

WHAT IF JESUS WAS SERIOUS?



8-WEEK STUDY

on the challenging teachings of Jesus
in the Sermon on the Mount

WEEK 1

Discussion Guide

**If Jesus was serious,
then heaven is already here**

Matthew 4:17

WHAT IF JESUS WAS SERIOUS?



WEEKLY READING

Primary text from this week: Matthew 4:17

Secondary texts from this week: Mark 1:1, Mark 1:14-15, Matthew 6:9-10

GETTING STARTED

Goals for this session: To better understand the *Kingdom of Heaven/God* theme in the four Gospels

Missed the sermon? Watch it at www.youtube.com/venturamissionary

Break the Ice: What are the images that come to your mind when you think of “heaven?” Where did those images come from?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. On Sunday, Pastor Doug introduced what he called *the main theme of Jesus' ministry: The Kingdom of Heaven (or Kingdom of God)*. What stood out to you about this? What was confusing?
2. Have the group read **Genesis 28:10-17**, **Exodus 3:1-6**, and **Exodus 19:9-12**. How do you understand these Biblical passages that show heaven and earth as “overlapping?” Is that a new concept for you? What are the implications of this idea?
3. Look up the following passages that describe Jesus using “temple” language (i.e. the place where heaven and earth overlap): **John 1:14**, **John 2:18-22**, **Colossians 1:19**, **Colossians 2:9**. What is the significance of Jesus being talked about in this way?
4. Have someone in the group read **Mark 1:14-15**, in which Mark summarizes the main theme of Jesus' teaching. After hearing Sunday's sermon, what do you think Jesus was referring to when He claimed that “the kingdom of heaven has come near” (or *arrived*)?
5. Have someone in the group read the Lord's Prayer in **Matthew 6:9-11** (which is part of the Sermon on the Mount). What do you think Jesus means when He prays “your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven”?

Follow up question: Do you think this is a **prayer of petitioning** (asking God to do something He hasn't already done), or a **prayer of surrender** (asking God to accomplish His request through us)?

6. Read **Revelation 21 and 22** and discuss how the images in these passages differ from popular ideas about the end of the world.

PRAYER

Pray for yourself: Pray the Lord's Prayer, asking God to work in you and through you to bring His kingdom (His rule) on earth (our space) as it is in heaven (God's space).

Pray for your four: Identify four people who don't know Jesus (friends, family, neighbors, or co-workers/classmates), and commit to pray for them consistently. Pray that **(1)** God would reveal Jesus to them, **(2)** that God would turn their hearts towards Him, **(3)** that God would put Christians in their path to represent Christ, and **(4)** that God would give you an opportunity to share what Christ has done in your life.

ACTION STEPS

Do the following this week: Read the Sermon on the Mount a couple of times this week. As you read it, ask yourself the question, “What if Jesus was serious?”

NOTES

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.