

Creekside Community Church
Return of the King: The Gospel of Matthew
September 24th, 2017
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Three Keys to Staying the Course: Matthew 13:23-54

I. Remember that God's Plan Takes Time (13:24-30, 36-43, 47-50)

II. Remember that God's Work is Hard to See (13:31-33)

III. Remember that God's Kingdom is Worth Everything (13:44-46, 51-53)

For further thought and discussion:

Getting Started

1. What's the most recent *letdown* you've experienced (i.e. something you had high hopes about, but that ended up being a disappointment)? Share with the group.

Going Deeper

2. What is Jesus' overarching point in Matthew 13? What truth about God's kingdom (i.e. his reign in the world) do these parables convey? Why would this truth have been so surprising (perhaps even a letdown) to Jesus' contemporaries?
3. What keeps God from completely eradicating evil now (see v. 29; compare with 2 Peter 3:8-9)? When will God's Kingdom be established? How should this reality shape our expectations of the present age? What happens when believers try to prematurely separate from society?
4. What's so surprising about the parable of the mustard seed (vv. 31-32)? What truth about God's kingdom is Jesus conveying (see Daniel 4:20-21f)? How does this parable encourage us when our efforts to extend God's kingdom seem ineffective? What point is Jesus' making in the parable of the leaven (v. 33)? How does this parable encourage us when we feel like we're not growing?
5. What's the point of Jesus' parables in vv. 44-46? What do followers of Jesus' get to experience that no one else does? How do these parables relate Jesus' statement in vv. 51-52?

Application:

6. What small, seemingly insignificant actions do you need to commit to over the long haul to see God's kingdom expand in your life? In your neighborhood? In Creekside? At work? In your city?
7. Which of these three truths about God's Kingdom is most relevant to you this week? Which do *you* need to remember to stay the course? Why?
8. What's one thing you can apply this week from this passage?