

## Session 1: The Servant King

### SESSION GOALS

Every session has a point—what each participant should walk away from the discussion knowing, feeling, and doing.

**Main Idea:** Jesus came not as a conquering king, but as a suffering servant, a humble savior who wants to rescue us from sin so that we can enjoy a relationship with him forever.

**Head Change:** To know that Jesus came to offer salvation to everyone.

**Heart Change:** To feel love for God himself more than for the gifts he gives us.

**Life Change:** To prioritize God and keep our lives in proper perspective—we should love God and people.

### OPEN

**Have you ever asked for a gift that, when you received it, was different than what you expected? How did you react?**

As we approach Christmas, the church season of Advent prepares us for the arrival of Jesus—the Messiah. He went by many titles like king, savior, deliverer. But as pastor Derwin Gray explains to us in this five-session series, Jesus, as the suffering servant, fulfilled his calling to rescue us through sacrifice and humility.

## **VIEW**

Before viewing the session, here are a few important things to look for in Derwin Gray's teaching. As you watch, pay attention to how Derwin answers the following questions.

**What sort of Messiah did the Jewish people expect, and how did Jesus fulfill their expectations?**

**What did Jesus come to do?**

Watch Session 1: The Servant King (12 minutes).

## REVIEW

Christmas is less about the gifts we receive under the tree and more about the gift of God in Jesus, the Messiah who came to serve and save us. In this first session, Derwin Gray discussed the suffering servant: God's Messiah sent to serve through sacrifice.

Derwin opened by explaining how the first-century Jews expected their Messiah to arrive as a king and conqueror to rescue them from Roman occupation. But Jesus arrived in an unexpected manner. **In what ways did Jesus's arrival not fit the usual trappings of a royal birth?**

Derwin said Jesus was a different kind of king. Instead of staying aloof in his throne room, Jesus came down to be with his people—as a human being. We call this event the Incarnation. **In what ways is it significant to you that God became a person?**

Derwin asked, “Why did Jesus come to us like this? Why do we celebrate a baby born in a manger this season?” **How would you answer him?**

Instead of coming with blazing chariots and angel armies at his command ready to fight the enemy, Jesus came as a humble suffering servant. He saved through sacrifice. **What does Jesus's sacrifice mean to you? In what ways has his suffering served you?**

Derwin said that “there's not ever been a moment that the King of kings did not want to rescue you from sin and death and evil.” **What difference does it make to know Jesus desires to rescue you?**

Derwin pointed out our tendency to enjoy the things God gives us more than God himself. He said, “We worship things and use people instead of loving people and using things.” **When have you found more joy in things than in God? What do you think is the remedy?**

In Isaiah 42:6–7 we see that the Messiah was to extend his invitation of new life to all people—regardless of class, race, sex, age—so they could be forgiven and restored to God. **In what ways was Jesus's invitation to everyone countercultural? How have you seen churches or individuals imitate Jesus's open offer to have a relationship with him?**

[illegible]

## BIBLE EXPLORATION

This series focuses on the majestic kingship of Jesus. The divine second person of the Godhead, creator and ruler of all things, introduced himself in person to his creatures—us—in a most unexpected way. Though he rightfully deserved all praise, honor, and glory, he arrived in humble, disadvantaged, even scandalous circumstances. And, of course, he chose to become human in those circumstances on purpose.

The Bethlehem and Jerusalem of the first century may not feel familiar, but human nature hasn't changed in two thousand years. Their problems are our problems, and Jesus's solution to theirs applies equally to ours. He came to rescue all of us from sin, if only we choose him to rule our lives.

Read Luke 2:1–20.

The Christmas story, as this passage is often called, offers glimpses of both Jesus's glory and his humility. **Which circumstances of Jesus's birth reflect the unexpected meekness of the Messiah?**

**Which events describe aspects of his heavenly glory?**

The theme of the Messiah coming humbly originated in the prophet Isaiah but is continued by the apostle Paul in his New Testament letter to the Philippians. In chapter 2, he quoted a hymn about Jesus, which reads, in part, "he emptied himself by assuming the form of a servant . . ."

**When you hear "servant," what characteristics do you think of?**

**How does your idea of God compare to Paul's description of Jesus? What's different? Similar?**

Read Philippians 2:5–8. God the Son became a human being, giving up the glories of heaven to live as a lowly man—a servant. In a world that values rank and accomplishment, he chose humility. **When have you been tempted to pursue glory? What encouragement does Jesus's example give you to choose service instead?**

In verse 8, we see how Jesus humbled himself for us. And if being born in poverty wasn't low enough, he went on to die on a cross—the most shameful form of capital

punishment—for us. He was willing to go lower than everyone else so that everyone might be able to attain the glory he gave up. **When did you first learn about Jesus’s sacrifice on your behalf? What does his death on the cross mean to you?**

---

---

---

Jesus chose to lower himself so we could be lifted up. **In what ways has Jesus restored you from a low place? What kind of influence has he had in changing your life?**

---

---

**What could it look like in your life to lower yourself so that someone else could be raised up?**

---

---

Now read verses 9–11. In response to Jesus’s humble obedience to die on the cross, God returned him to his rightful place of glory. His name went from a shameful byword to the name above all others. One day, every human ever created will acknowledge him as Lord. **In what ways does Jesus’s lordship encourage you?**

---

---

---

---

**What is it like to know that your king stooped down to serve you with his very life?**

---

---

**In what ways does Jesus’s humility inspire you to serve others? What does service look like in your life right now?**

---

---

## **LAST WORD**

Jesus—the Son of God, creator, sustainer, encourager—humbled himself to become a human being, to live among us, and to die in a humiliating fashion because of his great love for us.

---

---

---

As his followers, we are called to live sacrificially, loving the unlovable, serving despite our status, and suffering for the sake of Christ. Let’s endeavor to live out the words of Isaiah 42:6: “I have called you for a righteous purpose . . . and I will appoint you to be a covenant for the people and a light to the nations.”

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## DEEPER WALK

---

**Read:** Read the Christmas story in Matthew 1:18–21 and Luke 2:1–38. Spend time meditating on God becoming a human.

**Pray:** Ask God to open your eyes and soften your heart toward daily chances to love others like Jesus loves you.

**Memorize:** Memorize Isaiah 42:6, “I have called you for a righteous purpose, and I will hold you by your hand. I will watch over you, and I will appoint you to be a covenant for the people and a light to the nations.”

---

---

---

---

---

---

---