



KINGDOM

ANNUAL FOCUS

September 2017–June 2018

Williamsburg Community Chapel



THE KINGDOM

Goal:

Our prayer is that from September 2017 to June 2018 we will each understand the kingdom of God, how it is lived out, and how we can reflect it in every aspect of our lives.

Key Verse:

Acts 28:30-31, “He lived there two whole years at his own expense, and welcomed all who came to him, proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.”

Annual Focus Resources:

Continuing Education for Elders, Staff, and Deacons:

Kingdom Calling, by Amy Sherman

Supplemental Small Group Studies: In addition to our fall Chapel-wide small group study and the sermon questions provided each week throughout the year, small groups may wish to explore the following small group studies to supplement the themes of the annual focus.

- Option 1: *Life on Mission* by Dustin Willis and Aaron Coe
- Option 2: *Gospel Shaped Work* by Tom Nelson (available on RightNow Media)
- Option 3: *James* by Francis Chan (available on RightNow Media)

Rationale for the Focus:

We concluded our 2016-2017 series on Movement with a study of the Book of Acts. Throughout the year, and specifically in the series on the Book of Acts that we called “Serving a Movement,” we examined how God moved in the early church and how the Holy Spirit moved and worked, transforming lives and empowering an unstoppable force — his Church. We hoped in this final series that we would all ask ourselves the question, “What role can I play in

this movement?” Clearly we are each called individually, as well as corporately, to engage in this movement. It was Jesus’ promise to us that through the power of his Spirit he would lead us to become his witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). Witnesses. We are all witnesses, and we are all called, invited, even commanded to become just that: witnesses to the world. But what does that look like? After a year of studying Movement, we are left asking questions about what may be next for us and what it looks like to join the Movement.

Questions like:

“What does it look like to engage in the Movement of God?”

“I get it, we are to move. But where are we moving?”

“How do I engage? What am I supposed to do?”

“How can my everyday life be about movement?”

“How do I move within the Church and in my community?”

These are great questions to be asking. These are questions that Luke may have even wanted us to be asking as he wrote the Book of Acts. We all must certainly be convinced that each of us has a role to play in serving God’s Movement. This conviction and these questions have led many of us to engage the world around us differently: to speak the truth of Jesus boldly, to serve more diligently in our community, to intentionally build new relationships, and humbly seek reconciliation in broken ones, to spend more time in prayer and in quiet rest, to intentionally surrender more of our lives to Jesus, to rely more fully on the Holy Spirit who empowers us to live and move! But certainly, there are still questions, and still more to engage in as we learn to join God humbly, obediently, and courageously in his Movement.

Something that jumped off the pages as we studied the Book of Acts this past spring was the “literary bookends” that Luke used as he wrote the awe-inspiring account of the early church. The first bookend is found in Acts 1:3 where Luke tells us that in the forty days following Jesus’ resurrection and prior to his ascension, Jesus taught his disciples about the kingdom of God. At first glance this may not be a surprising reality. Luke recorded many times in his Gospel that Jesus spoke and taught about the kingdom of God. Thirty-two times to be exact. But as we concluded our study of Acts we looked at the final two verses that Luke wrote about Paul (the final two verses in the Book of Acts) during his house arrest in Rome. Luke wrote that Paul “lived there two whole years at his own expense, and welcomed all who came to him,

proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hinderance” (Acts 28:30-31). The second bookend! Paul proclaimed the kingdom of God. It seems that Luke wants us to know that both understanding and proclaiming the kingdom of God is important. Important to us as we follow Jesus, and important for us to share with the world around us. Embracing the kingdom of God is a key component of serving God’s Movement and of living as part of his church.

The kingdom of God is often called an “already-not-yet” kingdom. Theologians would call this concept “partially realized eschatology,” but the phrase “already-not-yet” seems to be a better one for us. This concept implies that the kingdom of God is here, and is a kingdom that will still come in a fullness that we do not currently experience. In Matthew 4:23 Jesus begins his public ministry saying, “Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” It is not a kingdom that we only wait for in the future, but it is a kingdom that is being realized all around us, in our lives, in our homes, in our workplaces, and in Creation. If we open our eyes, we can see the wonder and joy of his kingdom all around us. We can see the kingdom as people are transformed, as relationships are healed, and as we join God in his work of restoring a broken world. We can see it in the wonder of a well-crafted building and in the beauty of a brilliantly painted canvas. The kingdom of God is springing up all around us. The kingdom is already here!

