Our 12 Core Beliefs

At Christ's Center Church, there are twelve Core Beliefs which have informed the way we live, pray, and minister to our community. They come in four categories:

Beliefs about God

God is a Good Father Jesus Christ is Savior & Lord The Holy Spirit is Active

Beliefs about Mankind

We are Sons & Daughters First Our Sin Separated Us from God We are Redeemed through Jesus Christ

Beliefs about the Church

The Church is God's Family on Earth
The Church Exists to Glorify God on Earth

The Church Seeks to Expand God's Family on Earth

Beliefs about the Kingdom

The Gospel of the Kingdom is the Only Hope for Mankind

We are Called to Extend God's Kingdom The Kingdom of God is Already & Not Yet

These beliefs are not to be confused with a full statement of faith, which you can find at ChristsCenter.com. Rather, they are guiding truths that we feel God has highlighted for our congregation. They are a part of our history, and a part of the passion we carry today.

About This Workbook

Over the next three months, we will be preaching sermons on each of these Core Beliefs. This workbook (along with the second volume) is designed to be a companion to those sermons, and a daily devotional that explores each of our twelve beliefs in greater depth. We'll have daily scripture meditations, and ideas how to spend time with God each day. You don't have to use it, of course. Many people have their own preferred ways of spending daily time with God. But for those who would like to join us, we think this is a pretty good (and pretty easy!) way to do it.

Each week will begin with some introductory thoughts on the theme at hand, and will then convene to daily meditations by use of the S.W.O.R.D. method (see next page for details.)

Going Deeper

For those who want to go beyond the S.W.O.R.D. Drill and have a little more time, the Going Deeper section can serve as a helpful short Bible study. For this part, you'll want to use your own Bible, highlighters, and journal. The instructions in this section are just suggestions, of course. Sometimes we will encourage you to read the surrounding chapter for proper context, and draw your attentions to various ideas. Sometimes we'll direct you to other resources: articles, discussions, videos, or podcasts that have helped to shape our beliefs. We encourage you to dive in and think deeply.

What is The S.W.O.R.D. Drill?

The SWORD drill is a device for studying the Bible and incorporating it into our soul where it can be readily drawn upon when needed. This process involves the supernatural power of God's Word reaching our heart as opposed to simply giving us head knowledge. This practical tool can be used by anyone. The five steps are defined by the acronym S.W.O.R.D.

S - Scripture

Read the **SCRIPTURE**. Then read it again, only slower. Don't rush through any of it. Let the words sink in. Then, write the verse out. Or if it's too long, write out the part that speaks to you the most.

W - Wait

Read the passage a third time, then **WAIT**. Give your mind and your heart some space to process. What words seem most important to you in this moment? Write those down. Are there any parts that seem to be jumping off the page? Write those down, too.

O - Observe

Okay, now it's time to pay attention not only the words themselves, but to how they are affecting your heart. Ask yourself, "Where am I in these scriptures? Where am I in these words?" Can you **OBSERVE** what your heart is doing? Do these words make you anxious? Do they excite you? Are you uncomfortable as you read them? Write down these observations. Be honest with yourself.

R - Request

Now that you've noticed what your heart is doing, it's time to invite the Holy Spirit to help you understand. It's time to **REQUEST** His input; His direction. What is He saying to you? Remember that we are not studying the Bible as if it were a textbook. You are asking for spiritual direction — and letting the Spirit of God, and the Word of God, lead you. So take a few moments and write down how you feel Him leading you.

D - Dedicate

Based on what you've been reading and sensing, **DEDICATE** yourself to following where God is leading. Write down a prayer, or a response to His words. This is about taking action on what God has revealed to you through His Word.

*(The S.W.O.R.D. Drill from Conquer Series Journal: Learn more about the Conquer Series Journal today @ conquerseries.com)

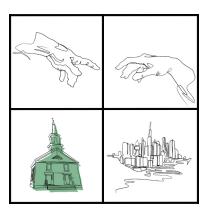
How do I pray The Prayer of Examen?

Review your day and ask:

- When did I sense the Lord's presence today?
- Is there any place where I missed it?
- · Where did I feel the joy of the Lord?

Then, thank God for His presence, and ask Him to be with you the next day.

