

The Village Church – Rancho Santa Fe
Week #19 – Adult Bible Study – 2025 & 2026

Discovering the Bible

February 17 & 18, 2026

Review – The Teachings

1. In this section we focused on Jesus' teaching: both the content of what he taught and the style and contexts in which he taught
2. Jesus was often called "Teacher" – which is the meaning of "rabbi"
3. Part of Jesus' power and impact derived from his amazing spiritual wisdom as well as his ability to express it in profoundly memorable and also challenging ways
4. Jesus taught not only in words but also in actions

The Kingdom

1. General Thoughts
 - a. Jesus often used the terms "Kingdom of God" or "Kingdom of Heaven"
 - b. As with all theological language, we must use concepts and images from the reality of our own world in order to describe something that is both within and also outside of our world. This fact is vitally important to remember as we speak of the Kingdom
 - c. Clearly, Jesus did *not* mean to say that he was a typical, garden-variety King who was about the business of establishing yet another earthly Kingdom
 - d. One interpretation of Jesus' meaning is that he was speaking only of a Kingdom that is not at all present in this world, a Kingdom that manifests only when we die, or only when the end of history arrives
 - e. But another interpretation includes the very real presence of Jesus' Kingdom in the here and now of this world
 - f. The scriptural record belies the confusion and questions of those who tried to learn about the Kingdom of God
2. Matthew 9:35-38
 - a. Here is but one example of the many times mentioned in the Gospels when Jesus' essential or fundamental message was about the "good news of the kingdom"
 - b. Note the markers or signs of the kingdom's presence: people are healed, Jesus has compassion for the people who, though "harassed and helpless" nevertheless experience in Jesus a shepherding presence
 - c. Both the *proclamation* and the *manifestation* of the kingdom are not limited to Jesus himself, therefore Jesus instructs the disciples to ask for more people to help spread the kingdom
 - d. And, immediately following this passage, Jesus will send the 12 Disciples out to do the same work he has been doing
3. Matthew 13:31-33
 - a. "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed..."
 - b. "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast..."
 - c. These two analogies teach that the kingdom may start small or be "small" in the world's eyes – but it has a huge impact
4. Matthew 18:1-5
 - a. "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"
 - b. This question from the disciples indicates that they expect Jesus to be a regular king at the head of a normal kingdom
 - c. Jesus' response of focusing on a child teaches that his kingdom is different: it requires child-like faith and humility of those who would apprehend and participate in it
5. Mark 4:1-20
 - a. The Parable of the Sower
 - b. "To you has been given the secret (or mystery) of the kingdom of God"
 - c. The kingdom is established as people hear a word or accept a truth – the word and truth of God and from God – not by the might of an army or the drawing of boundaries
 - d. The presence of the kingdom depends – in part – on those who learn of its reality, who stay true to its character and purpose, and who further spread the word

6. Mark 10:13-16
 - a. “Let the little children come to me...for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs.”
 - b. Children receive and live by the truth that is taught to them (or the lies) by the adults around them – such is the challenge to Jesus’ disciples to receive and live by what he is teaching them
7. Mark 15:1-15
 - a. Jesus and Pilate
 - b. Here we see the conflict between Jesus’ kingdom/kingship and that of the world as represented by Pilate (the Roman Empire) and the chief priests (Israel)
 - c. The true Kingdom of God confronts two kinds of kingdoms of the world:
 - i. A kingdom based on human rules (Rome)
 - ii. A kingdom based on God’s rules – but misguided and needing reform (Israel)
 - d. Here is food for thought about whether there can actually be a “Christian” nation that is like the other nations of the world
8. Luke 10:1-12
 - a. Jesus sends 70 of his followers out into the “mission field”
 - b. “The kingdom of God has come near to you”
 - c. We see again that Jesus fully expected his followers to both proclaim and to enact/embody the kingdom that he came to establish on earth
 - d. Note again the marks of Jesus’ kingdom: peace, healing
9. Luke 11:1-13
 - a. “Your kingdom come”
 - b. When Jesus is present, the kingdom is present, and...
 - c. It is a kingdom that is both “now” and also “not yet”
 - d. “Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you.”
 - e. The present reality and power of the kingdom is available to all.
 - f. God, as loving Father, wants to give good gifts to his children – the gifts of living in the kingdom
10. Luke 13:22-30
 - a. “Lord, will only a few be saved?”
 - b. “There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrown out.”
 - c. Here Jesus speaks of those who correctly comprehend what the Kingdom is actually all about...and those who don’t. Here he does not reveal the dividing line between the two, but elsewhere he is very clear. The Kingdom is about humility, reliance on grace, service to others, and openness to all, to mention just a few key characteristics
11. Luke 14:15-24
 - a. The Great Banquet
 - b. The Kingdom is a place of feasting, joy, and community – with God and with others
 - c. All are invited...but not all will give attention to the Kingdom’s presence among us
 - d. The cares of the world distract us from the first order of business: attention to God and God’s Kingdom
 - e. The little people (the “meek”) – “poor, crippled, blind, lame” are included (the opposite of what the powerful and elite religious leaders believed and taught)

Questions for Your Life Today

- A. Where do you see the Kingdom of God/Heaven present in your life today?
- B. How can we open our hearts and minds to be more aware of and in service to the Kingdom?
- C. What makes it hard to believe and trust that the Kingdom is right here, right now?
- D. What other kings and kingdoms vie for our attention and allegiance?

Notes by The Rev. Dr. Jack Baca, Senior Pastor, The Village Church, Rancho Santa Fe, California

Primary Source: Discovering the Bible: A New Generation, published by The Kerygma Program, Pittsburgh, PA. Boyd Lien, author.