The kingdom of God is also a future reality. We read specifically in Revelation 21 that there will be a new heaven and a new earth and that God will dwell with his Creation and men and women with God. We hold fast to the promise in Revelation 21:4 that “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.” So we live everyday experiencing the difficult and painful reality that although the kingdom is now, it is also not yet. We experience this as we interact with the consequences of sin, feel the pain of sickness and death, the heartbreak of broken relationships, and the toil of work.

So how can we live in this “already-not-yet” kingdom of God? What does this kingdom look like? What are its values? How can we reflect it? How can we experience the kingdom now? What do we do as we wait for the kingdom to fully come?

In the Gospel of Matthew there is a key Biblical text for studying the kingdom of God. As noted before, Matthew records that Jesus began his public ministry

with the declaration, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Then Jesus began walking around the region of Galilee, calling his first disciples and “proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom” (4:23). Matthew makes it clear from the beginning of his Gospel that Jesus is the king that many have been waiting for, and that as the ultimate and one true king, Jesus is ushering in a new kingdom. Jesus is initiating a kingdom that is unlike any other kingdom, and frankly unlike any kingdom that anyone was anticipating. The kingdom of God is unexpected, all-encompassing, and open to all who believe. The first recorded teaching we find in the Gospel of Matthew outlines the values of this new kingdom. Scholars label it the First of Five Discourses in Matthew’s Gospel, and we know it more commonly as the Sermon on the Mount. This is where we will begin our study on the kingdom of God.

After we study the Sermon on the Mount and embrace the values and principles of Jesus’ kingdom, we will spend the Advent season looking at how Matthew clearly defines Jesus as the long awaited king. We will see how Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophets’ assurance of a servant king who would rule all. As the New Year begins, we will get practical as we study the book of Proverbs and the kingdom wisdom it offers us for our everyday lives. During the season of Lent we will return to Matthew and study the kingdom parables as we consider what it looks like to live in this “already-not-yet” kingdom of God. These kingdom parables teach us to be citizens in the kingdom and allow for us to reflect upon how our lives can be more completely surrendered to a king that loves us so much that he died for us. Lent leads to Easter as we celebrate King Jesus and his work that saves us. After Easter we will ask ourselves how we can partner with God and with each other to be kingdom builders. Kingdom partnership is a part of everyday living, so we will look to Scripture to see how we can reflect and build God’s kingdom at home, work, church, in relationships, and with our witness. We desire to see our whole Chapel family engage in the work of establishing God’s kingdom in our lives.

In summary, our prayer is that from September 2017 to June 2018 we will each understand the kingdom of God, how it is lived out, and how we can reflect it in every aspect of our lives.

Origins of the Focus:

The disciple-making mission of the Chapel has remained the same for over forty years. It is the mission that Jesus gave the church when he commanded us in Matthew 28:19-20 to “go and make disciples of all nations.” In studying the

Great Commission, as these verses are so often called, one discovers that the command of Jesus, the imperative, is to MAKE DISCIPLES. Sometimes we get caught up on the first word, “go,” but the clear command of Jesus is not in the going, but in the making. Jesus commands his followers to make disciples.

What do you feel when you hear this command? Ill-equipped? Unprepared? Unsettled? Excited? Motivated? Ready? Jesus’ command is clear. If we were to write these verses in a way that accentuates the grammatical structure of this command, we may translate it more like, “As you are going, MAKE disciples!” Or even “As you are journeying through life, MAKE disciples!” In other words we could write this phrase “as you are going” many ways, depending on the journey we are on...

As you are going...As you are parenting...As you are working...As you are playing...As you are vacationing...As you are teaching...As you are serving...As you are building relationships...As you are praying...As you are creating... As you are living...

As you are doing all these things, MAKE DISCIPLES!

Are you currently making any disciples? The Great Commission implies a level of intentionality to how we go about our everyday living. We might even say, it commands a level of intentionality to how we go about making disciples in our everyday living.

This “as we are going” approach to discipleship making asserts that all of life is a chance to express our kingdom living. That in all aspects of our lives, as we seek to live on mission to make disciples, we are invited to live out kingdom values, speak kingdom truth, and build kingdom realities into the world around us. We cannot separate our lives into kingdom and non-kingdom realities. We can’t live in two different kingdoms, we can’t serve two different kings. No, we must surrender to the one true king, and live the values and principles of his kingdom. We don’t enter Jesus’ kingdom on Sunday mornings and then go back to our other kingdom life during the week. Following Jesus, and obeying the command to make disciples, means that kingdom living is something that takes place in our homes, in our workplace, in our schools, in our neighborhoods, and at church. In Matthew 13:44 Jesus says, “The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys the field.” The kingdom moves us to surrender. The kingdom moves us to joy. The kingdom of

heaven moves us to live a life that involves disciple making and kingdom living wherever our journey takes us.