Week 7: The Church is God's Family on Earth



7 - The Church is God's Family on Earth

- 2 Jesus Christ is both Savior and Lord
- 9 The Church Seeks to Expand God's Family on Earth
- 10 The Gospel of the Kingdom is the Only Hope for Mankind
- 11 We are Called to Extend God's Kingdom
- 12 The Kingdom of God is Already & Not Yet

The Church

Thus far in our study, we learned that God is a good Father, and that long before we ran off into sin, we were His sons and daughters. We learned about how Jesus, our Savior and Lord, redeemed us, bringing us back into the kinship circle, and giving us His Spirit of adoption. Now, we transition into how we move forward and live our lives. And the first thing we must understand is that we dare not try it alone.

What is the Church?

Today, we informally use the word "church" to mean many things: it is the building where we meet for ninety minutes on Sundays; it is the meeting itself; it is the organization which plans the Sunday meeting.

But in the New Testament, the word for church is "Ekklesia," which means, roughly, "the assembly of called out ones." That means the church isn't a time or a place or an administrative hub; the church is people. Specifically, it is the people who have been called out of the kingdom of darkness, and assemble in the house of God. The church, in other words, is a family.

Over and over again, the scriptures use family language for God's people. He is our Father, Christ is our older brother, and we call one another "brother" and "sister." When we gather at the appointed time and the appointed day, we come to the living room of God's house. We assemble as a family.

Week 7: The Church is God's Family on Earth

Why is this important?

In our individualistic society, some of us might bristle at the notion that we might need other people. We talk about faith being a deeply personal thing, and we refer to Jesus as our personal Lord and Savior. Our culture revels in independence.

But we are too small and too weak to navigate life on our own. God calls us to walk together; to carry one another's burdens; to stir each other up to good works; to weep with those who weep and rejoice with those who rejoice.

Paul calls the church "the body of Christ," where the eye needs the ear, and the ear needs the eye. Not only is every part of the body important, every part is also dependent on the rest of the body.

This is God's glorious plan for His church. He designed us to need one another; to walk in transparency with our brothers and sisters; to be vulnerable, teachable, and full of hope. This is how we travel through life: we go as a family. Christ has shown us the way to the Father. Now, together, we learn how to live as His children.

The Church is God's Family on Earth

Sunday Sermon Notes	

Monday

John 13:34-35 (ESV) A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one

another."			
Scripture			
•			
Wait			
Observe			
Request			
•			
Dedicate			

Going Deeper:

Think of a person in your life who you have had a difficult time loving. How would Jesus love that person? Can you love them today in the same way?

Afternoon or Evening Meditation

Take a few minutes to quiet your heart before the Lord. Revisit today's Dedication (above). Pray it through again, and thank God for hearing you.

Tuesday

Morning Meditations
Start with 2 minutes of silence before God

John 17:20 (ESV) "I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me." Scripture _____ Wait ____ Observe ____ Request _____ Dedicate ____

Going Deeper:

Jesus prayed for us to be one with Him and the family of God. Are there areas where you are in opposition to His prayer?

Afternoon or Evening Meditation

Wednesday

Ephesians 4:11-13 (ESV) And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God... Scripture _____ Wait ____ Observe _____ Request _____ Dedicate _____

Going Deeper:

Are you aware of the work you are doing to build up the body? Is it hard for you to count on others to build you up as a part of the body? If so, why?

Afternoon or Evening Meditation

Take a few minutes to quiet your heart before the Lord. Revisit today's Dedication (above). Pray it through again, and thank God for hearing you.

Thursday

Morning Meditations
Start with 2 minutes of silence before God

Ephesians 4:15-16 (ESV) Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love. Scripture _____ Wait _____ Observe _____ Request _____ Dedicate ____

Going Deeper:

Are you more comfortable building people up, or being built up by others? Why?

Afternoon or Evening Meditation



Hebrews 10:24-25 (ESV) And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

Scripture			
W. ·ı			
Observe _			
Dedicate _			

Going Deeper:

Why is gathering important? Why do you think we are tempted to neglect this?

