

Session 5: The Lowly King

SESSION GOALS

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

Main Idea: Jesus is the king who took on our poverty so that we could experience his riches.

Head Change: To know that God, in his grace, has made us heirs of his kingdom.

Heart Change: To feel gratitude that Jesus came to earth to invite us into his eternal family.

Life Change: To act as God’s ambassadors, his representatives to the world, and communicate his grace to those around us through generosity, love, and joy.

OPEN

Have you ever received an inheritance, perhaps from a parent or a more distant relative? How did you react?

Inheriting someone’s earthly goods can be a mixed blessing. We don’t want to experience the death of a loved one, but we are likely very grateful for what we’ve been gifted. The Bible says we are co-heirs with Christ, inheriting his spiritual riches. But we don’t have to wait until we die to join him and receive our inheritance. Eternal life with God starts when we understand and accept Jesus’s gift of grace. In this final session, Derwin will examine how our heavenly king humbled himself because he loves us.

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.

In what ways did Jesus become lowly on our behalf?

What is Christmas all about?

What are we supposed to do with the riches of God's grace?

Watch Session 5: The Lowly King (12 minutes).

REVIEW

Jesus left the riches of heaven so he could come to earth as a helpless baby. He voluntarily took on the life of a homeless preacher who invited an eclectic group of followers to join his mission.

In the Incarnation, the eternal, all-powerful God joined with frail, weak flesh to become the perfect, holy God-man. Part of becoming human meant laying aside the glories of eternity and taking on the limitations, sufferings, and poverty of humanity. Jesus knows what it's like to hurt, to want, to mourn. **What does it mean to you that Jesus can relate so well to your hard times?**

While he may have been poor by society's standards, Jesus remained rich in heavenly treasure that he planned to give away. Second Corinthians 8:9 reads, "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ: Though he was rich, for your sake he became poor so that by his poverty you might become rich." **How does Jesus's great reversal—king to peasant, rich to poor, heaven to earth—reveal the depth of his love for us?**

Derwin said, "Jesus, the king who owns everything, decides to become so poor that we could become rich in him." **From what you know of Jesus's life, what difficulties did Jesus experience on earth? In what ways do his experiences make him more relatable to you?**

Derwin told the story about the "naked preacher" on his NFL team. Despite his odd methods, the man had some level of success sharing with his teammates about God. **What interesting ways of evangelizing have you witnessed? Were they successful? Why or why not?**

Derwin could not get away from the question, "Do you know Jesus?" It kept coming back to him as he tried to deal with life his own way. But then he decided he needed to know Jesus and the grace he offered. **When did you start to know Jesus? How were you introduced to him?**

Jesus is a study in contrasts. He was born (and lived) in humble circumstances yet he is rich enough to offer us the ultimate inheritance: adoption into God's family.

Romans 8:14–17 celebrates how, in Derwin's words, "the son of God comes to earth to adopt us so that we can

become the sons and daughters of God.” **What does it mean to you to hear that God chooses you?**

If you have any experience with adoption, either as an adoptee, adoptive parent, or family member, share a bit of your story if you feel comfortable. **What parallels do you see between your adoption story and God’s choosing us to be his children?**

Adopted children gain full status in their new family—no legal difference can be made between them and the natural-born children of their parents. So they are co-heirs, obligated to inherit everything just as if they had been born into the family. God’s children, no matter what kinds of brokenness we may come from, all enjoy the fullness of his love. **What has it looked like in your life to remember your status as God’s adopted child?**

Derwin encouraged us to plug into Jesus so that our light can shine, meaning we need to rely on Christ for strength, wisdom, and perseverance in every circumstance. **In what ways are you connected to Jesus? Relying on him? Looking to him in your daily life?**

BIBLE EXPLORATION

The lowly babe was born in lowly Bethlehem, placed in a lowly manger, and raised by a couple in lowly circumstances. This baby, however, was the King of kings and Lord of lords. The juxtaposition between his earthly status and his heavenly surroundings serves to highlight the drastic measures Jesus took in his mission to bring us into God's family.

In his sacrifice of laying aside his divine glory for a while, and in his agonizing death, Jesus's generosity and selflessness shine as an example to us. How are Christians supposed to live? As much like Jesus as possible. Let's explore how we can live generously and sacrificially with one another.

Read 2 Corinthians 8:1–5. In his letter to the church at Corinth, Paul tells them the churches elsewhere (in Macedonia) had gone through difficult times and yet showed great generosity. **How did Paul describe the cause of their generosity in verse 1?**

Spontaneous generosity toward others is proof of God's grace working in and through a person or church. The Macedonian churches had been enduring "a severe trial brought about by affliction," yet they responded with "extreme joy." **How do you usually respond to difficult situations? In what ways have you seen a person, or an organization, respond to trials by becoming outward-focused and generous?**

How has witnessing a generous person drawn you closer to Jesus?

Paul was not starting a competition between the Macedonian churches and the Corinthian church. More than any amount of money raised, he was more concerned with the heart behind their giving. **What are some wrong motivations for giving? What are good reasons to be generous?**

Read verses 6–9.

Paul wanted to inspire the Corinthians to become generous. He challenged them to be generous by saying in verse 8: "I am testing the genuineness of your love."

What could it look like in your life to show your faith through your giving?

Generosity is not limited to money. **How else can you give of yourself? What needs in your church can you help meet? In your family or neighborhood or among your friends?**

Read 2 Corinthians 8:9–15. Essentially, Paul is telling the Corinthians to consider the immense generosity of Jesus and look at what he did for them so that they could gain the riches of heaven. **Have you ever linked your giving habits to what Jesus did for you? In what ways is generosity a reflection of God’s kindness toward you?**

In verses 10–12, Paul encourages the church to finish what they had started—to follow through on their stated desire to give. Their willingness, he said, matters more than the size of the gift. **When you consider giving to your church, what is your attitude? How do you react when asked to volunteer your time?**

See verses 14–15. **What is the goal of the Corinthian church giving to other churches?**

In your own experience, how have you seen generosity between churches and organizations for the benefit of the community, that no one would be left with too little?

Paul reminds us that giving benefits both the giver and the recipient. But our ability to give and serve graciously comes from God and is modeled for us through the life of Christ. **What are you doing to stay close to Jesus so you can live generously?**

We are generous because God has been generous to us. **What could it look like to be generous with your time, resources, or energy this week?**

LAST WORD

The lowly circumstances of Jesus's birth are more than the makings for a poignant Christmas story. His choice to leave heaven behind reveals his character and his mission. Jesus's kingdom is upside-down, one where the last are first, the first are last, the poor are rich, and the outcasts are welcome. In his kingdom, the divided are united, the creator befriends his creation, suffering leads to joy, and the undeserving are saved.

Let the grace of Jesus our king spur us on to a generous, grace-filled life that will prove irresistible to everyone around us.

DEEPER WALK

Read: Re-read 2 Corinthians 8:1–15 this week. Consider what Jesus gave up to give you everything you need.

Pray: Pray for a generous heart willing to give and serve. Ask God to show you opportunities and needs that you can help meet.

Act: Find one or more areas in which you can tangibly give of yourself. For instance, commit to a volunteer position, donate to a nonprofit, or set up a giving account for your church.

Memorize: Memorize 2 Corinthians 8:9, "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ: Though he was rich, for your sake he became poor so that by his poverty you might become rich."