This past year we introduced many new concepts to our staff team and the congregation. New paradigm shifts were geared to help us mobilize the body to fulfill the mission of making disciples. These paradigm shifts caused us to begin to rethink how we are making disciples and how we are more fully reflecting the kingdom of God. The paradigm shifts were and continue to be as follows:

1. Golfing Buddies vs. Football Team
2. Autonomy vs. Partnership
3. Building the Church vs. Building the Kingdom
4. Slavery vs. Sabbath
5. Converts vs. Disciples
6. Behavioral Modification vs. Jesus' Transformation
7. Division vs. Unity
8. Consumers vs. Creators
9. Doers of Tasks vs. Leaders of Leaders

These paradigm shifts are taking root at the Chapel as we engage in the mission to make disciples and expand the kingdom of God here in Williamsburg and around the world. Yet questions remain, and it is our hope that as we study the Kingdom we will all learn to use our lives to become kingdom builders and disciple makers. That we will see each aspect of our lives as a chance to express our kingdom values and surrender to the true king.

Pastoral Perspective on the Focus:

As we consider the kingdom of God together this year, it is important for each of us to consider a few concepts that may help us in our quest to make disciples and to be kingdom builders. It is always possible that we become too focused on programs or structures, and in doing so lose sight of the beauty of God' transformational work that is happening all around us. We hope these concepts will impact our kingdom-building potential.

1. "But if it is really true that I am a sinner saved by sheer grace — at God's infinite cost — then there's nothing he cannot ask of me" — *Tim Keller*
Our salvation is completely dependent on Jesus and what he has done for us. This truth leads us to surrender our lives to the God who loves us so much that he died for us. This is the beginning of

kingdom living as we surrender to our glorious king.
(Ephesians 2:8-9, Romans 12:1-2)

2. “Remember the signs and believe the signs.” — *C.S. Lewis*

As we seek to live kingdom values and build kingdom realities into our lives, we need to keep our eyes open to how Jesus is leading and to what he is doing around us. Jesus will lead us to build his kingdom in our lives, so let us remember to keep our eyes and hearts open to how he desires us to move in our world.
(Ephesians 1:18, Psalm 119:17)

3. “Celebrate what you want to replicate.” — *Suzy Sylvester*

As parents, we celebrate, encourage, and praise moments of character, honesty, and service with our children, believing that they will be more inclined to act this way in the future if we acknowledge it now. The same goes for our lives and the life of our church family. As we consider how we may all engage in kingdom building, let us celebrate and encourage those around us as we see others become kingdom builders. (1 Thessalonians 5:11)

4. “First take the log out of your own eye.” — *Jesus*

As we are challenged to surrender to Jesus and to live out his kingdom in this world, we are challenged as well to make sure that we reflect upon our own actions before we judge the world around us. A thorough evaluation of our own lives will undoubtedly reveal ways in which we need to repent and surrender. We must humbly acknowledge our own shortcomings and blind spots as we are called to help others do the same. (Matthew 7:1-5)

5. “You have to create space in your life where only God can meet you, where only God can show up.” — *Danielle Strickland*

Acknowledging that we are not God, and that we desperately need him, requires the courage to intentionally find quiet rest and the time to listen, even as the Holy Spirit leads us into places where we are increasingly dependent on him. (Judges 6: 11-24)

Series 1



KINGDOM VALUES

September 17–November 19 (10 Weeks)

In Matthew chapter four, Jesus begins his public ministry with the phrase, “Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” In Acts chapter 1, we read that after his resurrection, Jesus spent forty days with his disciples teaching them about the kingdom of God. Later, as the Book of Acts concludes, Paul, under house arrest is “proclaiming the kingdom of God” with boldness and without hindrance to all who would come to hear. Clearly, the kingdom of God is important for us to understand as followers of Jesus Christ. It is a central theme in Scripture and certainly a central theme in Jesus’ teaching.