Afternoon or Evening Meditation

Take a few minutes to quiet your heart before the Lord. Revisit today's Dedication (above). Pray it through again, and thank God for hearing you. Saturday

Morning Meditations
Start with 2 minutes of silence before God

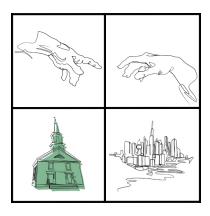
Fournaling Day

O = O
God has called the church to be a family in order to show the world what He is like. In other words, we are not supposed to live the Christian life by ourselves. Are there any areas you find yourself resisting being part of church as a family?

Afternoon or Evening Meditation

What else has God been teaching me this week?

Week 8: The Church Exists to Glorify God on Earth



- 7 The Church is God's family on Earth
- 8 The Church Exists to Glorify God on Earth
- 9 The Church Seeks to Expand God's Family on Earth
- 10 The Gospel of the Kingdom is the Only Hope for Mankind
- 11 We are Called to Extend God's Kingdom
- 12 The Kingdom of God is Already & Not Yet

Our Family's Common Purpose

So, the family of God is the church. But why did Jesus call us out in the first place? What is our purpose in being a family?

There are many reasons why people join God's church, and there are many reasons to gather. But we believe there is one, over-arching reason why the church exists, and that is to glorify our Father in Heaven.

Glorifying God doesn't begin with the assembly; it begins at home, when we acknowledge Him as the source of all good things. Even when we're all by ourselves, we "Enter His gates with thanksgiving," as Psalm 100 says. The Message version says it in a more colorful way: "Enter with the password: 'Thank you!'"

The Communion of Saints

Of course, the assembly must assemble. The family has to get together regularly if it is going to be a family. Sometimes, those gatherings are informal. Other times we follow a regular pattern; a lituray.

When we gather on Sundays, we sing songs of praise to God, and we testify of His goodness. We pray together, hear the word together, and take the Lord's supper together. With these traditions, we point one another upward; we glorify our Father.

A Contrast Community

Glorifying God does not end when the formal gathering times end. Rather, we are called to bring God glory in the way we live our lives throughout the week. In the words of Pastor Timothy Keller, the church is called to be a "contrast community." That is, we are called to live in sharp contrast to the culture around us, particularly in the ways we use wealth, sexuality, and power.

Those three areas play an outsized role in our society, and God has called us to glorify Him in each area. Where the world abuses wealth (the lust of the eyes), God calls us to be radically generous and just, looking after those who have less than we do. Where the world deifies sexual expression (lust of the flesh), God calls us to honor one another with our bodies, keeping sex inside the context He gave us, and upholding the dignity of every person. And in a world that seeks to gain fame, political power, and social coercion over one another (the pride of life), God calls us to follow Christ's pattern, taking the role of a servant.

In the end, there is to be no division between our private relationship with God and our corporate faith. Whether we are alone in our living rooms, assembled in the sanctuary, or gathered in the town square, the church of Jesus Christ seeks first to glorify God in all things.

The Church Exists to Glorify God on Earth

Sunday Sermon Motes

Monday

Matthew 5:14-16 (ESV) "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in Scripture _____ Wait ____ Observe _____ Request _____ Dedicate _____

Going Deeper:

Ask God to show you some of the good works you are engaged in that He is glorified by.

Afternoon or Evening Meditation

Take a few minutes to quiet your heart before the Lord. Revisit today's Dedication (above). Pray it through again, and thank God for hearing you.

Tuesday

Morning Meditations
Start with 2 minutes of silence before God

one another, in a	cord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of hrist. Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.
Scripture _	
Wait	
Observe _	
Request	
Dedicate _	

Going Deeper:

This verse seems to indicate that if we want to live in harmony, we must have endurance. Why is that? And why is harmony important among believers?

Afternoon or Evening Meditation

Wednesday

Psalms 96:7-9 (ESV) Ascribe to the LORD, O families of the peoples, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength! Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; bring an offering, and come into his courts! Worship the LORD in the splendor of holiness; tremble before him, all the earth!
Scripture
Wait
Observe
Request
Dedicate

Going Deeper:

To ascribe means to give attribution; to identify the source. Why is it important to ascribe glory to God? What happens if we don't?

Afternoon or Evening Meditation

Take a few minutes to quiet your heart before the Lord. Revisit today's Dedication (above). Pray it through again, and thank God for hearing you.

Thursday

Morning Meditations
Start with 2 minutes of silence before God

fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.
Scripture
•
Wait
Observe
Request
Dedicate

Going Deeper:

What is the "fruit of your lips?" Be mindful today of what is coming out of your mouth. Invite God to give you insight about this aspect of your life.

