

Matthew Week 23: The Kingdom and the Image of God

Scripture Memory of the Month

Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil.

Ephesians 4:26

1) CATCH UP ON LIFE

This is when we update each other on the day in and day out happenings of our lives. Because God is our Father we are family. As church family, we care about each other's lives: what we're celebrating, what we're mourning, what decisions we are praying through, and everything in between. (1 Thessalonians 2:8, Romans 12:10 and 15)

Celebrate the wins - where have you seen Jesus working in the last week (shaping you to be more like Himself or working in the lives of those that He's put around you)?

What (if any) big life updates do you need to catch us up on (positive or negative)? Are there any practical needs you have right now?

Pray: Take every opportunity to pray and thank God for the good He's doing in our lives, and ask for help and healing anywhere there is pain.

2) DISCUSS THE TEXT - ENGAGE THE HEART

The discussion for tonight is difficult, especially in the midst of everything that is happening in our country. We are a church family, and we of all people should be able to have a discussion like this. Thus, there is no room for mockery, self-righteousness, being fake, yelling, or anything that is not loving in this discussion. The only way we all grow in this is walking in the light together and giving each other the grace and room to work out our fallenness together.

Read Genesis 1:26-27

What are a few different aspects of what it means to be made in the image of God?

How does race and ethnicity relate to this?

Read Ephesians 2:11-22

What is the dividing wall of hostility here? How did prejudice affect the Ephesian church?

What are some ways that you have seen prejudice? Experienced prejudice? Committed prejudice (either explicitly or in your own heart)? Share your stories, upbringings, background, etc., and allow for one another to proclaim the gospel in order to break down any dividing wall of hostility. Remember that Christ's blood forms us into one people, one family.

How can we collectively fight prejudice in our own lives, our own group, and our own church? How can we grow together?

3) REVIEW THE MISSION

Through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit we have been sent as missionaries in everyday life to display God's glory and lead others to repentance and faith through belief in the gospel. (John 20:21 and 2 Corinthians 5:18-20)

People:

Who can be intentionally living on mission amidst our current situation? (neighbors, coworkers, or a specific demographic in Columbia)

Plan:

Who is one person you can share the gospel with this week? How can that be done under the current constraints? Spend some time praying for these opportunities.

How can we be intentional in times like this about sharing the gospel?

Pray:

Pray for God to help us love him above all else that we may join him boldly in his mission to redeem the world. Pray for those around us that we need to share this with or invite in.