

**“Living in the Gap”**  
*Live A Better Story- Week #6*

**WRAP-UP**

When we read through the Bible, we see not only the story of God, but also our story. In the beginning, God’s original plan was for man to live in perfect relationship with God and His creation. But when sin entered the world, it distorted God’s plan and design. The Law revealed how far we had fallen, and we saw that the Law alone cannot bring about the kingdom of God, or our own justification. But God sent Jesus, a Second Adam who is faithful. At the cross He demonstrated God’s love and through the resurrection declared victory over sin and death. Jesus inaugurated the Kingdom of God, ascended to heaven and sent the Holy Spirit. But God didn’t snatch people away to heaven with Him then, instead He asks us to occupy the earth and bring God’s Kingdom here by living in the power of His Spirit. The seeds of God’s Kingdom we sew here on earth will last into the future and serve to draw others into that Kingdom as well.

**Memory Verse**

*For the Kingdom of God is not a matter of what we eat or drink, but of living a life of goodness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.*  
- Romans 14:17 NLT

**PRAYER (20 MIN)**

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life: \_\_\_\_\_

Pray for your group members’ needs: (see back for more space)

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*Challenge- Watch for opportunities to see God’s will done on earth. Bring His goodness, peace and joy with you this week where ever you go.*

**INTRODUCTION**

As we conclude this sermon series, we will look at the final chapter of God’s story. It is found in the book of Revelation. This indeed qualifies as a happy ending. In this chapter we see that there will be a new heaven and a new earth and no more death or sorrow or tears. But what about now? Right now, we are in between Jesus’s resurrection (the victory over sin and death), and that beautiful happily-ever-after. We live in “the Gap”. So how should we live as we wait in this Gap for Jesus to return and make all things new? Let’s find out.

**Ice Breaker (Optional—8 min)**

Do you binge watch series to catch up or just watch whatever is current?

**STUDY QUESTIONS (45 MIN)**

**1. What did Jesus say?**

Matthew 6:9-13 KJV - 9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. 10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as [it is] in heaven. 11 Give us this day our daily bread. 12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

We probably all know the Lord’s Prayer. When asked by His followers how to pray, Jesus gave them a pattern of prayer that included these words, “...Thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.” He knew what hardships they would face over their lifetime, yet He didn’t teach them to pray to for protection or to escape this earth and leave the difficulties behind, but for God’s will to be done.

Along with your group, list all of the ways you can think of for God’s will to be done on earth. How much of that list involves us taking

action versus God acting independent of man? Is there anything on that list you have an opportunity to take part in today?

Acts 1:6-8 NLT - 6 So when the apostles were with Jesus, they kept asking him, "Lord, has the time come for you to free Israel and restore our kingdom?" 7 He replied, "The Father alone has the authority to set those dates and times, and they are not for you to know. 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere--in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Now that they were praying for God's kingdom to come, we find the disciples were trying to figure out when that would happen. They probably expected it more in terms of the timetable to overthrow Rome rather than as spiritual encounters that they might have. But what did Jesus talk about instead of the dates and times (v.8)? So, in answer to when the kingdom would come, Jesus said they would receive power from the Holy spirit to witness about Him to the world. What if Jesus was not changing topics but rather explaining how the Kingdom of God is ushered in? How would you explain that witnessing about Jesus brings in the Kingdom of God to earth?

## 2. What it's like in the Gap?

2 Peter 3:10-15a NLT - 10 But the day of the Lord will come as unexpectedly as a thief. Then the heavens will pass away with a terrible noise, and the very elements themselves will disappear in fire, and the earth and everything on it will be found to deserve judgment. 11 Since everything around us is going to be destroyed like this, what holy and godly lives you should live, 12 looking forward to the day of God and hurrying it along. On that day, he will set the heavens on fire, and the elements will melt away in the flames. 13 But we are looking forward to the new heavens and new earth he has promised, a world filled with God's righteousness. 14 And so, dear friends, while you are waiting for these things to happen, make every effort to be found living peaceful lives that are pure and blameless in his sight. 15 And remember. our Lord's patience gives people time to be saved...

After Jesus had returned to heaven the disciples had to wrestle with living in the Gap. Peter specifically addressed this issue in 2 Peter chapter 3. He paints the picture both of the destruction of the old but also the ushering in of the new heaven and earth. How did Peter characterize the life we should live while we wait for this to happen? In verse 15 he references those being saved during this time of waiting. Do you know of any instances where the life of a believer was influential in someone's salvation?

So, we too find ourselves between Jesus's resurrection and His return. That can be exciting, but it can also be challenging.

Pastor David suggested three options of how to respond to such challenges; 1) hunker down, 2) fight fire with fire or 3) bring the kingdom to earth by living out a Godly life.

One of the challenges of living in the Gap is that we live in a culture of moral complexity and often have different views from our neighbors. Select one example of a moral difference you have experienced. What would it look like to respond by 1) hunkering down, 2) fighting fire with fire and 3) living out a Godly life in response to that situation? Which are you most inclined to do?

## 3. Holy Spirit Empowered

Romans 14:17-19 NLT - 17 For the Kingdom of God is not a matter of what we eat or drink, but of living a life of goodness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. 18 If you serve Christ with this attitude, you will please God, and others will approve of you, too. 19 So then, let us aim for harmony in the church and try to build each other up.

We know the kind of life we want to live as we bring the Kingdom of God into this world and some of the challenges we will face doing so. Paul tells us that the Kingdom is present where the Holy Spirit brings righteousness, peace and joy. The Kingdom of God (that is the place where God reigns) is Holy Spirit-empowered, and there is a difference between modifying our behavior and letting God's Spirit have control. Can you remember a time when you felt that you were struggling to maintain control only to finally let go and allow the Spirit to take over? If so, can you describe what happened? What does Paul tell us results from living a life of goodness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (v. 19)? How would you say that helps usher in the Kingdom on earth?

