

SPEAKER: Scott Beckenhauer

DATE: April 27, 2025

SERIES: Upside Down

Sermon Title

“Upside Down Kingdom”

Introduction

This week, we started a new sermon series called “**Upside Down**”. Throughout this series, we are going to be unpacking the things Jesus taught that at first glance are not just counter-cultural, but seemingly counterintuitive. Much of what Jesus said seems backwards and confusing and it's easy for us to write those off as things we cannot apply to our lives. But when we actually see the truth of what Jesus said and see what happens when we put those things into practice, we notice that letting Jesus turn our world **Upside Down** brings about so many great things that God wants for us. To get started this week, answer this icebreaker question with your group:

- When was a time in your life when you felt like everything had been turned upside down, for good or for bad? Share those circumstances and events with your group..

Seek the Word

Read Matthew 5:1-12 aloud, then answer the questions below:

- When you see the groups of people that Jesus calls “blessed” (poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek, the hungry and thirsty for righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, the persecuted), what do you learn about the values of the Kingdom of God?
- How are these different groups reflected in today’s society? In what ways do they need to hear the truth about what the Kingdom of God brings?

Read Matthew 5:11-12 aloud, then answer the questions below:

- Have you ever experienced insults, persecution, or slander about your character as a result of your faith? What did that do to you spiritually?
- Jesus tells us to rejoice in these moments, because it is a sign of living a true faith like the prophets. What encouragement do you feel from this message?

Read Matthew 5:13-16 aloud, then answer the questions below:

- What do you think it means for us to be called the “salt of the earth”? How does that practically show up in our lives as Christians?
- What do you think it means for us to be called the “light of the world”? How does that practically show up in our lives as Christians?
- If people looked at you today, would they see salt and light? How intentional are you about being salt and light, and leading people to glorify God on a daily basis?

Talk About It

- Scott posed a question in the sermon this week, “What would the Beatitudes look like today?” and listed many different groups. *Blessed are the geeks, nerds, wimps, wrinkled, unfashionable, middle managers, anxious, unemployed, divorced, homeless, dropouts, burnout, leftouts, chronically angry and bitter, sexually addicted and frustrated, mentally ill, HIV-positive, parents who feel they’ve failed, children who ran away, barren, pregnant out of wedlock, and failures.* Read through that list again slowly, and think about the others that fit in this list. When you see those people, or are one of those people, how easy is it for you to see someone worthy of the love of Jesus? How can you grow in preaching the truth of Jesus to those people?
- Share with your group a brief story of when you realized for the first time that this church was for you (not just in style and flavor, but spiritually and relationally). Now talk about how you can show that to others who have never walked through these doors before.
- The Kingdom of God is among us here and now, and Jesus invites us as His disciples to live in it and bring others with us. How does that imagery change our desire to tell people about Jesus?

Wrap Up

Reminder: Jesus is for you, and the Kingdom of God is for you. The world looks at different people with different backgrounds and circumstances and decides to label them with different worths and values, often “lesser” or “lower” than the standard. But the Kingdom of God and the message of Jesus turns that **Upside Down** and declares them worthy, qualified, seen, and loved. Our mission is to be a place and people where that truth is communicated and lived out clearly. The Church, and our church, exists for the sake of those yet to enter it, and is open to EVERYONE. We ought to strive with everything we can to make that known to those around us.

Challenge for the Week: Every morning, start your day with a prayer to God. Thank Him for seeing you and loving you. Thank Him for His blessings and the beauty of His **Upside Down** Kingdom. And ask God to empower you to be salt and light in the world around you, and to open your eyes to those in your life that need to hear the blessings that God has for them

Prayer: Close your time together by praying to God, thanking Him for His upside down Kingdom. Lift up specific people in your lives who need to know the love God has for them, and ask that God uses you to bring that message to them.