

## LEADER DISCUSSION GUIDE

**TITLE:** The Kingdom of God Has Come Near

**SUMMARY:** The gospel is the good news that Jesus is the Messiah, the King who fulfills Israel's story, defeats sin and death, and establishes God's kingdom. It's not just personal salvation but a call to live under Jesus' lordship in every aspect of life, participating in His mission to renew creation.

**KEY VERSE:** Mark 1:14-15

### DISCUSSION GUIDE:

1. What is a key idea or question you have from Pete's sermon on Sunday?

Facilitator Tip: Consider beginning your study together by watching a short clip of Pete's sermon from Sunday. <https://www.youtube.com/@CreeksideChurchOn>

2. How would you explain to someone what it means to be a follower of Jesus?

Facilitator Tip: You could read Matthew 10:34-39 to start this conversation. In this passage Jesus outlines the cost of following Him. To truly follow Jesus means He has become everything to us. He is our King, which means everything else, my loved ones, even my own life, is no longer my top priority. There is incredible blessing and also sacrifice that comes from following Jesus.

3. Do you find it easy to explain what it means to be a follower of Jesus or difficult? Does it feel simple or overly complex?

Facilitator Tip: Jesus' teaching about what it means to follow Him is clear but we can make it complex if we get into "but what about?" I recently watched a video clip of a Christian apologist who was talking non-Christians about following Jesus. What he said was simple and clear, but they had questions like, "But what about the guy on the desert island who never heard the gospel?" "But what about the person following God through another religion who lives a moral life and tries their best to follow God?" Complexity comes from trying to reason out every scenario we can postulate. Following Jesus means placing our faith and trust in Him as our Life Leader and Sin Forgiver and leaving it to Him to be the Judge. That's the simple message of Jesus.

4. What doubts or questions about faith are you wrestling with, and how might trusting Jesus as the risen King help you find clarity or peace in those struggles?

Facilitator Tip: You may want to begin this conversation by sharing an example from your own experience or from someone you know.

5. Read Luke 7:36-50. How can believing in Jesus as the King who loves you change the way you view yourself or your past mistakes?

Facilitator Tip: You can ask the group – “If I believe Jesus is my King, what does that mean about His authority in my life?” It means what He says is real and true for me above any other voices in my life, including my own! God has told me I am His dearly loved child. (see John 15:9-11, Ephesians 2:1. 4-5, 5:1-2, 25-27, 1 John 3:1-3, 16) For any of your group members who struggle to believe this, it can be helpful to write down or say aloud these and other verses that affirm who they are in Him.

6. What does ‘repentance’ mean to you right now, and what’s one area of your life where you feel called to turn back to Jesus’ way?

Facilitator Tip: Remind the group that repentance means a change of mind that leads to a change of action. (see Acts 26:20). It is to change our mind about Jesus (He, not me or anyone else, is my King) and about my thoughts and actions. For example, I may feel called to turn back to Jesus’ way in how I see myself, in my purpose and relationships, in how I view my possessions/money and so on.

7. What’s one way you can actively trust (believe in) and submit to Jesus’ kingship this week to help you rebuild (or continue to build) a faith that feels authentic and lasting?

Facilitator Tip: You can remind the group that this is one of the reasons you meet together, to encourage and pray for each other as you grow your faith! As your group members share their area, why not take a few moments right then to lift up them and that area before the Lord.