

The Hidden Message of Jesus

Place: First Presbyterian Church, Social Hall

Dates: Sundays, June 8, 2008–August 31, 2008

Times: 9:45 a.m. –10:30 a.m.

The First Presbyterian Church
120 Broad Street
LaGrange, Georgia 30240

www.fpc1agrange.org

The Hidden Message of Jesus

Why don't they teach us more about this in church?

First Presbyterian Church

First Presbyterian Church

Tel: 706.884.4064

“...what is the Kingdom of God?”

A tiny incident from my seminary days persists in my memory. It was during an energetic class discussion in which a student asked the professor: “What exactly is meant by the ‘Kingdom of God?’” The professor was reluctant. “Let’s not get into that or we’ll be here all night. Suffice it to say that the kingdom has been studied and studied and there is little agreement on what it actually means.

Maybe one reason why even theologians have difficulty describing the Kingdom of God is because Jesus never intended it to be described. The Kingdom must be experienced to become real; stumbled upon by accident; or entered by re-thinking (repenting of) everything.

Kingdom of God: circumstance where God reigns; K.O.G. at once present and future kingship of God about which Jesus teaches repeatedly.

Why Study the Kingdom?

There is much conversation these days among theologians and laypeople alike to the effect that the Church has emphasized the wrong things in Jesus’ ministry and neglected the heart of his message—namely that God’s reign or Kingdom has arrived. What if many have carried on a religion that faithfully celebrates Jesus in ritual and art, teaches about Jesus in sermons and books, sings about him in songs and hymns, and theorizes about Jesus in seminaries and classrooms, but somewhere along the way has underplayed the treasures of his essential message. If this is true, then Christianity may be in for some wonderful surprises and significant change.

The Class: “The Hidden Message of Jesus”

Christians should be suspicious of claims that there is a significant body of material that would appreciably change their concept of Christian faith. Claims that there are hidden gospels or a secret code in the New Testament are invariably manipulative or blatant attempts to attract attention or distort the faith. On the other hand, Jesus describes the Kingdom of God as a hidden reality—like a treasure hidden in a field or a seed buried in the ground or a tiny mustard seed that has vastly more potential than its insignificant size would suggest. There is something about the Kingdom

that cannot be spelled out but only discovered. It is reasonable to suggest that there are aspects of Jesus’ message that are subtle or concealed.

There’s the secondary fact that learned people in Jesus’ time were the very ones who didn’t perceive the importance and beauty of what Jesus came to bring. Somehow living self-important lives, distanced from the hard realities of human struggle insulated people from “getting” Jesus.

The Class

This summer the pastor’s combined adult class, titled, “The Hidden Message of Jesus,” will take a fresh look at the Kingdom and the way Jesus envisions us responding to it. The class will invite all to discover afresh Jesus’ transforming message.

First Presbyterian Church

**First Presbyterian Church
120 Broad Street
LaGrange, Georgia 30240**

www.fpclagrange.org