Afternoon or Evening Meditation

Friday

1 Peter 2:11-12 (ESV) 11 Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. 12 Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation. Scripture _____ Wait ____ Observe ____ Request _____ Dedicate

Going Deeper:

What passions do you most often have to war against? Why does it matter?

Afternoon or Evening Meditation

Take a few minutes to quiet your heart before the Lord. Revisit today's Dedication (above). Pray it through again, and thank God for hearing you.

Saturday

Morning Meditations
Start with 2 minutes of silence before God

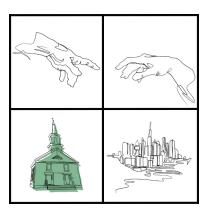
Journaling Day

How are you experiencing the Glory of God in your life and relationships? Ask God to show you where He wants to increase that glory.

Afternoon or Evening Meditation

What e	lje ha	s God	lbeen	teach	ling	me t	hij i	week!

Week 9: The Church Seeks to Expand God's Family on Earth



- 7 The Church is God's Family on Earth
- 8 The Church Exists to Glorify God on Earth

9 - The Church Seeks to Expand God's Family on Earth

- 10 The Gospel of the Kingdom is the Only Hope for Mankind
- 11 We are Called to Extend God's Kingdom
- 12 The Kingdom of God is Already & Not Yet

An Ever-Expanding Circle

Thus far, we've seen that the church is God's family, and that our goal is to bring glory to God in everything we do. One of the ways we believe we must be faithful is to expand God's family.

In Genesis 1, when God was creating the world, He said, "Let Us make man in Our own image" (Gen 1:26). In other words, though God was complete as a Trinity, He chose to create sons and daughters. Then, after He created man and woman in the garden, He exhorted them to "be fruitful and multiply." Thus, He was always looking to expand the kinship circle.

Our Great Commission

When Jesus ascended into heaven, He told His disciples to go into all the world and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matt 28:18-20).

This famous "great commission" is our task now. It includes both evangelism and discipleship, where we invite others to come back into the kinship circle, just like we did. (Did you notice how baptism begins "In the name of the Father?")

This is why we believe so much in evangelism and discipleship, both in a world missions setting, and in our local communities. We spread Christ's invitation for the prodigals to come home, just like we did. Once we're home, we learn how to receive His love, how to love like He does, and to act like sons and daughters who have been restored.

Word and Deed

When Jesus walked the Earth, people didn't flock to Him only because of what He said. They also came because of His deeds. He didn't just give them an invitation to come into His kingdom; He also demonstrated what that kingdom is actually like. He showed them that He loved them.

In the same way, if we are to expand God's family on Earth, the church must demonstrate the gospel in both word and deed. We do this by working together with the larger body of Christ to serve our communities. When "the whole church takes the whole gospel to the whole city," people see our good works and glorify God. This is why we are committed to working together with other churches around our region. Together, we can love a lot of people right into our Father's home.

The Church Seeks to Expand God's Family on Earth

Sunday Sermon Motes

Monday

Psalms 68:5-6 (NIV) A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling. God sets the lonely in families, he leads out the prisoners with singing;
Scripture
Wait
Observe
Request
Dedicate

Going Deeper:

God promises to adopt all of us into family. Why is it so important that people be brought into family as opposed to an organization or state?

Afternoon or Evening Meditation

Take a few minutes to quiet your heart before the Lord. Revisit today's Dedication (above). Pray it through again, and thank God for hearing you.

Tuesday

Morning Meditations
Start with 2 minutes of silence before God

2 Corinthians 5:17-18 (ESV) Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; Scripture _____ Wait ____ Observe ____ Request _____ Dedicate _____

Going Deeper:

This is such a hope-filled verse, inviting people to be reconciled into God's family. Is this the way you see yourself? As a minister of God's reconciliation?

Afternoon or Evening Meditation

Wednesday

Acts 1:8 (ESV) But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."
Scripture
Wait
Observe
Request
Dedicate

Going Deeper:

Jesus tells us that as we go we are to share the good news with the whole world. Why is it important that we receive Holy Spirit first?

Afternoon or Evening Meditation

Take a few minutes to quiet your heart before the Lord. Revisit today's Dedication (above). Pray it through again, and thank God for hearing you.

