

Thy Kingdom Come

“A Story to Stretch Your Heart”

Jesus’ parable of the wineskins

September 3, 2006

Mark Spencer Community Life Pastor

Do you remember picking teams on the playground as a kid? I do. We’d select two captains; usually they were the biggest meanest guys. (So actually they typically appointed themselves!) Once “chosen”, they would step forward and begin to scrutinize their potential teammates. In true “pecking order” they would select, one by one, who would make their team. It was a soul wrenching, terrifying time...especially if you were among the last to be selected. I usually went middle of the pack, but my heart bled for those who were at the end of the line. They were viewed as “extra weight” and not real contributors.

Thank God that the Kingdom is different. People are embraced and celebrated...every shape, size and culture! But that kind of embrace can really stretch us at times. Today’s parable displays just how stretching that process can be, but also offers the hopeful promise of God enlarging our capacity as we cooperate with Him.

Instead of offering you an outline this morning I want to provide some reflection questions for this coming week. My hope is that as you think and re-think through this parable that you will discover the parable becoming “part of you”! Somehow I think that is what Jesus is really hoping would happen.

Monday: Has there been a time in your life where you have been “cut out” by others or just the “odd man out”? What did it feel like? What do you wish someone would have done for you then? How can you be that kind of someone for another person?

Tuesday: What are the BIG markers you use for “who is in and who is out”? In light of the parable of the wineskins do you think they are the best markers?

Wednesday: What kinds of people are hardest for you to be with? How do they challenge you? Take a moment now and ask the Lord to help you stretch your circle wider.

Thursday: Why do you think churches have a rap of being “exclusive”? What is one thing we can do at Faith to help change that reputation?

Friday: If Jesus were to minister in our day, what groups of people would he relate to? How do you think He’d approach them? Would that be controversial? Take a moment to listen for the Spirit’s invitation...He may be asking you to stretch.