

garden with our big brother Jesus.

Over the next few weeks we'll be looking at Jesus' 'Sermon on the Mount' as we seek to grow to ever greater maturity as citizens of heaven. Notice the 'Sermon on the Mount', just like the Ten Commandments, isn't about getting into the Kingdom, but rather how to live and grow as citizens of heaven, as the Father's children, for in Jesus that's what we are.

Let us pray. Jesus we thank you for opening the way into the Kingdom of Heaven for us. We thank and praise you for giving your life that we might be re-born as members of your family, members of the royal family of heaven. Help us to be growing to ever greater maturity as the Father's children, as citizens of heaven.

Jesus thank you for the wonderful rights, privileges and responsibilities we have as citizens of heaven. May we use them to bring you glory, honour and praise, and put a big smile on Dad's face. Amen.

22 January 2017

JESUS' KINGDOM

Matthew 4:12-23



Once upon a time there was a young man who wanted to become a citizen of heaven. His greatest passion was to become a heavenly man. But there was a huge stumbling block, you could only be a citizen of heaven if you were born into the royal family. It seemed impossible to become a citizen of heaven.

The young man went to work for the king, free of charge. He hoped to win the king's favour. He worked long and hard, but to no avail, to be a legal citizen of heaven you had to be born into the royal family. What could he do?

He was attracted to one of the king's daughters. Here he thought was the way.

I could marry my way into the kingdom. The king's daughter loved him dearly and he loved her more than his own life. They married. Surely now he could become a citizen of heaven. But no, to be a legal citizen of heaven you had to be born into the royal family.

No matter what he did, he couldn't make himself part of the royal family. So no matter what he did he couldn't become a citizen of heaven.

Being a citizen of heaven blessed you with wonderful privileges, with exciting opportunities, and best of all you could share life with the king and all his family. You could feast at the family dinner table. You could join in with the

family Christmas celebrations. You could enjoy being a loved, precious child of the Father, growing up under his care, knowing he would give anything for his children that they could become all he dreamed possible for them.

Jesus came proclaiming; "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." (Matt. 4:17) Jesus' passion is that we become citizens of heaven. "Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people." (Matt. 4:23) Jesus has come proclaiming the good news of the kingdom. For his passion is that we become

Christ Church Lutheran

Worship Times - 9.00am & 10.45am
Pastor: Tim 0427326553



Jesus' disciples multiplying disciples

citizens of heaven. Not illegitimate, not pretenders, but legal citizens of heaven, born into the royal family, the Heavenly Father's family.

And it certainly is important being a legal citizen. What happens to those who stay in Australia illegally? They're caught and deported. They have no right to stay, to be part of this country and all that it offers. Citizenship is important, for then you are part of the country, and then you can enjoy living in the country with all it has to offer.

Jesus comes born our brother that we might be re-born the Heavenly Father's children.

In the gospel reading we get the image of two kingdoms, the kingdom of light and the kingdom of dark. "The people living in darkness have seen a great light; those

living in the land of the shadow of death, a light has dawned." (Matt. 4:16/ Isa. 9:2)

I don't know about you, but I certainly don't want to spend my life in the 'land of the shadow of death'. What a horrid image. Existing under the shadow of death,

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sapping the life out of everything. It comes to nothing, at best. It's a slow decay, where fading memories reign. A land where your best is never good enough, you could always have done more. If only you could have the time again, but you can't. Slowly but surely everything is being taken from you; losing your vibrancy for life, losing your sharp mind, losing your senses, as they become dull. The

'land of the shadow of death' is a horrid kingdom, where anger and fear and intimidation rule.

Thank God that Jesus came proclaiming the Kingdom of Heaven.

Thank God we now can live in his kingdom of light, with Jesus as King.

As citizens of heaven we're not left in the dark. We're not thrown into the storms of life; sink or swim as best you can. Inevitable we all run out of strength and sink.

Not so in the kingdom of heaven, for there we swim based on our kings strength. And his strength doesn't run out, rather we have the hope of the opposite. We have in Jesus the hope of resurrection, our best, by far, is yet to come.

In Jesus we are citizens of heaven. We now have the wonderful privilege and opportunity to live under his grace and mercy, under his sacrificial love. We're not ruled by what we fear, for Jesus' perfect love drives out all fear. We are now infused with Jesus' spirit, and have the strength to live out his sacrificial love. The kingdom of heaven is characterised by; love one another, serve one another, forgive one another, carry one another's burdens, not judging one another but encouraging one another.

In Jesus there is no room thankfully for selfishness, for self-centred, small, insecure lives. Thank God that in Jesus our lives become participation in his sacrificial love, where he is at the centre, and in Jesus all things are possible. In Jesus' kingdom we

live from what we have, as we live from the security of knowing our Father is overjoyed with his children, passionately wanting to invest himself in us.

Once upon a time there was a young man, who couldn't earn the right to become a citizen of

In Jesus we are citizens of heaven.

heaven, but much to his surprise the Heavenly Father, adopted him as his son, at the cost of his One and Only Son. Now he was re-born a child of the royal family, a legitimate citizen of heaven.

Now he had the exciting future of growing up as one of the Father's children. Of listening to the Father, learning to speak his native tongue, just like his heavenly Father. Of watching his Father,

and mimicking everything he saw, till it came naturally. Naturally because as his Father's child they now share the same DNA. As the young man developed you could see the family resemblance, you could see the proud smile on his Father's face. Especially as his children played well together.

What a great privilege we have of living as citizens of heaven, of living with Jesus as our king. Wonderfully through our baptism we have been re-born in Jesus, and are now the Father's children. We are now children of the royal family, legal heirs, legal citizens who have all the rights, privileges and responsibilities that go with being a citizen of heaven. We have the wonderful privilege of growing up with Dad, our heavenly Father, of playing together in