
Designed to keep the word of God fresh in our hearts and minds, please enjoy the following summary of the 10:45am and 6.30pm services on the 26th of September 2021. If you would like to listen to the full sermon visit stnics.org/talks or search 'St. Nic's Nottingham' on Spotify.

Theme: Seeking the Kingdom

Speakers: Lynda and Steve

Time flies when you're having fun! In the third week of our '**Refreshing the vision**' sermon series, our main readings were:

Mathew 6:9-15, 31-34

Psalm 145:1-13

What does 'Seeking the Kingdom of God' mean?

Mathew 6:33 "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness..." is about individuals acknowledging the King and experiencing the transformation of the Holy Spirit. Seeking the Kingdom of God affects our present life.

The Kingship of God and Kingdom values are the focal point of seeking the Kingdom of God (**Psalm 45, Psalm 110, Psalm 145**). Remembering who is King is the starting and most important point of seeking the Kingdom.

Kingdom Values

The values of God are meant to be expressed here on earth. It is countercultural but it is what seeking the Kingdom is. One of the key values of the Kingdom is humility. We are Blessed to have the person of Jesus to look to because He was the living expression of Kingdom values. When Jesus talks about greatness He talks about humility and service. Jesus embodies the values we should aspire to. The Kingdom of God comes with Jesus. We are looking forward to the full Kingdom of God when Jesus comes again.

How do we seek the Kingdom of God?

Central to the Lord's Prayer is "thy Kingdom come" - that is surrender, a prayer to see what God wants over our own agenda and plans (**Mathew 6:10**). It's a real expression of trust. We CAN place our trust in God, even when we acknowledge that it is sometimes scary and overwhelming. We can place our trust in God even when we feel inadequate. God is kind and that prayer is a reminder that God is the one who establishes the Kingdom. God's establishment is out of love.

So, we seek the Kingdom of God through:

1. Trusting God

If we seek God's Kingdom, all other things will be added. In the time that Lynda and John have been at St. Stephen's in Sneinton, they have witnessed God's greatness.

2. Prayer

Seeking the Kingdom of God is also about **priorities** – making God the priority and praying. It is really encouraging to know that Lynda and John were moved by God to pray consistently for 40 days in the early days of their move to St. Stephen's.

Jesus models how important prayer is. Prayer is at the spiritual heart of everything. Prayer is for today and it is also hope for tomorrow. Jesus acknowledges the importance of us praying for both ourselves and others. If we are to walk in the ways of Jesus we are to pray.

We need to seek Jesus in our own lives – we shouldn't have a contradictory heart, praying for others but holding grudges. Forgive others. What we pray has implications for how we live.

3. God

Seeking the Kingdom of God is about making decisions. For example, deciding what you do with your money is intentional. How we spend money reflects who we serve as king. All that we are and all that we have belongs to God. Surrender is an act of trusting God. He knows our every need (**Mathew 6:31-34**). Jesus acknowledges the things we worry about. Seeking the Kingdom is not a promise for an easy life. Jesus acknowledges our challenges, but the most important thing is that **we can trust God**.

God expresses His power through **grace and compassion** unlike earthly Kings. He is the King of Kings. God chooses to reveal His great glory through **compassion, grace and love (Psalm 145:8)**.

How has seeking the Kingdom been reflected in Lynda and John's experiences at St. Stephen's?

- Seeking GOD'S plans over their own.
- Consistent prayer.
- The experience can be very overwhelming and God reminds them that HE does the miracles, not us and we can trust Him with that.
- Breakthroughs of the Kingdom – people seeking prayer for healing, overflow of gratitude in prayer to Jesus for life changing blessings, and people turning away from occult practices and choosing to follow Jesus.
- One of the simplest acts they have done in faith has been having the doors of the church open. When we pray thy kingdom come, are the doors open in our church and in our hearts and lives? What does it look like to have the door open? Sometimes it's quite frankly about not trying so hard. Some of the biggest breakthroughs happen outside of our human structures and organizing.

How does this work? What does it mean to be a church that seeks the Kingdom of God?

Firstly, church culture and values are rooted in righteousness, justice and compassion. Church culture is shaped by how we honour those who are sick in our community, those who are different from us, and not being concerned with just our church. It is about being concerned with God's rule everywhere - in our communities and workplaces and being Christians in every area of our lives.

Secondly, being a church that seeks the Kingdom of God means impacting individual lives and having our identities being rooted in Jesus Christ. This extends to impact in the city and the whole church (not just St. Nic's). Impact looks like lives being transformed, healing for families, and standing up for justice, saying no injustice by declaring "no, this is not how this looks in a world run by God."

This all works by us:

1. Loving God
2. Obeying Jesus' commands to make disciples
3. Seeking the Kingdom

Why are we seeking the Kingdom?

We are committed to God's Kingship and focusing on the big picture of Jesus being the King of the whole of life. St. Nic's is committed to making disciples, but growing the church is what Jesus does. We have to be intentional about not allowing anything or anyone take the place of the King (**Psalm 145:6**).

We are rooted in this place, in this city for a reason. We are bringing churches together across the city. We are all God's church. God is breaking into the city and transforming society.

Finally, let us worship God, praise Him and acknowledge Him as King. We might be encouraged by the fact that Jesus stands at the door and knocks (**Revelation 3:20**). He knocks and we open the door. I find it deeply encouraging that Jesus says I am here, I want you and I love you. He cares so deeply for every person and knocks ever so lovingly and patiently as we seek the Kingdom of God established out of love.

Coming up next in the series: Healing the city

N.B. Following any of the services, if you would like to share a personal reflection, encouragement or any way God is moving in your life in relation to the theme, please get in touch with realeboga@stnics.org!