



In olden days the Romans talked about culture when referring to cultivating their fields. The philosopher Cicero introduced culture as 'cultivating your spirit'. In both senses it is referring to planting something which will bear fruit. These days it has far more the meaning of a people's vision on life and their way of life. **The way in which it sees, is and does.**

In this way Jesus also planted the kingdom of God culture in his disciples. In this section we will learn how Jesus lived out kingdom culture and how the disciples learned from him and then passed this on to the new churches which were then founded.

This way people knew what the values of the kingdom were and how they could become part of it. Because Jesus lived out these important principles and taught them to others, change arose in the thinking of those who followed him. This way of thinking helped them to make choices in their life, whereby the kingdom of God could grow in their own lives and in the lives of their followers. That is how kingdom culture began to take shape.

Jesus teaches about kingdom culture for the first time when he withdraws with his disciples to the mountain. He tells them in great depth about the kingdom values.

Let us take a look at the first 9 values he sows in the hearts of the disciples.

Write down the key words:



Matt 5:3



Matt 5:4



Matt 5:5



Matt 5:6



Matt 5:7



Matt 5:8



Matt 5:9



Matt 5:10,11



Matt 5:13,14

Each lesson in part 6 starts with a short study about a person in the Bible, a few texts about the life of Jesus and his disciples and texts about the early churches which were established.

TASK:

Study the life and 'heart' of Joseph.



Gen 37



Gen 39,40,41



Gen 42,43,44,45



Gen 46,47,50

What can you learn from the man Joseph?

Read the chapters about the life of Joseph and describe how he became the king's attendant.

What can learn from Joseph as he goes through difficult times in his life?

What can we learn from Joseph when he sees his brothers again?

What inheritance does Joseph, and eventually also his family, receive?

What can you learn from Joseph for your own life?



Matt 16:24 and Matt 11:29

Read the instructions of Jesus. Apply this now to your own life.

Pose yourself four questions:

1. Is there a word from God for me personally in this tekst?
2. Is there a promise from God the Father for my life?
3. Does Jesus ask me to apply anything in my life?
4. Decide to do something about it and ask Jesus to help you with this.

Going deeper

In Matt 5:3 Jesus gives an important seed for the culture of the kingdom of God. He tells the disciples that they must be humble of heart, just as He is.

This is the culture within which the kingdom can bear fruit.

What does Jesus mean by humble?



Philip 2:5-11



Matt 11:29

The humility which Jesus shows here is a free choice to give up something which you have and own. Jesus acknowledges God as almighty. He chooses to follow the plan that God has. He does not choose for his own ambition which he might have. He lays down his Godly nature because he is not interested in being important, but is interested in others. This is central to his servant-heartedness

Seeing others as more important than yourself is the culture which Jesus teaches his disciples.

Zech 9:9 says that Jesus enters Jerusalem riding on a donkey. Here we see that Jesus, who is actually God and king of the kingdom, does not arrive with great glamour and splendour. He comes as a normal man. Humbly, on the back of a young donkey.

What is pride?



Luk 18:10-12

The Pharisee thinks that he lives a far more righteous life than the tax collector.

Pride is an attitude of heart which makes you feel that you are better than others. You make assumptions based on your own insights and strengths and consequently look down on others.

Humility, know who you are



John 6:37-39 7:28,29

Jesus leaves absolutely no doubt about who he is. He says very clearly that he has been sent by the Father. He is also very clear about his task and why he has come. He has come so that no one should perish.

This sounds rather proud. But as we just read, pride comes from your own strengths. Humility looks to the giver of power and might. Humility trusts in the one who sends and wants to remain dependent upon the one who sends, in order to live from their power and might. With this power he is then able to serve the people.

Example

It happened during my first trip to Russia. Whilst sitting in the plane I sensed God calling me to do immense things in this country. When I flew to Russia a second time, tears rolled down my cheeks. How would this work out, what could I do? I did not feel at all capable of doing anything useful. I just knew that God had called me.

This was enough, for God showed me each time who I was to meet up with. Time and time again I saw God's love touching and changing people. Then you know for sure that it is God's doing and not your own! It is also amazing to see that God, despite his Omnipotence, still chooses to work with people like you and me.

Tests from God



1 Chron 28:9, 29:17



Gen 39,40

Joseph had dreams in which he saw what his role in the future would be. He would become a leader for his family. Joseph was then tested to see what was in his heart. Twice Joseph is treated unjustly. First of all he is sold as a slave and then later he is imprisoned for something he didn't do. In both situations as a slave and a prisoner, Joseph is blessed by God for everyone to see. Here we witness Joseph's amazing attitude which fits in the culture of the kingdom. Joseph is not broken by the circumstances but chooses to embrace the roles he has as a slave and prisoner. This is true humility. From this position he can serve. Joseph is a slave yet in his heart he is a king. He is a prisoner, but in his heart he is a free man.

Through forgiveness and trusting in God he can survive these tests.

What does Isaiah say about the humble?



Is 57:15

Joseph is humiliated by his brothers and Potiphar's wife. Yet God is with Joseph and eventually promotes him to be the king's assistant. Joseph remains humble because he, just as Jesus does, trusts God and serves people, despite all the humiliation he has suffered.



James 4:6

God gives grace to the humble and then shows them favour in a wonderful way. That is just how God works. A way which is not possible humanly speaking, but with God, all things are possible. That is a principle of God's kingdom!



1 Pet.5:5,6

Voluntary servant-heartedness



John 13:12-17

Jesus washes his disciples' feet and is a great example to them. As Lord he demonstrated what servant-heartedness and humility is. Nothing changes regarding his position to the disciples. On the contrary, respect for their master only grows as they see this attitude in him.

Jesus laid down his position as king to become a servant. He does not rule but serve. His goal is to what God requires of him. Jesus has a clear vision. Not for himself but for others. He sees the needs of others and gives his life to save them. Humility focusses on others and not on yourself. You want others to prosper and are not constantly thinking about yourself. You want others to do well, to grow, be honoured, be happy.

Yet Jesus was still a man of authority. He is the son of God. He defeated satan. Yet he used his power and authority over satan to free those around him.

He never once forced anybody to follow him. He never abused his power to force others to enter the kingdom, he just presented them with the opportunity to follow.

It was not about his own kingdom but the kingdom of God.

Humility and leadership

How can you tell who is a servant of God?



1 Tim 4:12



2 Tim 2:24,25

Paul also thinks this is an important seed in kingdom culture. He teaches his disciple Timothy to stand strong in the knowledge of who he is, but with a humble attitude and servant heart.

This form of leadership starts in the heart. He knows who he is but even more so, who God is.

EXERCISE:



Discuss with your mentor what you have learned from the life of Joseph.



Let God know what you have decided as a result of this lesson.

Ask the Holy Spirit to give you the same heart attitude as that of Jesus.

Saying Curry Blake: 'we are sons of God, rulers over satan and servants of people.'