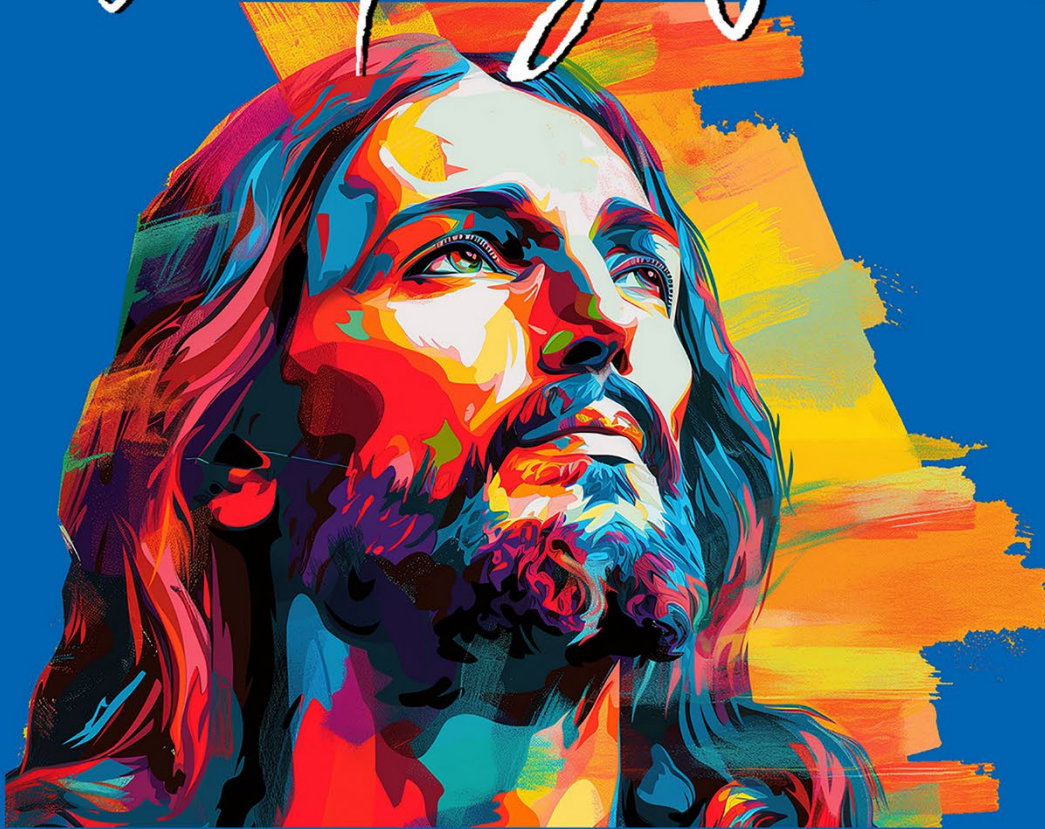


Finding Jesus



Embracing the Complete
Gospel of Jesus, the Christ.

Study Guide

CHARLES S. STUART

Let's Just Imagine!

Let's just imagine what might happen in our family, community, church, nation, and world if all believers **KINGDOM OF GOD ON EARTH!** helped usher in the

When people embrace their role in the Kingdom of God here on earth, their **EYES, EARS, MIND, HANDS, FEET & VOICE** will be used to reflect their faith.

They will use their **EYES** to look for needs that are unmet, and to watch over those in positions of authority.

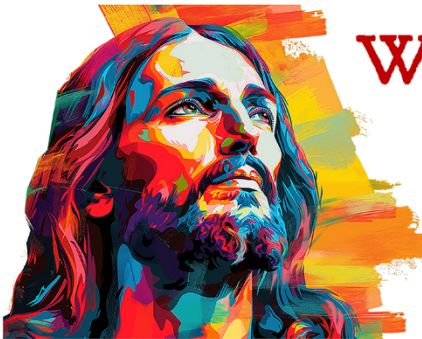
They will use their **EARS** to listen for the cries of those in pain, and to hear and address comments that demean those in need.

They will use their **MIND** to think of ways to get involved and to question for themselves what God would have them do for Him.

They will use their **HANDS** to do what is needed, remembering that it is through their hands that Jesus touches the "least of these."

They will use their **FEET** to go where needed...overseas, across the street or into the voting booth...to bring the Kingdom of God to those in need.

They will use their **VOICE** to speak up and out for those without a voice, and to hold those with power accountable to remember "the least of these" when making decisions.



**Wouldn't it be lovely to live
in a world like that!?!**

Charles Stuart

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About the Author.

Charlie Stuart was raised in the church by faithful, loving parents whose lives of service to “the others” inspired Charlie and his five siblings to purpose their lives to serve others, particularly the “least of these.”



Charlie has been active in the local church all his life serving as: Deacon, adult Bible study leader (20+ years), member of a pastor search committee and all the other committees in the local church.

Charlie graduated from the University of Florida in 1973 with an undergraduate degree in Marketing, with a focus on Economics. He worked in the family's office products company for 16 years and spent the following 20 years as a professional speaker, author, and consultant.

He also made time to volunteer for 25+ years with the YMCA as a local board member and on national task forces for the YMCA of the USA.

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SECOND FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH

Jesus Came to Establish the
Kingdom of God on Earth.

Foundational Truth.

II. Jesus Came to Establish the Kingdom of God on Earth.

Why did Jesus come to live among us? For too long we have heard one answer from most Protestant churches in America. Jesus came to die for our sins. Full stop.

But this truth is just not the whole truth. In His first public sermon Jesus answered this question in His first public sermon of His ministry. It's right there, in the Gospel of Jesus.

The Kingdom of God on Earth is Like...

