

Chapter 8: Jesus and the Kingdom of God

Jesus is the Son of God and Savior of the world, who has come to establish the Kingdom of God.

Chapter Summary

As the last of the prophets, John the Baptist prepared the Jewish people for the coming of the Kingdom of God. In love and obedience, Jesus was baptized to show us what was needed to be faithful to God's covenant. We enter the kingdom through Baptism and repentance. Jesus told parables so that the people would understand the kingdom, and He worked miracles to show that the kingdom was at hand. To enter the kingdom, we must become childlike. Jesus established the Church, the beginning of the Kingdom of God on earth, to continue His mission to lead all of mankind to the Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus gave Peter and the Apostles the authority to lead the Church. This authority is passed on to popes and bishops, who continue Jesus' mission.

More for Parents

As parents, we give everything to our children—time, resources, and love. Like a car running on empty, we might give more than we have. We're entrusted with leading our children in lives of virtue and love, but we can't do that if we rely on ourselves and our own strength. If we do, we'll be spent and unable to love as we should. No matter whether things are going well or poorly, we must rely *completely* on God in all things, just like a child. Only then can we be open to receiving the grace that makes it possible to love God and our children as we ought. Jesus tells us, "Apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). If we are not praying daily and frequenting the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, outside of Sunday, we may begin to rely on ourselves and our own strength rather than on the grace of God.

Virtue in the Family

Jesus tells us that we must receive the Kingdom of God "like a child" (Mark 10:15). We open ourselves to God's love and grace by adopting the disposition of a child relying on his parents. It is possible through such methods as prayer and fasting.

Being Childlike

- Prayer activity
 - Reflect on the following verse together: "Whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it" (Mark 10:15).
 - What are good characteristics of children?
 - What are certain things you need to rely on God to help you with?
 - Out loud, take turns asking God to help you with whatever specific need you may have.
 - Conclude by praying together, "Heavenly Father, form us to depend on You like children. Amen."
- Agree on how you can fast as a family. It can be an unnecessary activity (like watching TV, for example) that you can replace with a more wholesome use of time together. It could also be a certain food (like dessert, junk food, or a favorite family dish). Discuss how fasting from it will open you up to rely more on God and to focus on Him.
- Attend adoration (or remain in the church after Mass) for five to ten minutes. Explain that being in Jesus' presence is like being held by Him like a child. Encourage your family to ask Jesus specifically for the grace to be childlike. End your time with an Our Father together.

Vocabulary Words for Your Children to Review

- Apostles
- Incarnation
- Kingdom of God
- parable

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