



the **Call to Follow**

living the way of Jesus in the world

GOD'S KINGDOM:
Embracing the Way of Jesus

SESSION 2

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OVERVIEW

As we map God's Kingdom story in the Bible, we come face to face with Jesus Christ. Jesus came so that all people would experience fullness of life. He was God's love in human form and both fulfilled and showed us God's Kingdom intentions in visible ways. This is why he described himself as "the Way and the Truth and the Life." But what does this mean for us, as his followers?

Jesus is the Way. His way was rooted in prayer and dependence on God, and tested and refined for 40 days in the wilderness. There Jesus resisted temptations that are common to all of us, that keep emerging in modern form. He showed us the way to say no to the "idols" that lure us away from God. Being a global disciple means discerning and resisting the false gods that confront us in today's world.

Jesus' "way" also included not discriminating against class, ethnicity, age or gender. Day after day, he touched (and often healed) the untouchables, spoke with renowned teachers, and fed the hungry. He ate and drank with Jewish tax collectors and Samaritan housewives, opposed those who misused power, forgave sins, challenged people's economic and lifestyle priorities, and confronted and conquered evil. Yet he spent much of his time with **marginalized** people in villages and towns – those most affected by injustice and in need of compassion and support. In doing so, Jesus was exposing and challenging a religious establishment that had become corrupt and self-serving.

Jesus' words and actions impacted all of life, and he often addressed multiple issues in one conversation or action. In almost three years of walking the villages and towns of first-century Israel, Jesus gave us an insider's view of what God's Kingdom on earth would look like. His disciples were being taught to discern the times and learn of God's Kingdom priorities, both in word and action.

Our world is different than the one in which Jesus walked, but **injustice** and **unrighteousness** continue to confront us in modern form. The commitment to

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global discipleship is to tackle these things at multiple levels, addressing both symptoms and underlying root causes. These ministries emerge from following the way of Jesus for today and representing the priorities of the Kingdom of God.

Jesus is the Truth. His primary mode of teaching was **parables**, which described the Kingdom of God. They revealed that God's Kingdom encompasses all of public life and declares a King who is concerned with political power, economic priorities, equality of opportunity, and justice for all. This Kingdom also represents a culture that informs and shapes all relationships. If God was followed and obeyed as King of our world, the values and life of Jesus would infuse all creation, providing freedom and fullness of life. According to Jesus, the central theme of the Kingdom of God is love – love for God, neighbour, and self. This love is so radical that it even extends to enemies, because God is merciful.

Jesus is the Life. He came that we might experience fullness of life as individuals, beginning with a restored connection to God. Jesus was devoted to God in prayer and his life was aligned with God. His was a life of simplicity and focus, self-awareness and purpose. Jesus lived sacrificially and nonviolently – he was a man for others, a leader who served.

It has been over two thousand years since Jesus ministered as a human being, died for our sins, and was raised by God. Since then, the world has seen human kingdoms and countries rise and fall, and societies come and go, but followers who have remained true to Jesus and relevant in their engagement of the world have made lasting contributions to God's Kingdom purposes.

Whatever our forms of service today, our spiritual compass must always be aligned with the risen and living Lord, Jesus Christ. He remains our way, truth and life, the source of our strength and creativity. In his presence we also acknowledge that the Kingdom of God does not originate with us. It is not a territory, national identity or political orientation. It is an alternative life – both individually and in community – that reflects God's new creation emerging in our world.