

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you talk about God's word and Pastor Brian's message with friends and family. You of course can use your own questions, but we'd like to give you this tool to encourage Biblical fellowship and discipleship in your circle of relationships. ***Enjoy discovering more about Him!***

"REVEALING THE KINGDOM" | MARK 4: 21- 34 | CAMERON SEELY

WARM-UP QUESTION:

What was it like the last time you really needed a flashlight or candle?

"A Kingdom of Light, Listening and Living" Mark 4: 21-25

Jesus uses an analogy of a lamp, explaining light is displayed, not hidden. Christ-followers are to share the truth and love of Jesus.

What are ways Christ-followers hide or misrepresent their faith? How can Christ-followers avoid apathy in their faith?

"A Kingdom of Mysterious Growth" Mark 4: 26-29

Jesus shares a parable about a man who scattered seed and sees it grow into a harvest without knowing how, showing the growth of God's kingdom is supernatural, but His followers are part of the process. **What does this parable show about Jesus? What does it mean for His followers?**

"A Kingdom of Cautious Growth" Mark 4: 30-34

Jesus compares the kingdom of God to a mustard seed, which starts small and yet becomes one of the largest plants in a garden.

What are effective ways to handle false teachers and manipulators who take nest in churches? What are attitudes or beliefs that have taken nest in your heart that don't fit the kingdom of God?

REFLECTION QUESTION:

Jesus shares that the Kingdom of God will be one the grows supernaturally, from humble beginnings, and will be a light for all to see. His followers are part of displaying that light and encouraging and maintaining healthy growth. **How have you been letting the light of Jesus' love and truth shine in your life lately? How confident have you been in God's Kingdom lately? Pray that God will use you to be part of the growth of His kingdom.**

Jesus Journal: Write down at least one thing about Jesus that impressed you in the passage and message.

Revealing the Kingdom

Mark 4:21-34

Announcements:

Save the Date! Easter Weekend: Last year we were blessed to have nightly special services during Holy Week leading up to Easter and we will be having those again this year. Services will be 6:30-7:30pm each evening and will be unique times of prayer, reflection, learning, worship, and participation. Good Friday will be our communion service at 7-7:30am in the Sanctuary. We will also be having a family scavenger hunt on Saturday, April 19 from 9:00a-11:00a. These special services will lead us up to our Easter Sunday celebration at 7:30am, 9am, 10:30am, and 12pm as we look at the meaning of the resurrection. Consider inviting someone and we look forward to seeing you then!

Created: Join us for our next Photoshop Workshop with Michael Khamo on **Saturday March 22nd at 5pm in the Learning Center!** This is his second workshop with us teaching us some tips and trick on how to use Photoshop to create what you imagine. Hang out with our Creative Community as we learn together. Sign up to be notified of all of our gatherings on our website or app.

30 Day Prayer Guide for the Rohingya: We encourage you to pray with those around the world for the Rohingya during the month of Ramadan which is from February 28-March 29. Scan the QR code on the graphic or visit our Missions page or our church app and click on the 30 Days of Prayer Guide banner to download this year's prayer guide.

Women's Retreat: Hey ladies, there's still some room at the retreat so get signed up TODAY! Visit the Events page on our website or church app.

Today!!! Sunday Prayer Meeting: If you haven't had the privilege of joining any of our prayer meetings here at Calvary. We love to pray for our community, our body, our nation and the world. So please come meet up today at our new time from 1:30pm to 2:30pm in the Agape Room.

