

WHAT ARE YOU WORRIED ABOUT?

(Matthew 6:10; Luke 11:2)

OBSERVATIONS

Jesus' first words in Mark were *"the time has come... the Kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news"* (1:15). Jesus taught more about the Kingdom of God than any other topic - 49 times in Matthew, 16 times in Mark, 38 times in Luke (Matthew used *kingdom of heaven* because his primarily Jewish audience avoided using God's name).

The topic of the Kingdom of God is vast, and we cannot cover its scope in one study. However, note these important truths:

- The kingdom of God is not just a faraway place removed from earth, but a present reality by which God is transforming all creation. That is why *"your kingdom come"* is followed by *"your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."*
- The kingdom of God arrived in Jesus, but is not yet fully established. The transformation of creation is painful, compared to a woman giving birth (Romans 8:19-22).
- The obedient church (the earthly "body of Christ" represented by followers of Jesus) is the primary way by which the Kingdom of God advances in our world.
- The kingdom of God is opposed by the kingdom of this *world* (John 17:13-18; 1 John 2:15-17). The *"world"* does not refer to God's good creation, but sinful values and priorities that oppose the work of God.

Jesus also taught that our hearts are a spiritual battleground; our everyday worries and need for security clash with God's faithfulness (Matthew 6:19-34). The good news is that our worries can be overcome by God's kingdom promises (Matthew 6:33).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is one truth about the Kingdom of God that is important for you?
2. What are some ways that you desire to represent God's kingdom in your life?
3. What do you find most challenging in Jesus' teaching on worry? What is most freeing?

MOVING FORWARD

Write down your worries. Then respond to each worry by praying *"your Kingdom come"*. Ask the Holy Spirit to shift your priorities and increase your faith. Make this a prayer habit – when worries invade your heart, allow them to prompt you to pray *"your Kingdom come"*.