

A/ Teaching

Bible Material – Key Points - based on Mark 4v30-5v8

[Illustration: Nation/Brexit.]

Story of God's Reign (Mark 4v30-32 – mustard seed)

- The new Realm – Creation – perfect; awe; delegated to humans. (Genesis 1,2)
- The Rebellion – Fall – pretender to throne; spoiled (Genesis 3)
- The Re-invasion – Christ – Lord of all; proclaimed, demonstrated & victory (Col 2v15)
- The Restoration – Spirit – birth into kingdom; aligning hearts to His reign (Rom 8v1-17)
- The Return – Complete – evil destroyed; God's reign total. (Revelation 19-22)

⇒ You know the end – take courage!

Nature of God's Reign (Mark 4v35-41 – be still)

- Ultimate – eternal, total, expanding (Daniel 2,4,5,7, Mark 4v30-32)
- Moral – good, righteous, holy, just, integrity, pure (Matthew 5-7)
- Relational – love, grace (John 3v16, 1 John 3v16)
- Motivational – sacrificial (Philippians 2v5-11)

⇒ You know who's in charge & what he's like - have total confidence in him as God

Battle for God's Reign (Mark 5v1-8 – set free)

- Daily decision and battle of heart – God or Satan? (Ephesians 6v10-18, Genesis 3v2-6)
- Trust God's Reign (Mark 4v38-40)
- Exercise God's Reign – Moral, Relational & Motivational (Ephesians 4v17-6v9)

⇒ "Your kingdom come, your will be done" (Matthew 6v10)

Strategy for God's Reign – *Practical "How to"*

- Be Born again (John 3v3)
- Understand God's Will (Ephesians 5v17)
- Think God's Will (Romans 12v2)
- Do God's Will (James 4v7)
- Be God's Will (Ephesians 5v1-2)

These guides / worksheets may help you think things through:

- "How does God Guide?" booklet
- "Living His Reign in my Life" worksheet

B/ Personal Reflection & Development - Materials available

- Reflect on what the following scriptures reveal about the sovereignty of God ...
 - God working in the Joseph's life Genesis 37-50
 - Daniels visions concerning empires in Daniel 2,4,5,7
 - Isaiah's prophecy of a future reign in Isaiah 11v1-9
 - God's greatness in Isaiah 40 or Job 38-41
 - A reflection on worldly rulers' schemes in Psalm 2
 - God's knowledge of you in Psalm 139
 - God bringing about his purposes in Romans 8-11
 - God's ultimate reign in Revelation 4,5,18-22
- Key Bible verses to memorise and meditate on:
 - Genesis 1v1; Mark 4v39-41; Isaiah 40v28-31; Ephesians 6v10
- Songs to meditate on:
 - "The battle belongs to the Lord (In heavenly armour)" Petra
 - "Who is on the Lord's side?" Frances Havergal
 - "Come set your rule and reign" Rend Collective
- Consider God's calling on your life.
 - What has he called you to right now?
 - Where might he be leading you to?
 - Use the *"How does God Guide?"* leaflet to help you.
 - Other materials include "SHAPE" by Erik Rees
- Consider what God's reign means in your life where he has placed you right now.
 - Use the *"Living His Reign in My Life"* worksheet to help you think through his will for you in terms of moral, relational and motivational elements. Other materials you may like to read include:
 - "Challenging Lifestyle" by Nicky Gumbel
 - "Discipleship" by David Watson.
 - There are links to some podcasts on our Facebook page which look at the issue of this warfare and the idols that so easily creep into our lives.
- Thought provoking Questions for further study:
 - If God is sovereign, why does he allow suffering in the world?
 - If God is sovereign, how do humans have free choice?
- Reflect on some of the "Small Team" and "Pair/Triplet" material before meeting.

C/ Small Team (1 hour 15mins + worship)

- Worship

- Summary of “Bible Material” (5 mins)
- Talk Questions (15 mins)
 - Summarise the history of the reign of God.
 - How much of the world is God sovereign over?
 - What does Jesus mean when he talks about “entering the kingdom of God”? (John 3v3-8)
 - What are the characteristics of God’s reign? Does this give me confidence?
 - Where does the battle for God’s reign take place? What form does this battle take, and what are the armour and the weapons?

- Summary of “Practical” (5 mins)
- Practical Questions (40 mins)
 - Battle 1: Trusting God’s reign in every situation
 - How can knowing that God is sovereign impact our response to:
 - Negative circumstances (e.g. ill-health, bad decisions by authorities ...)?
 - Positive circumstances?
 - Decision-making?
 - Battle 2: Exercising God’s reign in every situation
 - Does God’s sovereignty mean we do nothing? Why not?
 - Do you think the idea of submission to a Sovereign God is more difficult for us today in Britain than at other times in our history? Why or why not?
 - What does God’s reign look like in practice in my life?
 - Think about the roles, relationships and situations you have at present.
 - To what extent do you feel God has placed you in these?
 - What is God’s will for your thinking and behavior in these situations and roles? (e.g. Galatians 5v16-26, 2 Peter 1v5-9, Matthew 28v18-20, Romans 12v1-21)
 - Share testimony about how God has guided you in the past or where you have seen God’s overruling in a situation.
 - What is God calling you to obey right now?

- Pray together (10 mins)
 - Let each pray for someone else.
 - Pray for your “list-of-5” – pray that God in his sovereignty would provide opportunities and he would reign in your heart as you respond.

D/ Pair/Triplet (40 mins)

- The goal is not to be right but to help one another as brothers/sisters in Christ (Ecclesiastes 4v12).
- Share and Discuss together (15 mins)
 - Share encouragements you have had from bible reading / prayer / worship.
 - In what way is God challenging you concerning his sovereignty? It might be in terms of trust, or in terms of obedience.
 - Do you have a sense of God's calling on your life?
 - Do you feel/know God has placed you where you are for a purpose?
 - In what ways do you feel the battle raging right now?
- Read a passage from the Bible together (this could be one that one of you has read during the week or Isaiah 40v27-31). (15 mins)
 - What does this passage say about God?
 - What does this passage say about us as humans?
 - What does it say about the relationship between us and God?
 - What is God wanting to say to me specifically from this passage?
- Pray together (10 mins)
 - Give thanks and pray for one another based on the Bible passage and your discussion.
 - Pray for God to enable you in the trust or obedience you discussed earlier.
 - Pray for your "list-of-5"