

Title: The Kingdom of God

- **Isaiah 53 and the Suffering Servant:** The passage depicts a figure who suffers unjustly, bearing the sins of others. This is understood as a prophecy about Jesus, written long before His birth, foretelling His role as the one who would take on the world's sin and pain.
- **Symbolism of the Scapegoat:** Jesus is likened to the scapegoat from Yom Kippur, who bore the sins of the community. Like the scapegoat, Jesus took upon Himself the sins, fears, and guilt of humanity, offering a way to reconciliation with God.
- **Inability to Save Ourselves:** No one can earn God's favour through good deeds alone. Humanity needs a saviour who bridges the gap caused by sin, shame, and fear. Jesus' death was a divine plan to defeat the "domination system" characterised by violence and power, establishing a new society based on love, justice, and mercy.
- **The Disciples' Misunderstanding:** James and John's request for honour in Mark 10 shows a lack of understanding of Jesus' mission. Their desire for security may reflect fear and a desire for certainty, similar to how people today seek strong leaders in uncertain times.
- **Facing Fear and Embracing the Cross:** Fear is prevalent in society, from terrorism to personal insecurities. The sermon suggests that, like James and John, we may act out of fear, seeking security. However, Jesus calls us to face the reality of the cross, understanding that true security comes from Him.
- **The Kingdom of God - "Now and Not Yet":** The Kingdom is present but not yet fully realised. As followers of Jesus, we are called to live by its principles—love, mercy, and justice—contrasting the world's systems of power, fear, and greed.
- **Call to Trust in Jesus:** Trusting Jesus means finding peace even amid life's insecurities. He offers rest, guidance, and the "unforced rhythms of grace." Believers are encouraged to actively participate in building God's Kingdom on earth, following His example.
- **Conclusion and Prayer:** A prayer for guidance and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit to live out the values of God's Kingdom, spreading love, justice, and mercy in the world.

Questions:

1. Reflecting on Isaiah 53, how does the image of the "Suffering Servant" shape our understanding of who Jesus is and the purpose of His sacrifice?
2. In Mark 10:35-45, James and John seek positions of honour in Jesus' Kingdom. How does this reveal their understanding of Jesus' mission, and what does it teach us about our own desires for recognition or security?
3. The sermon draws a parallel between the scapegoat in the Old Testament and Jesus' role as the one who bears our sins. What does this symbolism tell us about the nature of forgiveness and redemption?
4. Jesus speaks about drinking a cup and undergoing a baptism of suffering. How can we apply this concept to our own lives when facing difficult situations or sacrifices?
5. The sermon suggests that the disciples, like many of us, might have been acting out of fear. How can we confront and manage our fears in a way that aligns with the teachings of Jesus?
6. In what ways can we actively participate in building God's Kingdom "now and not yet," and how does this differ from the systems of power and security we see in the world today?