Thursday

Morning Meditations
Start with 2 minutes of silence before God

Psalms 22:22-23 (ESV) I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will praise you: You who fear the LORD, praise him! All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him, and stand in awe of him, all you offspring of Israel! Scripture _____ Wait ____ Observe _____ Request _____ Dedicate _____

Going Deeper:

The Psalmist says he will tell of God's name to his own brothers. What role does your testimony play in expanding the family of God.

Afternoon or Evening Meditation



Isaiah 61:3b-4 ...That they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he may be glorified. They shall build up the ancient ruins; they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations. Scripture _____ Wait ____ Observe _____ Request _____ Dedicate _____

Going Deeper:

What are the ruins and devastations that most bother you in your city? How does serving the city help to extend his family?

Afternoon or Evening Meditation

Take a few minutes to quiet your heart before the Lord. Revisit today's Dedication (above). Pray it through again, and thank God for hearing you. Saturday

Morning Meditations
Start with 2 minutes of silence before God

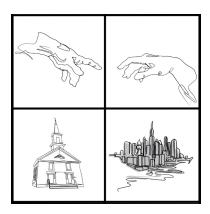
Journaling Day

We are a family on mission. Are there areas you are being prompted to serve in? Ask God to show you where He might direct you to invest time and energy.

Afternoon or Evening Meditation

What e	lje ha	s God	lbeen	teach	ling	me t	hij i	week!

Week 10: The Gospel of the Kingdom is the Only Hope for Mankind



- 7 The Church is God's Family on Earth
- 2 Jesus Christ is both Savior and Lord
- 9 The Church Seeks to Expand God's Family on Earth

10 - The Gospel of the Kingdom is the Only Hope for Mankind

- 11 We are Called to Extend God's Kingdom
- 12 The Kingdom of God is Already & Not Yet

The Kingdom

Thus far, we have outlined core beliefs concerning God, ourselves, and the church as God' family. Now, we broaden our scope one more time as we consider the Kingdom of God. And our first belief is a bold one: The Gospel of The Kingdom is the Only Hope for Mankind.

What is the Gospel of the Kingdom?

When Jesus preached the good news, He didn't speak only of personal salvation. He didn't just preach about asking God into our hearts, and going to Heaven when we die. Personal salvation, as beautiful as it is, is only one aspect of "the good news." Jesus preached something far bigger.

Before Christ came, scripture says the world was under the domain of darkness. (Col 1:13). All throughout the Old Testament, the prophets looked forward to a day when that era would end; when the Messiah would come to defeat the darkness and usher in His reign as Lord of Heaven and Earth.

When Jesus arrived on the scene, the angels rejoiced, because they knew He was the fulfillment of those hopes. With the coming of Jesus came the beginning of the end for the kingdom of darkness. The reign of satan was over; the Kingdom of God had come.

Jesus' Mission on Earth

When Jesus walked into the synagogue in Nazareth at the start of His ministry, He read from the book of Isaiah. "The Spirit of the Lord is on Me, because he has anointed Me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." (Lk 4:18-19, quoted from Is 61:1-2)

This, according to Jesus, was His mission. He had come to end satan's rule, bringing hope, redemption, and renewal to a world that had been dominated by the God's enemy. The Gospel of the Kingdom, then can be summed up this way: Jesus, the King, has come, ushering in a new domain which will last forever. This new kingdom is the great hope of mankind.

Our Place in the Kingdom

Jesus taught us to pray "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven." We know that one day, His perfect will WILL be done on Earth. One day, every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. (Phil 1:9-11). On that day, His kingdom will be FULLY unveiled on Earth. But until then, we pray for Earth to look more like Heaven, and we work toward that same end.

How do we do that practically? Quite simply, we emulate Christ. If Jesus' mission was to bring life and hope to a devastated race, we do the same. As ambassadors of His Kingdom, we bring hope everywhere we go. Wherever there has been devastation, we rebuild. We seek justice and peace. We seek the welfare of our cities. We do our best to pronounce a blessing over our communities—even our enemies. For that is the way of our King; that is the way of King Jesus.

