

WEEK FORTY-ONE INTRODUCTION

Jesus' ministry is multifaceted. His miraculous works draw crowds of onlookers who subsequently receive His teaching. Other times, Jesus intentionally teaches a very small group of disciples. Each size of group seems to carry distinctive elements, and as the groups grow smaller the commitment given and expected grows. Spiritual confrontation and warfare mark Jesus' ministry. As He proclaims the message of the kingdom of God, He demonstrates the kingdom by healing the sick and casting out demons. This element of spiritual warfare must not be lost. Jesus' kingdom is antithetical to the kingdoms of this world and is stark opposition to the tyrannical reign of Satan. Seeing this in Jesus' ministry prepares us, His followers, for contemporary manifestations of the same conflict.

KEY SCRIPTURE

But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.

—John 4:23-24 ESV

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What happens with Peter's mother-in-law in Matthew 8:14-17? How does this event epitomize the Christian life?

Why are the crowds amazed in Mark 1:27? What sets Jesus and His teaching apart from the rest? Describe the two facets of Jesus' authority present in this passage.

John 3 is one of the most poignant and significant passages in all of the New Testament. What core doctrinal concept is Jesus teaching Nicodemus? How does one enter into the kingdom of God? According to John 3:8, on whom does that entrance depend? How would you define *conversion*?

Luke 2:41-51 is the only window we have of Jesus' adolescence. Retell the story. How do you sympathize with Mary and Joseph? Why does Jesus reply as He does in verse 49?

John 5:1-17 helps us understand God's providence and His rest on the seventh day of creation. God *continues* His care of creation even during His "day of rest." Consider the world around you today. Describe God's continuing, sustaining care and its significance for how you live and experience life.

Jesus' Sermon on the Mount is recorded in Matthew 5-7. This passage is rich in its instruction for how the follower of Jesus, the citizen of His kingdom, should live. Matthew 5:3-12 communicates Jesus' "Beatitudes." Analyze how Jesus describes peak humanhood. What does the blessed life look like according to Jesus? How does His description stand at odds with our cultures conceptions of the best life?

Matthew 5:17 brings light regarding Jesus' relationship with the Old Testament, particularly the Law. Describe the difference between *abolishing* the Law and the Prophets and *fulfilling* them.

How does Jesus describe prayer in Luke 11:1-13? How does He show us the heart of the Father? What is the ultimate gift of the Father in prayer according to Luke 11:13?

How does Jesus describe His new community in Mark 3:31-35? How does His teaching here challenge your approach to living as a member of the church?

BE A DOER OF THE WORD

“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” **-Matthew 11:28 ESV**

Are you experiencing the rest of Jesus in your life? Or, are you living a frenetic, hectic, and busy life that leaves you frazzled and soul-weary? I know many of us are. Jesus extends an invitation to you right now in this passage. It is an invitation that arises directly from His heart, “for I am gentle and lowly in heart.” Rest in Him. Rest in what He has done, is doing, and will do.