or accepted by others. In our world, we are judged by what grades we get, how we look, or how good we are at sports. But the kingdom of God is opposite from this! It's not about what you can do for God - **it's what God did for you!** You are helpless - completely unable to do anything to be accepted by God (Romans 3:9-20). Even though being kind, giving to the poor, and coming to church are good things, none of these things can take away your sin and make you perfect. Trusting Jesus is the only way. Only when you are "poor in spirit," are you able to receive the free gift of salvation that Jesus offers by His grace.

KINGDOM LIFE (Matthew 5:4-48)

Say: Jesus continued to teach about the kingdom of God for 3 years. Jesus always amazed His listeners, because life in the kingdom is so different than life in this world. 3



Let's look at just a few of the things Jesus taught.

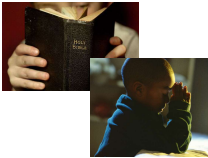
In our world, the people who are the loudest, the boldest, the best looking, and the strongest are noticed. Just think about the people who are famous in our world - movie stars and sports heroes. But Jesus taught that in God's kingdom, the humble people will inherit the earth, and those who seek peace will be blessed (Matthew 5:4-10).

And Jesus said that it's a blessing if someone makes fun of you for following Him. Have you ever been made fun of? It feels awful. How could it be *good* to be made fun of? It is a blessing because anyone who is treated badly for following Jesus will receive a great reward one day! (Matthew 5:11)

Jesus also said: *"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor. Hate your enemy.' But here is what I tell you. Love your enemies. Pray for those who hurt you. Then you will be sons of your Father who is in heaven."* - Matthew 5:43-45a

Jesus said that even ungodly people love their friends; that's just natural. But when we have God's spirit living in us, we can do what is unnatural. We can love those who hate us. That was opposite-teaching!

It's no wonder that Jesus' teaching caused such a stir. The things He taught were radical. The things He taught were totally different from the world's way. As He traveled, Jesus performed many miracles to prove that He was more than just a man with His own ideas. He was speaking the truth of God. In the coming weeks we'll talk much more about what Jesus taught about His kingdom.



Application: If the kingdom of God is so different from this world, and Jesus' truth is so different from our own ideas, how can you know the truth? You can dive into His word. Ask God to show you His truth. Abide in Jesus, and ask Him to guide you in every part of your day. Ask God to pour out His grace on you so you can live the kingdom life (Titus 2:11-12). I would never want you to follow the world's way and miss out on what God has in store for you in the kingdom life. The kingdom life is full of miracles and excitement, peace and joy, love and acceptance. Life in the kingdom is the adventure that we are all craving deep down inside. It's a life lived hand-in-hand with the Creator of the universe. It's living life to the fullest; it's knowing that you are loved. Don't miss out on this life! Abide in Jesus. Life in the eternal kingdom of God begins NOW!

PPT Verse

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PPT Main Point

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