Introduction:

- Hello church, How is everyone doing today?
- I'm so excited and always nervous to be sharing on a Sunday morning! (Brian is a machine, not like a robot)

- Truly it's a joy to be sharing God's word with you. And I pray we each leave here today **encouraged and stirred up** as we talk about the Kingdom of God in three Parables Jesus is going to share in Mark 4.
- Let's look together as Jesus begins **"Revealing the Kingdom"** to us today!
- Turn/Pray: (Turn to Mark 4 and Pray)

Highlighting Last Week: (slide change)

Pastor Andrew Paulsen -

- Pastor Andrew did a phenomenal job walking us through the start of this chapter, where Jesus is continuing on with His public ministry. Only more specifically His public Teaching/Preaching ministry.
- We were introduced last week to Jesus teaching in Parables!
- Andrew is a teacher himself, so as expected, he walked us through why Jesus taught in Parables. Really Jesus explained it Himself, but AP walked us through it really well.
- Here is a quick refresher on the importance and purpose of Parables:

What is a Parable?: Using a short story to convey a moral, spiritual, or theological message by means of everyday experiences or relatable illustrations!

(My Terms, bringing a deeper concept, closer to the surface.)

But Why teach in Parables? (Why not just shoot it straight?):

- Jesus said Himself at the end of His first Parable: "He who has ears to hear, let him hear" *Mark 4:9
- Parables reveal who actually cares to listen. Who wants to SEEK the meaning.
- **"Jesus is saying, I've dropped some wisdom, are you going to pick it up?"**
- Pastor Andrew Paulsen

Worth noting - When Jesus and the boys got alone away from the crowds. It says...they "asked him about the Parables".

- Disciples who care about the truth, seek it! We are called to follow, and to seek after Him.
- If we care about the King and His Kingdom. We are going to ask some questions or dig a little deeper.

- If we don't....well our next Parable will reveal a lot about that!

Preface - As we jump into our first Parable. I want you to have in mind. That Jesus is not sharing simply wise words for our world's systems and kingdoms. But about the Kingdom of God and its advancement in our world. These are peeks into what it's like walking in His system, His Kingdom, under His rule.

(Slide Change & Read)

A Kingdom of Light, Listening, & Living! (Vs. 21-25)

Is a Lamp or Light meant to be hidden or displayed?

- The Answer is Obvious. Light is meant to be let loose.
- Jesus just got done giving the "Truth" or shedding "Light" on the Parable of the Sower with His disciples.
- These truths that God reveals to us. Are not to be hidden. Not to kept to ourselves. But to be revealed.

God's Kingdom is one of revealing light because He is Light:

This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

1 John 1:5

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy

1 Peter 2:9-10

Let the Light Loose!

- I know this seems like a funny way to put this statement. But I couldn't stop seeing it this way. **(Don't hold back the truth that's in you!)**
- What Jesus is revealing to us, is that the truth He has brought into our lives, or revealed about us. Needs to be displayed!!!
 - Whether that truth came from God's light revealing your sinfulness and bringing you out of the dark. (You gotta testimony!)

- Or if that light was illuminating truth, that revealed Christ to you in a deeper way by His word. (About forgiveness, redemption, the Love of God, or His mercies.)
- These things are not meant to be hidden or held back. And truthfully. One way or another they will be revealed!
 - God's not waiting on us! He is advancing His kingdom, and trust me when I tell you its worth getting on board!

Listen CAREFULLY:

- Pay Attention to what you hear. (What we learn, understand, and grasp matters)
 - Be mindful about what comes in.
 - Both in what you have already heard, and who you're listening to!
 - Spurgeon once said about Vs. 24

Be careful what you hear; hear the truth, and the truth only. It does seem to me as if some people said, "Here is a place of worship; there is sure to be a sermon, let us go in and hear it." Ah! but all that is preached is not gospel, and it is not all hearing that will be valuable to your souls.

- Charles Haddon Spurgeon (Metropolitan Tabernacle, Pulpit Volume 43)

- It is so true, that in our Modern day of information and access to any platform, influencer, youtube channel or sermon. We can hear alot.
- But at times, it pays to just take account of who and what we are letting in. (This is not an appeal to be more closed minded.)
 - Be reasonable and wrestle with different ideas.
 - But within the Kingdom of God. If its not gospel or Kingdom focused. Is it helping?

Live what you've been given!:

- Now, for those who have received His light/truth. How does that truth display itself?
- Does our life give witness and power to those truths.
 - Basically (James 1:22 - Be Doers of the Word, not Hearers only)
 - As we steward the truth we know well, more truth will come our way!