This fall, we will be studying Jesus’ first teaching on the kingdom of God. It is a section of Scripture we call the Sermon on the Mount. In this passage of Scripture Jesus describes a kingdom that stands in contrast to the world. A kingdom unlike any other. It is a kingdom in which its citizens, the followers of Jesus Christ, live a life marked by a new set of values and behaviors. The Sermon on the Mount describes what human life and human community look like when they come under the gracious rule of their true king, Jesus Christ. It describes a new value-system, ethical standard, religious devotion, attitude toward money, ambition, life-style, and network of relationships. It describes our life as followers of Jesus.

The kingdom of God stands in stark contrast to the value system that we see in the world around us and even in our own lives. As we study the Sermon on the Mount we will be asked to examine ourselves to see how we are living in and reflecting these kingdom values. If we allow this teaching of Jesus to lead us, we will discover a greater dependency on him and a greater freedom from the world. Ultimately, Jesus teaches that life in his kingdom, with his kingdom values, is abundant life.

September 17: *Kingdom Values*, Matthew 5:1-12

September 24: *Kingdom Impact*, Matthew 5:13-16

October 1: *The Impossible Kingdom*, Matthew 5:17-26

October 8: *Kingdom Integrity*, Matthew 5:27-37

October 15: *Kingdom Relationships*, Matthew 5:38-48

- October 22:** *Kingdom Disciplines*, Matthew 6:1-18
October 29: *Kingdom Ambition*, Matthew 6:19-24
November 5: *Kingdom Peace*, Matthew 6:25-34
November 12: *Kingdom Attitude*, Matthew 7:1-20
November 19: *Kingdom Commitment*, Matthew 7:21-29
November 26: Thanksgiving Sunday (*Series Break*)

Series 2



KINGDOM COME: ADVENT

December 3–31 (5 Weeks)

The Gospel writers make it clear that Jesus is the promised king of the Old Testament. Matthew in particular, writing to a primarily Jewish audience, makes it clear that Jesus Christ is the promised king, the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophets. In Jesus' day, there were many different ideas of how this promised king would come and what this king would be like, but Matthew makes it clear that the ultimate and perfect fulfillment of these promises is Jesus. Embedded in these first chapters of Matthew are many Old Testament prophecies. The narrative of Jesus's birth and even his genealogy are written to explicitly announce the fulfillment of these prophecies and to leave no doubts that Jesus is indeed the Messiah, our promised Savior and King.

Together, in the season of Advent, we will see how Jesus is not only the promised fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy, but how he is our powerful, preeminent, and prevailing king today. Studying the narrative of Jesus's birth we will see how Matthew invites us to make Jesus our king, our only king. Will you surrender to this king? If Jesus is indeed the promised king, the son of the Most High God and our only hope for salvation, then he demands our complete surrender.

- December 3:** *The Promised King*, Matthew 1:1-17
December 10: *The Present King*, Matthew 1:18-25
December 17: *The Preeminent King*, Matthew 2:1-12
December 24: Christmas Eve Services
The Prevailing King, Matthew 2:13-23
December 31: In-Between Series

Series 3



KINGDOM WISDOM

January 7–February 11 (6 Weeks)

The quest for wisdom is as old as time. Yet Scripture tells us that true wisdom can only be given from our Creator who spoke the world into existence and breathed his Spirit into our souls. As the New Year begins, we will look to the giver of wisdom as we study the book of Proverbs. Here we will discover practical and everyday wisdom for our homes, relationships, workplaces, and daily lives. As citizens of the kingdom of God, our wisdom looks different than the wisdom taught in the world around us. Together, as we dive into Proverbs, we will be challenged to live our lives in a way that reflects the values and wisdom of the kingdom of God.

January 7: *Kingdom Wisdom: True Wisdom*, Proverbs 3:1-12

January 14: *Kingdom Wisdom: Friendship*,
Proverbs 17:9-17, 25:17-22, 27:6-17

January 21: *Kingdom Wisdom: Work*, Proverbs 6:6-11, 24:30-34, 26:13-16

January 28: *Kingdom Wisdom: Anger*, Proverbs 14:29-30, 24:28-29, 25:21-22

February 4: *Kingdom Wisdom: Speech*, Proverbs 10:18-32, 12:13-19

February 11: *Kingdom Wisdom: Plans*, Proverbs 16:1-9, 25, 33

Series 4



KINGDOM STORIES

February 14–April 1 (9 Weeks)

The kingdom of God is often called an “already-not-yet” kingdom. Theologians would call this concept “partially realized eschatology,” but the phrase “already-not-yet” seems to be a better one for us. This concept means that the kingdom of God is already here, even as we wait for it to come in a fullness that we do not currently experience. We can see the kingdom of God present in our lives as we witness people transformed, as relationships are

healed, and as we join God in his work of restoring a broken world. We also experience the often painful reality that the kingdom is not yet. We experience the “not yet” component of his kingdom as we interact with the consequences of sin and the reality of a fallen world. We experience it in sickness and in death, and we experience it as we struggle with sin and with broken relationships. So how can we live in this “already and not yet kingdom?”

