

A Flourishing Kingdom

Speaker: Guy Miller Scripture: Matthew 5–7

This Sunday, Guy Miller came to visit Life Church. **If there are people in your group who are unlikely to know who Guy is, now would be a good time to explain.** Guy's love for us is always apparent when he speaks to us, and we think it is important that we take what he says seriously — and this Sunday, Guy came with a call to action.

Which kingdom are you building?

Guy opened by reminding us that it is God's heart for us to grow and flourish in relationship with Him — that this has been our mandate since the creation of the world (Genesis 1:28). After the fall, when Adam and Eve failed to be faithful in their walk with God, He renewed His covenant with Noah (Genesis 9:1–7). Even under the New Covenant, we have a similar mission (Acts 1:8). Nowadays, we tend to call this “building the Kingdom”. **What is the Kingdom? What does it mean for Christians to build it or to serve it?**

Guy challenged us to think about whose kingdom we are building in our day-to-day lives. Are we attempting to build our own little kingdoms, or are we building His Kingdom? One of the roles of the Holy Spirit is to help us build the Kingdom, and He often helps us by convicting us concerning sin and righteousness (John 16:8) — i.e. by leading us away from what is wrong and towards what is right. It is very likely that the Holy Spirit brought things to mind when Guy spoke about this. **Does anybody mind sharing an example?**

Gaining by losing

Guy went on to discuss one of the greatest paradoxes of the Kingdom — that whoever humbles themselves is the greatest in Heaven (Matthew 18:4). This is seen throughout the beatitudes at the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:3–12). **What do these nine sets of statements teach us about the Kingdom?**

Guy told us that we can only gain something in the Kingdom if we're willing to lose something that is, on some level, important to us. He spoke of New Year's resolutions as an example of this. Nevertheless, it's important here that we avoid the trap of slipping into legalism — we're not giving these things up because that makes us somehow holier or more acceptable, but because it leaves us in a better position to serve the purposes of God's Kingdom (Matthew 6:24).

In our culture, there are two times a year when people often give things up — New Year's and Lent. Neither has a particularly Biblical foundation — but that doesn't mean we can't redeem them for God's glory! **Who in the group set themselves New Year's resolutions? Will they help build the Kingdom? How are you getting on? — encourage one another!**

With Lent starting at the beginning of March, you'll have another opportunity to sacrifice something to gain something — or if you're particularly opposed to the idea of Lent, just pick a date. **Is the Holy Spirit speaking to you about something you should be stepping out into? What would you have to give up for that to happen? Split into smaller groups to discuss and pray. How are you going to hold each other accountable, if appropriate?**