

An aerial, black and white photograph of a city, likely Los Angeles, viewed from a high angle. A bright, circular light source, possibly the sun, is shining down from the sky, creating a lens flare effect and illuminating the city below. The city's layout, including streets, buildings, and a large stadium, is visible. The background shows mountains under a cloudy sky.

# PERSPECTIVES

TOOLS FOR CREATING A BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW | ROMANS 12:2

# UPSIDE DOWN

THE WAY OF THE KINGDOM

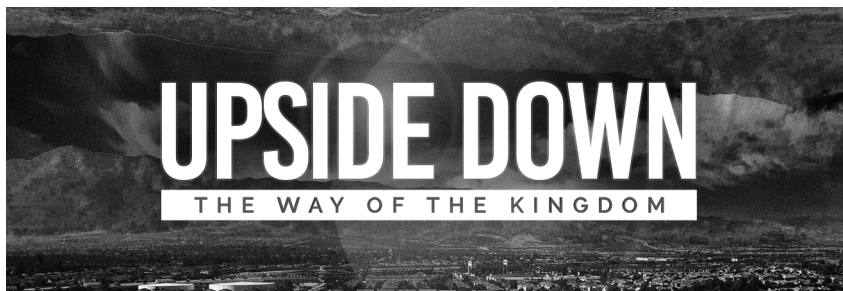
WEEKS 1-4

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Water  
of Life  
community church







## **WEEK 1: FAITH**

### **ICE BREAKER**

### **WORSHIP**

### **PRAYER**

### **SERMON REWIND**

Pastor emphasizes the importance of understanding the Kingdom of God through the parables that Jesus taught, illustrating how these stories often challenge conventional beliefs and provoke deeper thought. The Gospel of the Kingdom transforms lives, moving beyond mere knowledge to having engaged faith that can change the world. He highlights that cultivating a receptive heart is crucial, as the state of one's heart determines the ability to grow and engage with God's message. Ultimately, Pastor invites listeners to reflect on their own heart conditions, the choices they make about what to believe, and how to respond to God's teachings.

### **KEY VERSES**

Look up these additional verses:

**Matthew 11:4-5 (NLT)**

**1 Peter 2:5-8**

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### **1** Transformative Faith

The sermon emphasizes that having the 'faith of Jesus' involves a transformative relationship and not just a belief or acknowledgment of Him.

- a. What do you think it means to have the 'faith of Jesus' rather than just 'faith in Jesus?'
- b. 'Faith of Jesus' is active faith, what are ways you can live out the 'faith of Jesus', serving others personally and as a group?

### **2** Wisdom of Jesus Teaching

Jesus taught using stories to penetrate the heart and to help people understand a different perspective on living in the Kingdom of God.

- a. What do think was Jesus' heart to use stories or parables to communicate the kingdom of God?
- b. Can you think of a personal experience or story that helped you understand a lesson or principle better? How did it change your viewpoint?

### **3** Kingdom of Life

The sermon points out that worldly kingdoms often operate through force and control, while God's Kingdom is about life and healing.

- a. Jesus is a spring of life that moves through us, how does Jesus want God's kingdom to spring from us in our worldly kingdom?
- b. How can you apply the principle of leading with life and service rather than control and force in relationships, to strangers, and to our community?

### **4** Restoring a Right View of God

The pastor shared how the heart's condition affects one's ability to receive and grow from the teachings of Jesus, similar to how soil impacts a plant's growth.

- a. How does viewing God as compassionate (rather than distant) change your relationship with Him personally and communally?

- b.** In what ways might we come to know Him more truthfully so we can help others know Him truthfully too?

## 5

### **We Belong in the Father's House**

The sermon emphasizes the importance of the will in experiencing the Kingdom and suggests that Jesus wants to win our hearts and minds.

- a.** What do you think it means to have a 'willing heart' in the context of being part of the Kingdom of God?
- b.** Consider a time when you had to decide whether to open your heart to something new or challenging. How did that experience shape your understanding of being willing?

## **DIVE DEEPER**

Personal Reflection: Take a deep breath and read...

Opening up to God is hard, but from our openness, He wants to bless you and care for you deeply.

- Where do you struggle to submit to Jesus' teaching?
- How can you grow to receive His new perspective, allowing Him to transform you?

