"Christ the King"

Matthew 4:17

STRENGTH for the Journey with Joe Stowell

Part of the RBC family of Ministries

"Christ the King"

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Group Study Introduction

Use the following questions and exercises as your group time allows. Feel free to skip one or more questions in each section as necessary. If you have less then thirty minutes for group discussion, we recommend skipping the "Getting Started" section. Be sure to save time for prayer at the end of your meeting, using the "Strength through Prayer" section.

Getting Started:

Joe Stowell tells a humorous story about a driver, her car decorated with Christian bumper stickers and symbols, who tailgated the car in front of her and then got really angry when the other driver stopped at a yellow light. Joe categorizes this woman as a metaphor of all of us—as Christian children of heaven who act so much like children of hell.

- What is the worst case of road rage you have witnessed?
- In what context are you most easily tempted to "act like a child of hell"—e.g., when you get frustrated in traffic, when your favorite team loses, when your efforts at work get overlooked?

Strength through Scripture:

Open your Bibles to Matthew 4 and have a volunteer read verse 17 out loud.

1) The first part of Jesus' message was a call to repent. How would you define what that means?

2) The second part of Jesus' message was an announcement of the coming of the "kingdom of heaven." What comes to your mind when you hear that term?

3) Can you identify with Joe's statements that many of us think of the kingdom of heaven as a place or as something that is only in the future? Why or why not?

Notes:

"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."

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4) Why does it matter—for the world in general and your life in particular—that the kingdom of heaven is "the reign and rule of God"?

5) Why does it matter—for the world in general and your life in particular—that Jesus is both the living expression of the kingdom of heaven on earth and the King?

Digging Deeper:

If your group has enough time (i.e., you've listened to the audio on your own), answer one or more of these optional questions.

1) Joe begins his message with an introductory challenge to accept the authority of the Word of God without apology. Why is that important, especially in regard to Jesus' words in Matthew 4:17?

2) Read Matthew 6:9–10, the opening lines of the Lord's Prayer. What does this add to our understanding of the kingdom of heaven?

3) What evidence does Joe share regarding his point that the kingship of Christ is the theme of the gospel of Matthew?

Strength through Sharing:

1) Joe challenges us to ask ourselves this question: Is Jesus a king (one of many kings), the King (the only King), or my King? With what level of confidence can you respond, "Yes, Jesus is my King"?

2) Joe goes on to urge those of us who claim that Jesus is our King, to live out that reality, recognizing that Christ is our authority and resource. To what extent does that reflect the desire of your heart? Is there a situation in your life right now where you especially need to live out that reality?

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Strength through Prayer:

Spend a few moments as a group in silent, personal prayer. Confirm your desire for Jesus to truly be your King, and ask him to help you live out on a daily basis the fruit of such a relationship.

You may want to begin your prayer with these words:

"Jesus, you are my King! You are my authority, my resource. Empower me by the Holy Spirit to honor you by living in a way that reflects that reality."

When you are finished with this time of silent, personal prayer, you may want to move into a time of group prayer, praying for one another.

Closing Call to Action:

How would your life be different if every day you woke up and said, "Today, Jesus, you are my King"? When you put your head on the pillow tonight, ask yourself this question: *In what specific ways today did I live like Jesus was indeed my King?*

Notes:

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