

WEEK 8 - Vocation in the Kingdom - The Continuing Story and Your Role In It

Fall Focus 2024 // Canopy Guide

The Big Story

CONVERSATION STARTERS

Use the questions below to kickstart a community building, all-play conversation that connects to our weekly topic. If your group meets for dinner, these might be great questions to share around a table.

- What did you want to be when you grew up when you were a kid?
- Describe a time when a follower of Jesus ministered to you through their vocation/calling outside of Church. (Ex. at the grocery store, in a restaurant, at the doctor's office)
- How do you view your own job as a contribution or ministry to the Kingdom? (if you're between jobs, in full-time school, or are retired, how do you view the way you're investing your time in a kingdom-minded way?)

VIDEO INTRO | STUDY GUIDE

We've spent the last semester looking at the Big Story - the story where God creates a world of goodness, a people in his image, and brings order from chaos with an ever present love. We were created to bear the image of God, to be a kingdom of priests, and to be God's temple, God's home. We saw that sin and rebellion separated us from God, and that even when we went our own way, God has remained ever faithful. Out of his great love for us, he sent his Son to redeem us. Last week we examined the Church's rich history from the Holy Spirit's arrival at Pentecost, to the missionary journeys and letters of Paul and others, to the assembly of our biblical canon, and our continued role as the Church today. We still seek to bring God's kingdom here, bear witness to his love and mercy.

Fortunately for us, the call to be the hands and feet of Jesus isn't one we undertake alone. As a body has many parts, so a Church community has many members with many different gifts (2 Corinthians 5). Not all of us are called to serve in a prison, or to work with the homeless population. Not all of us are gifted in teaching or preaching, called to

serve on the worship team or on the greeting team or in children's ministry. But we are all called to serve and love and use our gifts together.

We were each given different gifts that we use in our daily lives, not just within the walls of our church building. How we use our gifts in our daily lives is part of our calling and our vocation. While many people see our vocation as our job (the ones we get paid to do and the ones we don't), our calling and vocation is more than that. We are called to live differently than the world. We are called to peace, called to love. We are called to be salt and light to a broken world.

We are in Christ, a new creation. The old has gone, the new has come. By grace we have been saved, through faith, not through works. This should be reflected in our lives as we live out our callings in the world.

As broken people, we are not going to get it right every time. We will likely miss the mark every day, but the grace of God allows us to live in the already, but not yet, tension of the Big Story. God has already offered us redemption through Christ, but our world is not yet whole and restored. It's a world that still groans in the tension between the perfect garden of Eden and the new Jerusalem (Revelation 21 & 22). We live and serve in the place where we know that God is using us to move forward his mission through the power of the Holy Spirit. In the midst of our imperfection we are invited to share and live in and live out this transformational story. This story isn't just any story. It is the story of God and his love for the world from the beginning of time as we know it. May we embrace this story and live in the way of Jesus, loving the outcast, serving the poor, acting justly, loving mercy, walking humbly with our God. May we continue sharing the story of the One who has made it all possible through his life, death, and resurrection. This is the Big Story. Thanks for a great semester.

Scripture to Read

- 2 Corinthians 5:16-6:1
- Micah 6:6-8
- Romans 12:3-13
- Ephesians 2:1-10
- Revelation 21:1-7; Revelation 22: 1-7

Scripture to Memorize

- Micah 6:8, 1 Peter 2:9, Ephesians 2:4-5

Deeper Discussion Questions

1. How would you describe your calling/vocation?

2. How does your story fit into the Big Story? How have you seen God at work in your life?
3. Suppose human history goes on for another 40,000 years. We would then be considered the Early Church. How do you think we would be perceived?

PRAYER

Pray the Lord's Prayer together this week (we'll post the words below), and take an extra beat after you say the words "thy kingdom come, thy will be done on Earth as it is in heaven," to reflect and consider what we mean when we pray for the kingdom to come. Make sure to claim some time as a group each week to pray specifically for each other.

"Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name;

Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread;

and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors;

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen"

EXTRA RESOURCES/ARTICLES/RESEARCH

1. Check out this article by Syd Hielema that articulates the similarities and differences between the words vocation and calling:
<https://inallthings.org/whats-in-a-word-calling-or-vocation/>
2. Want to read an inspiring word? Check out this blog from Jasmin Patterson on how Christians can help heal a broken world:
<https://jasminpatterson.com/how-christians-can-help-heal-a-broken-world/>
3. Want to find a way to roll your sleeves up and love your neighbor? Here's the resource guide we created for last spring:
<https://grandviewchristian.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Love-Your-Neighbor-Resource-Guide-FINAL.pdf>