

“Red Letter Words: The Kingdom of Heaven”

Matthew 13:24-43

Ray Cortese, March 1/2, 2014

Reflect on the Text

*Note: Why do we do this first? We always want to start with the Bible itself. The goal is to meditate on the Word and read it with an ear sensitive to the Holy Spirit’s promptings. Look for words or phrases that stand out through logic, repetition, layout, etc.

- Read Matthew 13:24-43. What stood out to you? What did you find interesting and/or important? What was challenging or caused you to have questions?

Reflect on the Sermon

INTRODUCTION

- 1 Jesus taught primarily via parables. Which of Jesus’ parables is your favorite? Ray asked, “Does our pushing back against the darkness make any difference at all?” What examples of pain and brokenness have caused you to recently doubt whether the kingdom of heaven is at hand?
- 2 Summarize the *Big Idea* of the sermon in **one phrase or sentence** (Note: this is not the same as listing the main points). In other words, if someone woke you up at 3am on Monday morning and asked, “What was the sermon about on Sunday?” what would you say in the midst of your sleepy haze?

A COMPREHENSIVE KINGDOM

- 3 The kingdom of heaven is way more comprehensive than most people think. It is actually Jesus making all things new. Ray said, “Imagine a world where there is no _____.” What would you like to put in that blank?
- 4 What is the end of the story according to the Bible? How does knowing the end of the story give us strength for today?

A COEXISTING KINGDOM

- 5 In the parable of the wheat and the weeds, who are the wheat and who are the weeds?
- 6 Why should we never be surprised by evil in the world or evil in the church? Read 2 Peter 3:9. What would you say to someone who says “Two thousand years proves Jesus and the Bible are not true.”
- 7 Ray gave four tests for how you can know whether you are a wheat or a weed. What are the four fruits produced in the life of someone who is a true believer? Which one(s) have you seen evidence in your own life?

A PERVASIVE KINGDOM

- 8 Why are a mustard seed and leaven appropriate symbols for the kingdom of heaven?
- 9 What did Woodberry discover about the source of freedom and advancement in democratic societies?
- 10 What was the point of the story about the woman on the airplane? How has God specifically called you to minister to the needs of a sick and broken world around you?

Final Reflections

- How has your understanding, appreciation, and love for God and the gospel grown as a result of this study?
- In what areas of faith and practice are you feeling convicted by the Holy Spirit to act as a result of this study?