

"Not Like That, Like This"

Week 4

KEY PASSAGES:

Matthew 6:9-10 "This, then, is how you should pray: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.'

John 18:36: Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world... my kingdom is from another place."

John 17:20-23, I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

Mark 3:25 If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand.

Galatians 5:13-25 You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love. For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.

So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

John 13:14-15 Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.

John 13:34-35 A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.

QUESTIONS:

1. Share an instance where you were forced to watch someone do something very incorrectly that you knew how to do properly.
2. Whether from childhood or otherwise, what is your favorite fictional kingdom? Why?
3. If you were king for a day, and your will became the will of the land... what would you decree?
4. Read Mt. 6:9-10 above. When we pray this prayer, we are accepting God's invitation to be agents of HIS will and HIS kingdom—living here on earth... but there are many other kingdoms and wills competing for our identity & allegiance. What other kingdom(s) or will(s) tempt you the most?
5. In the Galatians passage above, Paul says "If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other." What do you think causes this among followers of Christ and their churches?
6. Read the two passages from John 13 above where Jesus washed his disciples feet, including those of Judas, someone who was pursuing allegiance to a very different kingdom and mission from that of Jesus. Given that content, what do these verses communicate to you personally?

Application & reflection: In the Galatians passage above, look at the list of 'acts of the flesh' (earthly kingdoms) compared with 'acts of the Spirit' (God's kingdom living). When your life displays attributes from the first list, is it due to any misplaced kingdom allegiance(s)? Pray and ask for God's help in this.