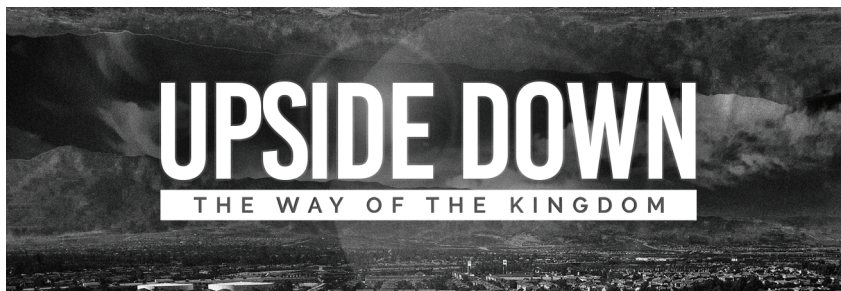
## **PRACTICAL APPLICATION**

Learning Jesus' Perspective: Each day this week.

- Write down places God wants to move in.
- Next to each bullet point, place a God promise from Scripture or prayer.

Ask the Holy Spirit for awareness of His safety and care being vulnerable with Him.





## **WEEK 2: PARABLE OF THE SOWER**

### **ICE BREAKER**

### **WORSHIP**

### **PRAYER**

### **SERMON REWIND**

The pastor discussed how Jesus' teachings centered around the Kingdom of God and emphasized the importance of having a receptive heart. Using the parable of the Sower, he illustrated how different heart conditions—like hardened paths, rocky ground, and thorny weeds—can hinder our growth. The message highlighted the necessity of self-reflection, repentance, and nurturing our faith through consistent spiritual practices. Ultimately, the pastor called on individuals to yield their will to God, allowing Him to prepare their hearts for a fruitful harvest.

### **KEY VERSES**

Look up these additional verses:

**Matthew 13:1-23 (NLT)**

**1 Peter 5:7-8 (NLT)**

**Philippians 2:13 (NLT)**

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

**1**

### **The Seed on the Path | Matthew 13:4, 19**

The parable illustrates how our desire for control creates environments that are not fit for growth.

- a. **Matthew 13:4, 19** mentions that the seed on the path represents those who hear the message but don't let it penetrate their heart. What do you think prevents people from truly understanding God's word?
- b. Consider distractions in your own life, how have they made it difficult to give up control to listen and understand Jesus' teachings?

**2**

### **The Rocky Soil | Matthew 13:5-6, 20-21**

The sermon talks about how insubstantial roots can cause faith to wilt when faced with challenges, like plants that don't establish deep roots.

- a. It's important to know Jesus' heart. What do you think Jesus means describing those with "no firm root", and how might that relate to the condition of our hearts in difficult times?
- b. When your faith feels shaky, what are some things you do—or could do—to deepen our spiritual roots?

**3**

### **Among Thorns | Matthew 13:7, 22**

Pastor illustrates how distractions from materialism, worry, and the fast pace of life can choke out our spiritual growth.

- a. What are the 'thorns' in your life? How do they affect our ability to grow fruitfully?
- b. If those thorns or weeds, in your life have caused a lack in trusting God, how do we begin trusting Him again?

**4**

### **The Good Soil | Matthew 13:8-9, 23**

Pastor emphasizes the importance of allowing God to actively cultivate our hearts by yielding to Him and nurturing daily habits.

- a. What does it mean to prepare 'good soil' in our hearts for God's word to take root and flourish, according to the sermon?

- b. What are the areas in our life God desires good soil that we struggle to yield? What intimidates us about surrender to Him, who wants good things for us?

## 5

### Jesus' Grace in Reflection

The pastor shared that Jesus expressed grace in His teaching, causing listeners to reflect on themselves and be conscious of their heart posture.

- a. What is the purpose of Jesus wanting us to be aware of our heart posture?
- b. Reflect on **Matthew 13:3-9 & 18-23**, and ask yourself, which soil are you today? Be honest with yourself and allow Jesus to meet you here.

## DIVE DEEPER

Personal Reflection: Take a deep breath and read...

The reality is, our heart is not always in the right place, but God desires you to know so you can trust in Him.

- Reflect on **Matthew 13:3-9 & 18-23**, and ask yourself, which soil are you today? Be honest with yourself and allow Jesus to meet you here.
- Will you stay on the path, the rocky place, among thorns, or live out planted in good soil? Know God is not mad at you, but ask Him how you might live in good soil today.