The Gospel of the Kingdom is the Only Hope for Mankind

Sunda	y Sermon	Notes



Col 1:13-15 For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of Scripture _____ Wait ____ Observe _____ Request _____ Dedicate ____

Going Deeper:

What does this mean to have been taken out of the domain of darkness and now being in the Kingdom?

Afternoon or Evening Meditation

Take a few minutes to quiet your heart before the Lord. Revisit today's Dedication (above). Pray it through again, and thank God for hearing you.

Tuesday

Morning Meditations
Start with 2 minutes of silence before God

Isaiah 9:6-7 For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.

of hosts will acc	complish this.	, 3		
Scripture				
Wait				
Observe				
 Request _				
•				
Dedicate				

Going Deeper:

What areas do you see His government of peace increasing in our community? What areas are you praying for that it will all the more?

Afternoon or Evening Meditation

Wednesday

Luke 4:17-21 (NIV) Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. He began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

Scripture
Wait
Observe
Request
Dedicate

Going Deeper:

In this verse, Jesus is proclaiming freedom, goodness, and favor. This was His mission. How do we, as followers of Jesus, continue that mission?

Afternoon or Evening Meditation

Take a few minutes to quiet your heart before the Lord. Revisit today's Dedication (above). Pray it through again, and thank God for hearing you.

Thursday

Morning Meditations
Start with 2 minutes of silence before God

Matthew 6:9-10 (NIV) 9 "This, then, is how you should pray: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.	your
Scripture	
Wait	
Observe	
Request	
Dedicate	

Going Deeper:

What are the implications of praying "on earth as it is in heaven?"

Afternoon or Evening Meditation

Friday

Luke 18:15-17 (ESV) Now they were bringing even infants to him that he might touch them. And when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them to him, saying, "Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it."

Scripture	
V ait	
Observe	
Request	
• ————————————————————————————————————	
Dedicate	

_	_	
Going	Dee	per:

Why do we have to become like children to receive the kingdom? How is this good news?

Afternoon or Evening Meditation

Take a few minutes to quiet your heart before the Lord. Revisit today's Dedication (above). Pray it through again, and thank God for hearing you.

Saturday

Morning Meditations
Start with 2 minutes of silence before God

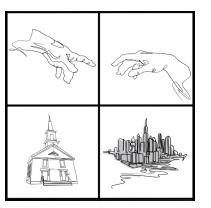
Fournaling Day

We are living through times of uncertainty, fear and trouble. Yet, the Gospel of the Kingdom always provides hope. Consider how God has given you hope. How can you share that hope with others in this season?

Afternoon or Evening Meditation

What else	haj God	been i	teaching	me thi	j week:

Week 11: We are Called to Extend God's Kingdom



- 7 The Church is God's family on Earth
- 2 Jesus Christ is both Savior and Lord
- 9 The Church Seeks to Expand God's Family on Earth
- 10 The Gospel of the Kingdom is the Only Hope for Mankind

11 - We are Called to Extend God's Kingdom

12 - The Kingdom of God is Already & Not Yet

The Rising Kingdom

As Jesus told parables to describe the Kingdom of God, and to explain how it grows. He said the Kingdom was like a mustard seed that was so small, you think it won't amount to much. Yet, over time, it would grow into a huge tree, providing shade for all kinds of birds.

Similarly, he said the Kingdom was like yeast. It doesn't take much yeast to make a loaf of bread rise. Just a little bit. But rise, it will.

Because the Son has risen, The Kingdom of God makes everything else rise, too. The Kingdom lifts the very hopes of humanity. It raises up the downtrodden. It takes those who are last, and makes them first. Over time, the yeast of the Kingdom will expand throughout the whole loaf of the world. It will transform individuals, and it will transform the institutions of which they are a part. And part of our job is to work with God to expand the borders of this hope.

The "Sacred" and the "Secular"

Since the Kingdom makes everything rise, each part of our lives is important. There is no split between worldly things and spiritual things. The jurisdiction of God's Kingdom does not end at the walls of a church building.

Unfortunately, many believers feel as if they live a powerless existences. They think that unless they work in a church setting, as a missionary, or in a government office, they have no ability to affect change. They are wrong.

The Power to Bless

If we are citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven, then we have authority to bless every place we go. We are ambassadors of the King. And since we all live and work in different environments and with different people, we all have great opportunities to bring more of the Kingdom to those places.

