



REGNUM CHRISTI

Live the Mystery

Session 2 The Mystery of the Kingdom of Jesus

Corresponding pages of the Live the Mystery of the Kingdom Document: p. 8-18

Workshop on the Parables of the Kingdom

Corresponding pages of the Live the Mystery of the Kingdom Document: p. 42

Each participant will have received a “Kingdom Kit” in their welcome packet and a handout with the interpretations of the Kingdom according to Benedict XVI and the passages of Scripture in Mt. 13 that correspond to the different parables.

Each participant chooses one image or parable and takes a moment of silent prayer for each one to listen to what God wants to tell them about the Kingdom in their lives through this parable.

In your welcome package, you will find a “Kingdom Kit.” Inside are 7 objects that each have a parable of the Kingdom associated with them. The seed is in a box and for you to plant and observe how the Kingdom operates as Jesus uses it as an image to show the characteristics of the Kingdom. For the workshop, choose the object that most interests or draws you in, read the related Scripture Passage listed below and take a moment to listen to how God is speaking to you through this.

Scripture Passages that Correspond to each Parable of the Kingdom

Seed/Sower: Mt. 13:1-9

Weeds and wheat: Mt. 13:24-30

Mustard Seed: Mt. 13:31-32

Yeast: Mt. 13:33

Treasure: Mt. 13:44

Pearl: Mt. 13:45-46

Net: Mt. 13:47-50

Interpretation of the Kingdom: Three Dimensions

“The core content of the Gospel is this: The Kingdom of God is at hand. A milestone is set up in the flow of time; something new takes places. And an answer to this gift is demanded of man: conversion and faith. The center of this announcement is the message that God’s Kingdom is at hand. This announcement is the actual core of Jesus’ words and works. A look at the statistics underscores this. The phrase “Kingdom of God” occurs 122 times in the

New Testament as a whole; 99 of these passages are found in the three Synoptic Gospels, and 90 of these 99 texts reports words of Jesus...

Before we delve more deeply into the words of Jesus in order to understand his message – his action and his suffering – it may be use to take a brief look at how the word *kingdom* has been understood in the history of the Church. We can identify three dimensions in the Church Fathers' interpretation of this key term.

The first dimension is the Christological one. Origen, basing himself on a reading of Jesus' words, called Jesus the *autobasileia*, that is the Kingdom in person. Jesus himself is the Kingdom; the Kingdom is not a thing, it is not a geographical dominion like worldly kingdoms. It is a person; it is he. On this interpretation, the term "Kingdom of God" is itself a veiled Christology. By the way in which he speaks of the Kingdom of God, Jesus leads men to realize the overwhelming fact that in him God himself is present among them, that he is God's presence.

There is a second way of looking at the significance of the "Kingdom of God," which we could call the idealistic or mystical interpretation. It sees man's interiority as the essential location of the Kingdom of God. This approach to understanding the Kingdom of God was also inaugurated by Origen. In his treatise *On Prayer*, he says that "those who pray for the coming of the Kingdom of God pray without any doubt for the Kingdom of God that they contain in themselves, and they pray that this Kingdom might bear fruit and attain its fullness. For in every holy man it is God who reigns [exercises dominion, is the Kingdom of God]....So if we want God to reign in us [his Kingdom to be in us], then sin must not be allowed in any way to reign in our mortal body (Rom. 6:12)... Then let God stroll at leisure in us as in a spiritual paradise (Gn. 3:8) and rule in us alone with his Christ." The basic idea is clear: The "Kingdom of God" is not to be found on any map. It is not a kingdom after the fashion of worldly kingdoms; it is allocated in man's inner being. It grows and radiates outward from that inner space.

The third dimension of the interpretation of the Kingdom of God we could call the ecclesiastical: the Kingdom of God and the Church are related in different ways and brought into more or less close proximity."

Ratzinger, Joseph. (Pope Benedict XVI) (2007). *Jesus of Nazareth: From the Baptism in the Jordan to the Transfiguration*. New York, Doubleday.

Discussion Questions:

1. Reflecting on Jesus' parables, how would you describe his Kingdom in your own words? What characteristics does the Kingdom have?
2. What aspects of the Kingdom do you see in Jesus' life? What parables in Scripture attract you and draw you into his Kingdom?
3. Have you experienced these same characteristics of the Kingdom in Regnum Christi, if so, how?