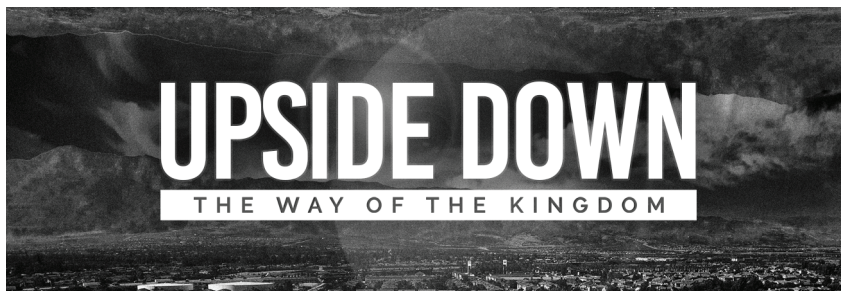
## PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Flourishing Fruitfully: This week, write down:

- One spiritual discipline you can commit to this week to help nurture your heart and deepen your faith.
- How you will stay accountable to this discipline.

Ask the Holy Spirit, *continuously*, to help keep your heart on Him in every season.





## WEEK 3: QUIET WORK

### ICE BREAKER

### WORSHIP

### PRAYER

### SERMON REWIND

The sermon emphasizes that many are not fully aware of the Spirit's move in their lives. The Spirit operates quietly yet powerfully, facilitating deep growth and transformation, as illustrated by the Parable of the Growing Seed. This growth leads to the Spirit developing in us grace, forgiveness, and mercy, to operate in spiritual and relational maturity. Ultimately, believers are called to trust in the Spirit's work within themselves and others, focusing on faith rather than control over growth.

### KEY VERSES

Look up these additional verses:

**Mark 4:26-29 (NIV)**

**Mark 4:30-33 (NIV)**

**Luke 13:18-19 (NIV)**

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### **1** Quiet Move of the Spirit

The sermon discusses how the Spirit works in the lives of followers, often in a quiet and transformative manner in the deeper parts of ourselves.

- a. What does it mean for the Spirit to cause growth in our lives quietly and sometimes in the dark and deep places?
- b. Can you think of a time when you experienced personal growth that was slow or not obvious at first? How did that shape your faith?

### **2** Gradually Growing

The Parable of the Growing Seed is mentioned as a picture of the Spirit's work in followers of Jesus, emphasizing the slow, quiet process of growth.

- a. How does the Parable of the Growing Seed illustrate the work of the Spirit in our lives? While we wish for quick growth, what is the value in the slow, quiet process of growth?
- b. In what ways can you encourage that gradual growth in yourself or those around you?

### **3** Kingdom Characteristics

The sermon highlights new characteristics that develop through the transformational work of the Spirit.

- a. What are some characteristics like grace, forgiveness, and mercy that we should continuously operate in through the Spirit?
- b. Which of these characteristics have you struggled to operate in the most? Why is it so difficult to live this out for yourself and others?

### **4** The Spirit Causes Growth

The sermon emphasizes that it's not our business to make things happen but yield in faith to the Spirit's power to grow the planted seeds.

- a. Kingdom growth means trust in the Spirit, what places in your life are you holding onto control? How can this group encourage each other to release control to God?

- b.** Think of a situation where you wanted to control the outcome. What was the result? How can you include God into that process in future situations?

## 5

### Rivers of Water

The pastor encourages followers to act as conduits of the Spirit's life-giving water to others.

- a.** How can we be 'rivers of living water' to others? How can we be more like Jesus to them?
- b.** What forms of serving as a group allow you to be 'rivers of living water' to the needs in the community?

**Reminder: 1 Corinthians 3:6** says, "I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow." God will use us to treat the seed for another, but we are not God because only He can cause growth. Therefore, trust in God's work through you.

## DIVE DEEPER

Personal Reflection: Take a deep breath and read...

We often expect faster growth, but the Spirit does not always operate like this on purpose.

- What are the areas of growth you want to be rushed? What is the purpose for a quick growth? Do you blame yourself for stunted growth?
- Do you think God is blaming you? If so, why do you think He does?

