

Advent Parables

The Weeds

TALK IT OVER

Key Scripture

"24 He put another parable before them, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, 25 but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. 26 So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also. 27 And the servants of the master of the house came and said to him, 'Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have weeds?' 28 He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' So the servants said to him, 'Then do you want us to go and gather them?' 29 But he said, 'No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. 30 Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, 'Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.'" – Matthew 13:24-30 (ESV)

"14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come." – Matthew 24:14 (ESV)

"8 But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. 10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed. 11 Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, 12 waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! 13 But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells." – 2 Peter 3:8-13 (ESV)

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Start Talking: Find a conversation starter for your group. (15 Min)

- What's a situation in which you regretted not being more patient?
- Why do you think Jesus was always waiting, delaying, or speaking of the "proper" or "appointed" time?

Head: Start Thinking. Ask a question to get your group thinking. (10 Min)

- Read Matthew 13:24-30. What do the weeds and wheat represent?
- Read Matthew 13:24-30. Why did the farmer not want to pull the weeds until harvest? What does this tell us about life?
- Read Matthew 13:24-30. How does this parable challenge the popular misinterpreted understanding of the "rapture," in which it is good to be "taken" first? (Also see Matthew 24:37-41).
- How can 2 Peter 3:8-13 help us to better understand Matthew 13?

Heart: Start Sharing. Choose a question to create openness. (10 Min)

- 2 Peter 3:9 says that the Lord is not slow, but patient. But in honesty, has it ever *felt* like an answer to your prayers was coming too slowly?
- How does the idea of a coming judgment change the way we live?
- A traditional prayer adapted from Revelation 22:20 says, "*Come quickly, Lord Jesus.*" When we are younger, it is harder to pray this. Have you found yourself coming to embrace this prayer more?
- 2 Peter 3:12 talks about "hastening" the day. How can we do that? Read Matthew 24:14.
- Is it difficult to reconcile the urgent need for people to come to faith before Jesus' immanent return, with the idea that evangelism is usually not a one conversation process?

Hands: Start Doing. Commit to a step and live it out this week. (10 Min)

- "Waiting" on the Lord is far from unproductive. How can you work on the 3-2-1 challenge during COVID orders? Who is someone you are interceding for to receive the gift of faith this Christmas?

Start Praying. Be bold and pray with power. (15 Min)

- For suggestions, see the *Group Prayer Ideas* page in this packet.

Trios: Split into same-gender groups of three. (15 Min)

1. What's a passage of scripture that has impacted you this week? Read it to the group and explain why.
2. Is there anything God is leading you to repent of?
3. How's your weekly 3-2-1 challenge going? (*3 Conversations with New People, Learn 2 Names, Make 1 Meaningful Connection*)
4. Who is one non-believer that you need to reach out to this week?
5. What's something you'd like someone else to check in with you about this week?
6. Pray for one another.