



The Kingdom Questions for Reflection

Part 1: “Kingdom vs. Empire” by Dave Terpstra
Tuesday, April 1, 2008

What was your reputation in high school? During your college or young adult years? Today?

What do you most long for in life right now? Do you talk to God about your longing? Do you talk to others about this longing?

Another church in Denver used to have this line as its mission statement: “Helping people find what they are looking for...”

- How is this true of how the Church works?
- How do you live it out?
- What would most people say they are “looking for” in life?
- Is this really what their deepest longings are about? How is the Church helping people find what they are not looking for?

What is the Kingdom that Jesus is talking about? How is your understanding of the Kingdom expanding this week? (These questions will appear every week in the reflection questions for this series...keep re-answering them)

Jesus talked about “the Kingdom of God” or “of heaven” all the time in the Gospels. Why do we not talk about and think about this topic as much as he seemed to?

As a quick and simple understanding, Dave said, “The Kingdom is where God reigns.”

- How do God's reign and human freedom/choice work together?
- Does God only reign in the places where we allow him to?
- Where does God not reign in your life?

Think about what a human king and his kingdom are like. How is this similar to and different than Jesus and his Kingdom?

Read Matthew 13: 44.

- The Kingdom here is both hidden and valuable. How do you see this to be true?
- How do you interact with the importance of the Kingdom similarly to and differently than the man in the parable?

Dave described the Kingdom as “upside down” compared to the reality and values of the world/“the Empire.”

- How is the Kingdom seemingly upside down – opposite – contrary?
- Where does the Empire actively oppose the Kingdom?
- How do you look upside down to those who don't know Christ?
- How would those who don't know Jesus say you blend into the Empire just like them?

(continued...)



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Read Matthew 5:-12, and use Jesus' descriptions of Kingdom living to look at your own life.

- What is the Kingdom value expressed in each verse?
- How is that value counter-cultural?
- How does the verse describe you right now?
- If there were one of these phrases that you wish more described you, which would it be and why?
- What can you do to catalyze your transformation in that area?

What would TNL outsiders or newcomers say is the reputation of TNL? Are you comfortable with that perception? How would you want it to be different? What can you do about that?

As an activity to expand your thinking about the Kingdom, consider re-watching the movie *The Matrix*. It is loaded with mixed religious metaphors from Christianity, Buddhism, the New Age, and secular humanism. Within this blend of philosophies, how does the film depict parallels to what the Kingdom of God is like? In other words, how is it a fitting metaphor for the Kingdom and how is it an inaccurate picture of the Kingdom? Google "matrix movie Christianity" and read through the debate of what is and isn't being said in the film.