GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

* **What is something you look forward to every year?**
* **How do you get ready for that occasion?**

**Main Point**

God calls His people to seek His kingdom over the things of earth.

The kingdom of God is that time and place in which the reign of God is recognized and loved. While God reigns over the whole universe, the kingdom of God on earth is something that is both here and not yet here at the same time. When we live under the reign of God, we are living in His kingdom. But in the future, when Jesus comes back, we will fully see what it’s like to be in the kingdom of God. Until then, we must live in anticipation and expectation of the kingdom coming in its fullness.

Have a volunteer read Luke 17:20-37.

* **What does it mean that Jesus’ kingdom is within us (v. 21)? How is this possible?**
* **What do you learn from Luke 17:26-29 concerning the urgency of encouraging others to enter the kingdom now?**

Jesus’ answer to their question was unexpected. He told them God’s kingdom would not come with observable signs. God’s kingdom already was present among them. While Jesus certainly emphasized the personal and spiritual nature of God’s kingdom, here He emphasized the kingdom’s presence among people, something within their grasp. The Pharisees did not have to go out searching for the kingdom; it was present wherever Jesus was present. Since the kingdom is already present in Jesus Christ, people need not wait to enter it but can do so now.

Jesus wanted the disciples to understand that prior to His return, people would live with no regard for the kingdom. When the Son of Man returns, many will be unprepared. Jesus went on to compare His return with the days in which Lot lived. As in the previous example, earthly pursuits will take precedence over spiritual preparation for judgment of sin. God’s judgment caught the people in Sodom by surprise because they lived as if it never would come.

Have a volunteer read Luke 18:18-30.

The parallel Gospel accounts of this story can be found in Mark 10:17-31 and Matthew 19:16-30. Mark describes the man running up and kneeling before Jesus, and Matthew adds that he is young. In contrast to the often sick, elderly, and poor people who followed Jesus and sought His healing and hope, the man was a rich young ruler.

* **If Jesus called you to surrender everything to Him, what would be most difficult for you to give up?**
* **Do you find Jesus’ response to the man (v. 22) uncomfortable? Why or why not? How does Jesus’ response compare with your general ideas about salvation?**

On the surface, Jesus seemed to be saying the man could earn eternal life by keeping the Commandments. Although we know that salvation is received only by grace through faith, not by works (Eph. 2:8-9), our works are a lot easier for us to measure, and we all have a tendency to try to impress God. Contrary to how it sounds, Jesus wasn’t saying that selling his possessions would earn him favor with God. He knew this young ruler’s heart. Jesus knew that what stood between this man and a relationship with Him was the priority of his possessions and his personal identity in them. He earnestly wanted the man to commit himself to God totally. In essence Jesus was saying, “You will not experience the full joy of trusting in God until you come to me empty handed.

Following Jesus provides no protection against suffering, but the reward includes eternal life. The rich ruler sought this but walked away from it. The greatest gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ. Jesus gave all He had for our sake. How could we hold anything back from Him?

**Application**

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

* **How can you live faithfully as a kingdom person while you go about your business in this world? What are some of the challenges in doing so? What are some of the promises you have in doing so?**
* **What does waiting for the “not yet” aspect of the kingdom do to our praying, our witness, and our obedience to Christ?**
* **What does your love and devotion to Jesus require you to “Go, sell?” How can our Group support you as you strive to be obedient? Pray for any specific things people mention during your closing prayer time**

**Pray**

Close in prayer, asking God to help you communicate to those who do not know Jesus the urgency of responding to the gospel. Also confess to God the things that distract you from living in expectation of Him and ask Him for the strength and conviction to live each day alert to His return.