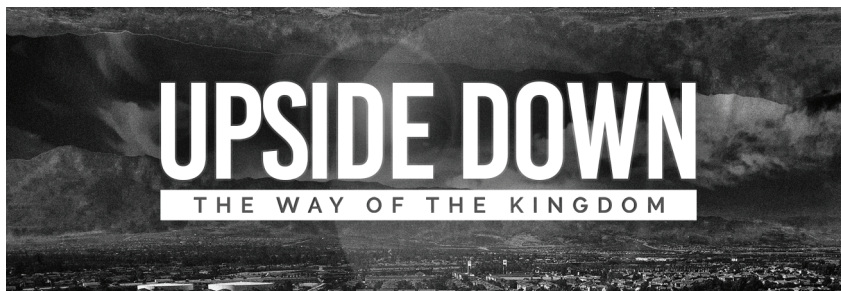
## PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Ask God to show you His heart to you. Each day this week, write down:

- Places of blame on yourself and God's thoughts about you.
- Encouraging verses paired with God's thoughts (from Scripture or prayer).
- Encouraging thoughts from peers.

Ask the Holy Spirit to help you see His heart for you and release areas of shame.





## **WEEK 4: PARABLE OF THE GREAT FEAST**

### **ICE BREAKER**

### **WORSHIP**

### **PRAYER**

### **SERMON REWIND**

The sermon explores the theme of humility and the contrast between the Jews and Gentiles in understanding Jesus' message. It highlights that those who think highly of themselves often miss the true essence of the gospel, while the outsiders embrace it with open hearts. Additionally, it addresses the excuses people make to avoid responding to Jesus' invitation, demonstrating how life's distractions can lead them to reject a relationship with Him. Ultimately, the sermon reassures that acceptance into God's kingdom is not based on qualifications but simply on willingness to accept His invitation.

### **KEY VERSES**

Look up these additional verses:

**Luke 14:1-14 (NIV)**

**Luke 14:15-24 (NIV)**

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### **1** Life Gets Busy

The pastor talked about how people made excuses to avoid attending the feast, showing how busy life can become.

- a. Why are we so quick to make excuses when it comes to fulfilling an important charge?
- b. Can you think of a time when you made excuses to avoid something important? How did that affect you?

### **2** Danger of Assumption

The sermon discusses how thinking you have God figured out can make you miss what you really need.

- a. What is the danger in having a false sense of perfection or self-reliance in your relationship with God?
- b. Have you ever felt like you didn't need God in a situation? How did that turn out for you?

### **3** Invitation to the Kingdom

The sermon emphasizes that those who we might not expect can accept the invitation to God's Kingdom.

- a. How does the idea of the 'outsiders becoming insiders' challenge our thinking about the perspective of the Kingdom?
- b. Is there someone you know who you think might never accept Jesus? How can you change your perspective on them?

### **4** Steady Lifestyle

The sermon mentions that people initially said 'yes' but then changed their minds and didn't attend.

- a. Why do you think it's important to be consistent and keep your word when it comes to commitments like faith?
- b. Reflect on a commitment you've made. How can you ensure that you follow through on it in the future?

## 5

### A Willing Heart

The sermon highlights that there are no prerequisites to accepting Jesus; all that's needed is willingness.

- a. How does "no prerequisites" change your mind on how God's Kingdom sees acceptance differently?
- b. How does "no prerequisites" begin to transform how we accept and love those around us?

**Reminder:** We learn from Jesus to then live out His lifestyle for others. We are showing people who He is in everyday living and interactions with people.

### DIVE DEEPER

Personal Reflection: Take a deep breath and read...

Excuses and self-righteousness make us miss out on the richness of Jesus' love for us and others. Teachings like this are love-filled parables to bring us back to His Kingdom lifestyle.

- Have you denied someone love because of an excuse or you thought highly of yourself? For future encouragement, how might Jesus have loved them?
- If you feel guilty about this experience, how do you think Jesus wants to care for you on your side of the situation?

### PRACTICAL APPLICATION

This week: Create a habit of consistency (reading Scripture, praying, serving):

- Acknowledge excuses and stay dedicated to consistency.
- Keep each other accountable.

Ask the Holy Spirit to help you be consistent and see others the way He does.







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The Perspectives Curriculum is written by Small Groups  
Volunteers at Water of Life Community Church.