THE KINGDOM OF SEEDS

We must make no mistake about it—God is intent on launching a revolution. Through the prophet Daniel, He clearly stated His goal to King Nebuchadnezzar that “in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever” (Dan. 2:44).

“ ‘Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it?’ In earthly governments there was nothing that could serve for a similitude. No civil society could afford Him a symbol. ‘It is like a grain of mustard seed,’ He said, ‘which, when it is sown upon the earth, though it be less than all the seeds that are upon the earth, yet when it is sown, groweth up, and becometh greater than all the herbs, and putteth out great branches; so that the birds of the heaven can lodge under the shadow thereof.’ (R.V.)” (Christ’s Object Lessons, 76).

The kingdom of Jesus Christ is not illustrated in brute force, military strength, or the caprice of man. Instead it is based on the immeasurable results produced through the life of a seed that has found fertile ground. When the faded glory of earthly kingdoms perishes with the leaders who established them, the power of Christ’s revolution against sin remains forever in the lives of those He came to claim.
Write out Matthew 6:25–34 from the translation of your choice. You may also re-write the passage in your own words, outline, or mind-map the chapter.
THE HEART REVOLUTION

In Matthew 6:16–34, Christ shows the either/or nature of discipleship. It is not possible for one to be obsessed with outward appearance while seeking an inward transformation. A person who merely seeks to look the part of a Christian will only rise to the level of hypocrisy. Additionally, a person who seeks to lay up treasures on earth cannot also lay up treasures in heaven. This doesn’t mean that rich people cannot invest in heaven’s economy. Rather, it means that where your treasure is, your heart will follow. The value of a treasure is determined not so much by the material it is composed of but by the quality of sacrifice a person is willing to make in order to obtain it. According to Jesus, we cannot have our affections set on things of the earth if we wish to have them set on things above.

The apex of Christ’s teaching revolves around worry. “Worry is blind and cannot discern the future, but Jesus sees the end from the beginning. In every difficulty He has a way prepared to bring relief... Our heavenly Father has a thousand ways to provide for us of which we know nothing. Those who accept the one principle of making the service of God supreme will find perplexities vanish and a plan path before their feet” (The Ministry of Healing, 481).

Worry is also something that the Gentiles do. It is unnecessary because what we ask of God, He already does for animals that are less valuable than us—and He does it without their asking. Finally, worrying is irrational. We accomplish nothing worthwhile by worrying. Our problems still remain unanswered, and it only shows how weak our trust in God really is.

Instead, Jesus says, “Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble” (Matt. 6:33, 34).

The revolution that Christ seeks to establish takes place in the heart of a person before it takes place in a community of believers. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus declares that a person cannot be a citizen of heaven if they are a citizen of earth, for these two kingdoms are antagonistic to each other. The only option for us is to choose to be God’s ambassadors—promoters of a better kingdom established solely upon faith in the character of His Son.

Memorize your favorite verse in Matthew 6:25–34. Write it out multiple times to help with memorization.

What is Jesus repeatedly saying in the main passage? Why?
THE SEEDS OF REVOLUTION

If the seed is the Word of God, then one of the most precious seeds ever scattered by Jesus was in His sermon on the mount of blessing beginning in Matthew 5. Among other things, the sermon addresses who we must be, what we must do, and how what we do helps us know who we are. In this sermon, Jesus clearly outlines the principles of His kingdom by dropping seeds of truth to transform the lives of His hearers.

The first portion of Christ’s sermon implies that happiness is often disguised by what seems counter-intuitive. What we think makes us happy actually doesn’t. For the human being, there is no greater joy than the recognition of our spiritual poverty, mourning, meekness, hunger, mercy, purity, peace, and persecution. For only when we experience these things are we able to become the recipients of real godliness.

The Beatitudes are one of the clearest indicators to show the legitimacy of our profession as Christians. How can one know if one is really a Christian? Is it by their actions, their speech, their affections? Yes, but these can at times be deceiving. People with good actions can have evil motivations, and real Christians can struggle with overcoming a habit of bad speech. The Christian journey has highs and lows, which sometimes makes it hard to even know whether or not we are who we claim to be. The Beatitudes answer this question. Do you hunger and thirst for righteousness? As a deer pants for water and stops to quench its thirst even though it’s being hunted, is the love of Christ more desirable than life itself? Whatever our profession, our relationship to the Beatitudes exposes the genuineness of our claims.

The power of the kingdom of God is not found in overcoming others. It is found in overcoming self. Jesus declared that His followers are salt and light. Salt infuses itself with what it must season. In the same way, light mixes into the darkness in order for it to make an impact. So the Christian must lose sight of who they are in order to make a real impact in the kingdom of God. Selflessness, not selfishness is the fulfilling of the law. True Christians do not only focus on their own righteousness, but, like Christ, they say, “For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth” (John 17:19).
What relationship do the following verses have with the primary passage?