Jesus was in Nazareth on Sabbath day, and as He would do many times whenever He was near a synagogue, He attended. As a rabbi (teacher) He was often allowed to read the day's lesson and comment on its meaning. It was like a small group bible study.

4 ¹⁶ When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, ¹⁷ and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:



4 ¹⁸ "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, ¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

Luke 4:16-19 ¹

1 Additional scriptural background found at Luke 4:14-30.
Other versions found at Matthew 13:53-58 & Mark 6:1-6a.

II. Jesus Came to Establish the Kingdom of God on Earth.

The “Year of the Lord’s Favor.”

When Jesus stood up to read the lesson in vv. 18-19, He didn’t just read from the scroll in Isaiah. He rearranged Isaiah 61:1-2 removing some phrases, adding some of His own, and quoting part of one verse from Isaiah 58:6. The bold text shown are what Jesus used in Luke 4:18-19.

61 ¹The spirit of the Lord God is upon me because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and release to the prisoners, ²to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn.

Isaiah 61:1-2

58 ⁶“Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?” Isaiah 58:6

Jesus repurposed verses from Isaiah to make it clear He was talking about the “year of the Lord’s favor,” when all things would be made right and justice, righteousness, and mercy would prevail. But He didn’t stop there.

We can know from this that what Jesus “read,” as recorded by Luke, was more than reading an ancient, albeit important, prophet’s words. The changes He made specifically clarified His personal mission on Earth. When you read this text in Luke you can see the Gospel of Jesus plain and simple. It was precisely what Jesus wanted to say as His first words in front of His home synagogue about why He was there, with them, and with us.

Foundational Truth.

Jesus announces this prophecy is fulfilled.

4 ²⁰ And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. ²¹ Then he began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." Luke 4:20-21

"Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." With these words Jesus declares this prophecy fulfilled... something only God could do... and it was fulfilled by Jesus, who they knew as a neighbor, a good teacher, one of them; but only God could fulfill prophecy.

So, what was He saying? Was He deluded? Did He know what He was saying? How could this be?

Later Jesus Confirms His Mission.

Jesus confirmed this as His purpose a few days later in the same chapter.

4 ⁴³ But he said to them, "I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God to the other cities also; for I was sent for this purpose." ⁴⁴ So he continued proclaiming the message in the synagogues of Judea. Luke 4:43-44 ²

Note that He said, *"this purpose,"* not "a purpose." This is why the living Jesus came. He was clearly referring to the Kingdom of God on Earth that He had come to establish.

The Kingdom of God on Earth was no longer a future dream world. With the arrival of Jesus, the dream began to take form. With these words the world began to tilt on its moral and spiritual axes and the long journey toward justice and righteousness began.

There was no need for more waiting. The Kingdom of God was here and was seated in the very room with them. And, for His Followers, He has been seated in the very room with us since that time.

II. Jesus Came to Establish the Kingdom of God on Earth.

The “good news” Jesus refers to is from the Isaiah prophesy, and in Jesus’s use in Luke, written in koiné Greek, it would later become “gospel” in English translations.

Jesus says it is God’s will for the Kingdom of God on Earth to be established by Jesus.

6¹⁰ “your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”
Matthew 6:10³

Many raised in the Southern Baptist Convention, like I was in the 1950-60’s, were taught various forms of the “will of God.” But the “Kingdom of God on Earth” as Jesus taught was not one of them. The life, works, and words of Jesus were taught, but not as a primary element of the “Gospel” but as good standards for living...albeit optional since the “Gospel” assured eternal salvation with, or without, the Gospel of Jesus.

Here Jesus introduces that the will of God is for God’s kingdom to come on Earth as it is in heaven. By placing this thought in the most common prayer of His time, and ours, He reminds us of its importance in the lives of His Followers.

This line, “*your kingdom come...*” is the definition of the Gospel of Jesus. It is a plea...and a promise...for the Kingdom of God on Earth to become the norm for all humankind for all time.

If we pray like Jesus taught, and mean it, we must strive to usher in the Kingdom of God on Earth. If we do not mean it, or if we pray but neglect to act out the prayer, we should feel the “fear and trembling” of a disappointed God.

2 Additional scriptural background found at Luke 4:42-44.

3 Additional scriptural background found at Matthew 6:7-15.
Other versions found at Matthew 13:53-58 & Mark 6:1-6a.

Foundational Truth.

CONCLUSION.

Jesus uses His first public comment to announce His “purpose,” to establish the Kingdom of God on Earth. He also described what the Kingdom of God on Earth would be like. And later, during the Sermon on the Mount, while talking about the framework for praying, He said that this wasn’t just His “purpose,” but that His “purpose” was the “will” of God.

In just ten verses (vv. Luke 4:16-21, 42-44; Matthew 6:10) Jesus embarked on changing what He expects His Followers to do both then...and now.

For His Followers this is a radical purpose that requires radical belief and radical living, remembering what Jesus said, *“I am with you always, to the end of the age.”*

Jesus came to fulfill the promise God made to bring the Kingdom of God to Earth. Jesus’s life and teaching prepared His followers to continue the mission. That’s what He expects of His followers today.

II. Jesus Came to Establish the Kingdom of God on Earth.

Where do you stand?

What do you think it means to “usher in the Kingdom of God on Earth?”

What role do followers have as “ushers” of the Kingdom of God on Earth?

How is Christ’s redemptive work (crucify, resurrected) a part of ushering in the Kingdom of God on Earth?

Foundational Truth.

In the Gospel of Jesus the will of God, as Jesus defined it in the Lord's Prayer, is to establish the Kingdom of God on Earth that Jesus came to fulfill.

Nothing less. Nothing more.

CHARLES STUART