Every relationship we have matters. God cares about every soccer practice, every school board meeting, every working lunch, and every non-working lunch. We carry the presence of Christ inside us. That means no matter what the setting is, we have the ability to extend the peace and generosity of Jesus; the unconditional love of the Father; the wisdom of the Holy Spirit. We have the authority to call Heaven into that place, to establish whatever that place looks like. And as we further the boundaries of His kingdom, we rise together with Christ.

We are Called to Extend God's Kingdom

Sunday Sermon Notes	

Monday

Matt 28:18 And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Scripture _____ Wait _____ Observe _____ Request _____ Dedicate _____

Going Deeper:

Do you find yourself responding to the Great Commission with a sense of empowerment or of being overwhelmed? Perhaps a mixture of both? Ask the Lord what He would like to say to you about this.

Afternoon or Evening Meditation

Take a few minutes to quiet your heart before the Lord. Revisit today's Dedication (above). Pray it through again, and thank God for hearing you.

Tuesday

Morning Meditations
Start with 2 minutes of silence before God

Psalms 145:10-13 (ESV) All your works shall give thanks to you, O LORD, and all your saints shall bless you! They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom and tell of your power, to make known to the children of man your mighty deeds, and the glorious splendor of your kingdom. Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations. Scripture _____ Wait ____ Observe _____ Request _____ Dedicate ____

Going Deeper:

What do you think of when you picture the "glory of God's Kingdom" here on earth?

Afternoon or Evening Meditation

Wednesday

Mark 4:30-32 (ESV) And he said, "With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable shall we use for it? It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when sown on the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth, yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants and puts out large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade."

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Scripture
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Going Deeper:

Jesus is describing how the Kingdom expands from something very small and continues to grow into something big. Are you valuing the small seeds that God has called you to cultivate in your areas of responsibility? Take a moment to identify them.

Afternoon or Evening Meditation

Take a few minutes to quiet your heart before the Lord. Revisit today's Dedication (above). Pray it through again, and thank God for hearing you.

Thursday

Morning Meditations
Start with 2 minutes of silence before God

Revelation 1:5-7 (ESV) To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen.

account of him. Even so. Amen.	
Scripture	
Wait	
Observe	
Request	
Dedicate	

Going Deeper:

No matter what your vocation, God has given you a job: you are a priest in His kingdom. Do you see yourself this way? What difference would it make if you did?

Afternoon or Evening Meditation

Friday

Revelation 5:9-10 (ESV) "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth."

Scripture

Wait

Observe

Request

Dedicate _____

Going Deeper:

We are called to be leaders in the kingdom of God. As followers of Christ, we have a responsibility to lead like Jesus. Consider how Jesus led in the verse above. What does this say about how we are to use our influence and authority?

Afternoon or Evening Meditation

Take a few minutes to quiet your heart before the Lord. Revisit today's Dedication (above). Pray it through again, and thank God for hearing you.

Saturday

Morning Meditations
Start with 2 minutes of silence before God

Fournaling Day

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Take some time to list some of the areas where you have responsibilities or influence (home, work, groups you lead or serve in, etc). Now consider how you are expanding the Kingdom of God in those places (Ex: bringing kindness, generosity, health, education). How can you bring more of the Kingdom to those responsibilities?

Afternoon or Evening Meditation

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Week 12: The Kingdom of God is Already & Not Yet



- 7 The Church is God's family on Earth
- 2 Jesus Christ is both Savior and Lord
- 9 The Church Seeks to Expand God's Family on Earth
- 10 The Gospel of the Kingdom is the Only Hope for Mankind
- 11 We are Called to Extend God's Kingdom

12 - The Kingdom of God is Already & Not Yet

Our Great Promise

Revelation 21:1-5 gives us a breathtaking picture of our future hope: "Then I saw a new Heaven and a new Earth, for the first Heaven and the first Earth had passed away, and the sea was no more... and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away. And He who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new."

In this passage, we catch a glimpse of the incredible hope to come. The Kingdom of God will arrive in all its fullness. On that day, there will be no more death, no more tears, and no more waiting. The King will be fully with us, and His new creation will be right before our eyes.

Our Current War

That promise seems far away. When we look around and see all the death and destruction that still haunts our world, Revelation 21 feels like fiction. Restoration is coming, but for now, we live in a transitional time, some areas are at peace and some are a war zone.