Luke 5:1–11
Matthew 13:1–52
Luke 15:1–32

What other parables come to mind that present a new kingdom?

Review your memorized verse from Matthew 6:25–34.
GOD IS LOVE

‘God is love.’ 1 John 4:16. His nature, His law, is love. It ever has been; it ever will be. ‘The high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity,’ whose ‘ways are everlasting,’ changeth not. With Him ‘is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.’ Isaiah 57:15; Habakkuk 3:6; James 1:17.

“Every manifestation of creative power is an expression of infinite love. The sovereignty of God involves fullness of blessing to all created beings. . . .

“The history of the great conflict between good and evil, from the time it first began in heaven to the final overthrow of rebellion and the total eradication of sin, is also a demonstration of God’s unchanging love” (Patriarchs and Prophets, 33).

It was to prove this message true that God sent His only Son into this world to save the human race. Jesus became flesh and tabernacled with us because that is the nature of His kingdom. Satan’s accusation against God was that He was selfish and that His unkeepable law was the means by which God chose to separate Himself from humanity.

By launching his attack on the human family, Satan thought to create an eternal separation between us and God, thus ruining the principles of heaven’s government forever. God must either change His law which He declares to be founded on love, or He must destroy His children whom He claims to love. However, when it comes to measuring the love of God, only one outcome is possible: our estimation of it will always fall short of its grandeur. God so loved the world that He gave His Son to be one with the human race and to die the death that we deserved so that we might obtain the life that He deserves.

God’s purpose from the beginning of creation has always been the same. He has always desired communion with us. Our sin, separating God from us, has created a chasm that seemed insurmountable. How could the divine purpose in us be fulfilled now that sin had marred the image of God in our characters and introduced death to our experience? Through Jesus, all things are possible. For this reason, His life, death, and resurrection were, are, and forever will be the only object worthy of our affection and study.

“The great controversy is ended. Sin and sinners are no more. The entire universe is clean. One pulse of harmony and gladness beats through the vast creation. From Him who created all, flow life and light and gladness, throughout the realms of illimitable space. From the minutest atom to the greatest world, all things, animate and inanimate, in their unshadowed beauty and perfect joy, declare that God is love” (The Great Controversy, 678).
THE RISK OF REDEMPTION

“The King of glory stooped low to take humanity. Rude and forbidding were His earthly surroundings. His glory was veiled, that the majesty of His outward form might not become an object of attraction. He shunned all outward display. Riches, worldly honor, and human greatness can never save a soul from death; Jesus purposed that no attraction of an earthly nature should call men to His side. Only the beauty of heavenly truth must draw those who would follow Him. The character of the Messiah had long been foretold in prophecy, and He desired men to accept Him upon the testimony of the word of God. . . .

“The story of Bethlehem is an exhaustless theme. In it is hidden ‘the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God.’ Romans 11:33. We marvel at the Saviour’s sacrifice in exchanging the throne of heaven for the manger, and the companionship of adoring angels for the beasts of the stall. Human pride and self-sufficiency stand rebuked in His presence. Yet this was but the beginning of His wonderful condescension. It would have been an almost infinite humiliation for the Son of God to take man’s nature, even when Adam stood in his innocence in Eden. But Jesus accepted humanity when the race had been weakened by four thousand years of sin. Like every child of Adam He accepted the results of the working of the great law of heredity. What these results were is shown in the history of His earthly ancestors. He came with such a heredity to share our sorrows and temptations, and to give us the example of a sinless life.

“Satan in heaven had hated Christ for His position in the courts of God. He hated Him the more when he himself was dethroned. He hated Him who pledged Himself to redeem a race of sinners. Yet into the world where Satan claimed dominion God permitted His Son to come, a helpless babe, subject to the weakness of humanity. He permitted Him to meet life’s peril in common with every human soul, to fight the battle as every child of humanity must fight it, at the risk of failure and eternal loss.

“The heart of the human father yearns over his son. He looks into the face of his little child, and trembles at the thought of life’s peril. He longs to shield his dear one from Satan’s power, to hold him back from temptation and conflict. To meet a bitterer conflict and a more fearful risk, God gave His only-begotten Son, that the path of life might be made sure for our little ones. ‘Herein is love.’ Wonder, O heavens! and be astonished, O earth!”

(The Desire of Ages, 43, 48, 49)
Share insights from this week’s memory verse and Bible study as well as any discoveries, observations, and questions with your Sabbath School class (or Bible study group). Consider these discussion questions with the rest of the group.

How is the biblical revolution of Christ different from other revolutions in Christ’s name?

What happens when biblical outcomes are desired by use of force, strength, and other unbiblical methods?

How can we stop worrying?

Why does humanity enjoy the duality of the external and the internal?

What aspects of the Beatitudes are most needed today?

Which parables of Christ are most inspirational? Which of them are most disturbing?

Summarize the whole lesson in three points that you have newly experienced.