

## Kingdom of God Session 3: Jesus teaches about the kingdom

*A bit of revision... From our studies so far, what is the kingdom of God? What were popular ideas and assumptions about the kingdom in Jesus' time? What has been the most important thing for you about the kingdom so far?*

Jesus spent a lot of time teaching what the kingdom was like by using parables, and many of these were addressed to wrong ideas people had about it. In this study we'll at some of the parables about the kingdom, all in this case from Matthew (note there's some overlap between this and our studies on the kingdom when we did the Lord's Prayer). We may not have the same misconceptions that Jesus' original listeners did, but we still need to align our ideas with what Jesus understood by the kingdom of God.

### Matthew 13:31–33, 44–45

- What is the point of the parables of the mustard seed and the yeast? Can you give some practical examples of how we might see this working out in the world today?
- What's the point of the parables of the pearl and the treasure? Is the kingdom really worth this much? Why? Why not? How can we encourage one another to go "all out" for the kingdom?

### Matthew 13:24–30, 36–42

Happily for us, this is one of the parables that Jesus explains! The 'weeds' are 'darnel' in Greek, a plant that looks so like wheat that one of its names is 'false wheat'.

- What is the basic message of this parable? What does it tell us about the interaction between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of this world? Does it mean that everything/everyone that's not part of the kingdom is evil through and through?
- Taking this parable with the ones of the mustard seed and the yeast, what does it tell us about the extent and influence of the kingdom? How do we see this in the world today?
- Jesus talks about judgement at the end of the parable. Do you think it's essential to have judgement? What if there was no weeding out of evil?

### Matthew 20:20–28

- From their mother's request, what sort of idea do you think James and John had about the kingdom of God? From the other disciples' response, what ideas do you think they had about it?
- What do you think Jesus means when he talks about the 'cup' he is going to drink? What does he say is the reason he came?
- How does Jesus turn our normal idea of authority on its head? What implications does this have for us as Christians, both individually and in the church?

### Matthew 20:1–16

Note that a denarius was a Roman coin equal to one day's wage, and God's people/kingdom were often compared to a vineyard.

- The workers who have worked all day grumble when they receive their wages (v.11). Do you think they had a point? Was it fair that the late-comers should get the same amount?
- What do you think Jesus is trying to teach us about the kingdom from this parable?

**To think about:** what main thing will you take away from this study to help you live better as a citizen of God's kingdom?