

LIFE CHURCH SERMON SCRIPTURES FOR July 27, 2014

Today's teacher: Valerie Copeland

Title: "Casting Your Net: What does it take?"

Casting your net is dedicating yourself to the kingdom-movement. Kingdom life: repent and follow; fellowship; extend the invitation.

Key Passage:

Matthew 13:47-52

⁴⁷"Once again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. ⁴⁸When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away. ⁴⁹This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous ⁵⁰and throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

⁵¹"Have you understood all these things?" Jesus asked.

"Yes," they replied.

⁵²He said to them, "Therefore every teacher of the law who has become a disciple in the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old."

How to cast your net (back to Matthew 4:17)

- **Respond to the gospel message with belief and repentance**
- **Be born again**
- **See the kingdom and understand what you hear**
 - You should see the kingdom and understand its teachings or are you only seeing with carnal eyes and not understanding what

Jesus' mission? "Blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear." Matthew 13:16

- **Be poor in spirit; clothe yourself in humility**
- **Become like a child**
- **Embrace the Father's agenda:**
 - Be concerned about the kingdom coming and the will of the Father being done – make this your primary prayer. Most of our prayers are consumed with the worries about our basic needs. Do not worry about your life. Do not ask, 'What shall we eat or drink or wear? For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first the kingdom and its righteousness and your material needs will be given to you as well, then seek our daily bread.
 - Treat God as a father; let him know how things are with you. Ask for what you need.
- **Put the words of Jesus into practice**
 - Cultivate good soil (with a renewed mind and humble heart) for the seed (the word). Is the word being snatched away because you do not understand it? Are you enthusiastic about the word until it makes demands on your life or brings persecution, then you lose interest? Are you letting the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth (materialism) choke the word, making it unfruitful?
- **Love the Lord with all your heart and love your neighbor as yourself; obedience is an expression of love.** "Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them." John 14:23
- **Be devoted to the family of God**
- **Do the will of the Father**
- **"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations."**

- Know THE gospel story – What’s the big picture?
- Know YOUR gospel story – How is your story a part of it? How do you fit in?

Group Activity

“Have you understood these things?” Discuss what you have or have not understood about the kingdom.

Think about what it means for you to cast your net. Are you stuck? If so, how? Discuss

What is the Kingdom of God?

- The gospel or good news of the Kingdom of God is the heart and core of Jesus Christ's message.
- A kingdom always requires a king. It is the realm in which a king sovereignly rules. It is where a king's will is done. The king holds supreme power. His authority is indisputable. Jesus is our king.
- The kingdom of God is being established on earth through Jesus Christ (His body, His church). This is the premier mission of Jesus Christ and the essential ministry of the church. Jesus came to lay the foundation for the Kingdom of God on earth.
- The word for kingdom in the Greek especially refers to the rule of Christ in believers' hearts – which is a rule that will one day be universal on the physical earth.
- Jesus began his ministry with preaching, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near." (same as kingdom of God)

How do I enter the Kingdom of God?

Repent!

The gospel preached by John and Jesus began with the command to repent. Change your mind! Change your values! Examine your motives, they matter!

Become spiritually poor

Jesus begins his very first sermon with, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." [Matthew 5:3] Jesus is not speaking of material wealth. Here he is speaking of spiritual humility; having no moral riches and recognizing your need. 'Poor' used in this verse means being 'reduced to a beggar'. These are the ones who experience the blessings of the kingdom. Those who feel they are sinful or 'morally sick' and so cry out to Jesus to be saved, are 'poor in spirit'. Those who are self righteous, morally confident and rich will have trouble in God's kingdom.

Become like a child – Matthew 18:1-4

Characteristics of kingdom people are like that of a child: vulnerable, trusting, dependent, learning, and growing. Our culture teaches that weakness and vulnerability are things to be ashamed of but humility is what counts in God's kingdom because pride and arrogance are the things which distort and destroy human lives and relationships. Becoming like children is central to growing in grace

and wisdom (kingdom greatness). Remember **grace** is the empowering presence of God to help us be what he's called us to be and do what he's called us to do. **Wisdom** is described in James 3:13-18.

Be born again – John 3:1-7

- God is starting a new family; to enter you need to be born all over again
- Born of water (a second birth): baptism in water which brings people into the kingdom-movement begun by John the Baptist and continued by Jesus' disciples; brings you into the visible community of Jesus' followers
- Born of the Spirit (from above, God initiated): baptism in the spirit, the new life, from within, that Jesus offers; the new life of the spirit welling up like a spring of water inside you
- These are required for membership in God's kingdom; without it you can't see the kingdom or get into the kingdom

The Church = the Body of Christ = the Family of God = the Temple of the Holy Spirit

- All those who trust Jesus as Savior and follow Him as Lord
- The work of the church is to carry on the mission of Jesus; to continue the kingdom-movement which is to partner with Christ to establish the new government or kingdom of God on earth

The Work of the Kingdom is done by doing the Will of God

Preach the gospel

As we preach the gospel, those who respond with belief and repentance are born again, enter the kingdom and join the new family of God. Now part of the kingdom, they too join the kingdom-movement spreading the good news that the kingdom of God is near (meaning that it is within the grasp of the hearer). The kingdom is being established one heart at time but there is a coming world government. This government will not be ruled by selfishly motivated humans but by Jesus Christ himself, and he will reign forever!

Put the kingdom first – Matthew 6:9-11, 6:25-34

Carrying out the mission of Christ to preach the good news is the primary concern of kingdom people