This is the tension we must embrace when we talk of the Kingdom of God. It is already here; but it is not yet fully realized. God has set creation free from the domain of darkness, but creation doesn't know it yet. Jesus is King, but most people don't acknowledges His right to rule.

Week 12: The Kingdom of God is Already & Not Yet

"Already and Not Yet"

When we say the Kingdom is already and not yet, we don't deny what Jesus accomplished by His death and resurrection. When He ushered in His kingdom, He gave us authority to further the boundaries of that Kingdom. We have received power to heal the sick, repair the broken, and bring the peace of Christ. By giving us that authority, He has allowed us to see glimpses of the future Kingdom. We cannot forget the work of Christ on the cross.

But neither can we deny the lingering pain that surrounds us. That pain serves to remind us that the Kingdom is not yet. Disease persists. Violence still plagues our communities. And even though Christ defeated death, everyone still dies. When Christ came, He began something that will not be complete until He comes again.

Presence and Power

If we think only of the glory to come in Revelation 21, forgetting that the Kingdom is "already," we will neglect our authority to call for Divine breakthrough. But if we forget the Kingdom is "not yet," we will become disillusioned at the lingering pain surrounding us.

Therefore, we must hold both truths in tension, carrying God's comforting presence and believing in His miraculous power. We must continue to call out for breakthrough, while taking solace in Him when the breakthrough hasn't yet come. Miracles won't always happen on this side of history, after all. Sometimes God will take away the cancer; sometimes He will give comfort to the mourners. Sometimes He will remove the pain; other times He will give the strength to endure it. Sometimes the healing will come to Earth; other times it will be deferred until the next life.

So we ask for God's intervention, and we ask for the grace to face our broken world. Like the persistent widow, we remind God of the unfinished places in His kingdom. We remind Him that, though there will be no tears, we are crying today. We ask Him, as the hymn says, for "strength for today, and bright hope for tomorrow." Great is His faithfulness.

Sunday	Sermon Notes



Revelation 21:1-5 (ESV) Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away. And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new."

Scripture .			
Wait			
Observe _			
Request _			
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Dedicate _			

Going Deeper: What do you feel when you read this passage? What does your heart most long for?

Afternoon or Evening Meditation

Take a few minutes to quiet your heart before the Lord. Revisit today's Dedication (above). Pray it through again, and thank God for hearing you.

Tuesday

Morning Meditations
Start with 2 minutes of silence before God

Mark 1:14-15 (ESV) Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel." Scripture _____ Observe _____ Request _____ Dedicate

Going Deeper:

To repent is to change your mind and turn away. What was Jesus wanting these people to turn away from? What might you have to turn away from in order to embrace the Kingdom of God in a greater way?

Afternoon or Evening Meditation

Wednesday

Revelation 11:15 (ESV) Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and Scripture _____ Wait ____ Observe _____ Request _____ Dedicate ____

Going Deeper:

What are the things that can be accomplished now? What things can only be accomplished when Christ returns?

Afternoon or Evening Meditation

Take a few minutes to quiet your heart before the Lord. Revisit today's Dedication (above). Pray it through again, and thank God for hearing you.

Morning Meditations

Start with 2 minutes of silence before God

Luke 17:20 (NASB) Now having been questioned by the Pharisees as to when the kingdom of God was coming, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed; nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or, 'There it is!' For behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst."
Scripture
Wait
Observe
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Dedicate

Going Deeper:

Why is it so important that we know the Kingdom is always in our midst?

Afternoon or Evening Meditation

Friday

Psalms 46:4-5, 9-10 (ESV) There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved... He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the chariots with fire. "Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!"

Scripture			
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Going Deeper:

While we wait for the kingdom to come in all its splendor, the wars have not ceased to the ends of the earth. So why are we called to be still? How can we be still?

Afternoon or Evening Meditation

Take a few minutes to quiet your heart before the Lord. Revisit today's Dedication (above). Pray it through again, and thank God for hearing you.

Saturday

Morning Meditations
Start with 2 minutes of silence before God

Fournaling Day

Identify areas in your life for which you are struggling to find joy and hope. Consider what each area might loo like when Christ returns to make all things new. Spend some time imagining and journaling about that.

Afternoon or Evening Meditation