During the season of Lent we will seek to answer this question as we study the kingdom parables found in the Book of Matthew. These kingdom stories will teach us to live in the tension of the “already-not-yet” kingdom of God. Through these stories we are challenged to live joyously and generously as we fully immerse ourselves in the kingdom. These parables will also teach us to live expectantly and alertly as we await our king’s return. In all, these parables will orient our hearts and minds not only towards God’s kingdom, but ultimately to the king himself.

- February 14** (Ash Wednesday): *The Kingdom Parables: Two Sons*, Matthew 21:28-32
- February 18:** *The Kingdom Parables: The Sower*, Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23
- February 25:** *The Kingdom Parables: The Good Seed and the Weeds*, Matthew 13:24-30
- March 4:** *The Kingdom Parables: The Treasure, Pearl, and Net*, Matthew 13:44-50
- March 11:** *The Kingdom Parables: The Unforgiving Servant*, Matthew 18: 21-35
- March 18:** *The Kingdom Parables: The Workers*, Matthew 20:1-16
- March 25** (Palm Sunday): *The Kingdom Parables: The Ten Virgins*, Matthew 15:1-13
- March 30** (Good Friday): *The Kingdom Parables: The Tenants*, Matthew 21:33-46
- April 1** (Easter): *The Good News of the Kingdom*, Matthew 28:1-10

Series 5



KINGDOM MISSION

April 8–June 10 (10 Weeks)

The disciple-making mission of the Chapel has remained the same for over forty years. It is the mission that Jesus gave the church when he commanded us in Matthew 28:19-20 to “go and make disciples of all nations.” In studying the Great Commission, as these verses are so often called, one discovers that the command of Jesus, the imperative, is to MAKE DISCIPLES. Sometimes we get caught up on the first word, “go,” but the clear command of Jesus is not in the going, but in the making. Jesus commands his followers to make disciples.

Are you currently in any intentional disciple making relationships? Are you intentionally reflecting the kingdom of God in your life and with your work? In this series we will look at the various ways we can partner with God to make disciples in every aspect of our lives. As parents, grandparents, children, bosses, employees, neighbors, friends, co-workers, and congregants we are all called to use the places and relationships in which God has planted us to intentionally partner with him in revealing his kingdom to the world.

Jesus promises that as we are going he will guide us, strengthen us, equip us, and empower us to be disciple makers. He also promises us that when we surrender fully to him and his kingdom we will find remarkable peace and joy as we partner with him. Our hope is that as we conclude our annual focus on the kingdom of God, this series will equip us to practically live out the calling to be make disciples and reflect God’s kingdom wherever he has placed us.

- April 8:** *Kingdom Mission*, Matthew 28:16-20
- April 15:** *Kingdom Mission: Prayer*, Colossians 4:2-6
- April 22:** *Kingdom Mission: Work*, Genesis 2:8-9, 15-22
- April 29:** *Kingdom Mission: Witness*, 1 Peter 2:9-12
- May 6:** *Kingdom Mission: Parenting*, Deuteronomy 6:4-9, 20-25
- May 13:** **(Mother’s Day)** *Kingdom Mission: Generosity*, Luke 18:9-30
- May 20:** *Kingdom Mission: Relational Reconciliation*,
2 Corinthians 5:11-21
- May 27:** *Kingdom Mission: Serving*, Jeremiah 29:1-14
- June 3:** *Kingdom Mission: Justice and Mercy*, Isaiah 58:1-14
- June 10:** *Kingdom Mission: Partnership*, Matthew 4:18-25

Series 6



SUMMER BIBLE STUDY

June 17–September 2 (12 Weeks)

In the summer we will shift to our Summer Bible Study Series. This is our opportunity to study a particular book of the Bible or series of books that may speak to contemporary issues in our culture today, expand a section of the annual focus, or just dive into a portion of Scripture that we may be unfamiliar with. It is a chance to walk book by book, chapter by chapter, or even verse by verse through a portion of Scripture together as a church community.



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