"Christ the King"

Matthew 4:17

STRENGTH for the Journey with Joe Stowell
Part of the RBC family of Ministries

Individual Study Introduction

After listening to the audio segment, use the following questions as your time allows. You may want to record your answers or jot down thoughts and notes in a personal journal. You may also want to use your journal as a record of your prayer time with God. Write out your prayer or simply record your requests and the areas of your life you are releasing to God. This written record will help you to watch God's movement in your life. You'll see more clearly the ways God is giving you "strength for the journey"!

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:

Read Matthew 4:17.

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?

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Lesson 1
Lesson 2
Lesson 3
Lesson 4

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 you have enough time, answer one or more of these optional questions. But be sure to save time for the final two sections.

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 Reflection:

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 in 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."

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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