Preface -

What I want to make clear is this is not about how educated or self righteous we can appear!

- We all know those who can quote scripture with the best of them. But have deeply misrepresented God's love and grace.
- What Jesus is saying is you've heard about my grace, do you afford it to others? You know of my forgiveness towards your sin, is that displayed to those around you? You know the place of safety and confession I've been for you, can others come and confess their sins to you?
- Has the truth grasped your heart, and do we want more opportunities to use it! (I hope so, because He wants to give it)
 - Apathy to God's truth, will not only lead to less truth (because you don't want it), but God will take what was there away.
 - If there is nowhere for the Seed to penetrate, the birds will take it away.

The Kingdom of God is a KINGDOM OF LIGHT!

(Slide Change)

A Kingdom of Mysterious Growth (Vs. 26-29)

- This is the only Gospel that details this Parable! (Its special)
 - In context, we are still being called as Disciples to "Plant Seed" to Share Truth. But we are not able to "Create Growth"
 - That is the mysterious work of God in the heart of a person!
 - The planting, the watering, the soil, are all parts of how the seed prepares its germinating. The growth is God's work in the seed to do what its nature calls it.
- **We are to Plant and Tend hearts not to Grow them!**
 - The great Commentator Matthew Henry said of this Parable:

Thus we know not how the Spirit by the word makes a change in the heart, any more than we can account for the blowing of the wind, which we hear the sound of, but cannot tell whence it comes, or whither it goes. Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness;
- Matthew Henry

- For me personally, and I'm sure for all of you. We have those stories of the friend or family member who came to faith and WE HAVE NO IDEA HOW...
- You shared with them for years, and they showed NO interest whatsoever.
- But by the good and mighty hand of God's sovereign grace. They come walking in the door a new person. (EX. Taylor "Redbeard" Britt, Chase, Etc.)

So don't grow weary in doing good. Share with that family member, pray for that neighbor, love that friend in the way of Jesus. And stay in the process.

Growth is gradual:

- First the blade!
- Then the ear!
- Then the grain!

He is faithful, and He will complete the works He starts.

In Us, and those we are the truth with.

(Slide Change)

A Kingdom of Cautious Growth (Vs. 30-34)

- **In God's Kingdom, growth was inevitable but not without trouble.**
 - This Parable details the beautiful growth that has and would happen to the church. Jesus is ultimately predicting the incredible growth of His church.
 - From 120 faithful disciples in the upper room in the books of Acts.
 - To the 2.4 Billion on the planet today.
 - This Growth is an incredible display of God's power and faithfulness. Throughout history there have been attempts to destroy and eradicate God's church. These attempts have not prevailed against God's anointed.
 - And what was once a persecuted sect in the early 1-3 century. Now is a worldwide beacon of hope to the world!

But there are some cautions for what comes with growth!

- Some commentators see trouble nesting in the branches. And I feel its worth mentioning.
 - This bush, plant or tree, grows so large that the **"birds of the air"** begin living in it.
 - **Many scholars point out that the birds mentioned** in the Parable of the sower, were used of Satan for His purposes.

- Birds at times do play a negative role in alot of biblical imagery. So what does this mean.
- The growth God brings to His church is not by any means wrong (We are a pretty large church ourselves)
- But there must be some caution to the expanding walls of the church.

**“The growth of the kingdom will not result in the conversion of the world. In fact, some of the growth will give opportunity for Satan to get in and go to work!”
(Warren Wiersbe)**

- How many Christian have misrepresented and caused serious harm to name of Christ within the walls of the church and to those outside:
 - False teachers.
 - Wolves in Sheeps clothing.
 - Manipulators.
- Size does not make a good metric for sincere faith and love.
- **This is why discipleship matters! (If we just baptizes and don't follow up, we don't know the people and their faith)**
- So what is Jesus' point about the Kingdom of God?
 - We ought to be actively apart of the furthering of the Kingdom of God. Share, Witness, Love, Serve and Pray.
 - But know that there will be those who still seek refuge in the body. Who don't seek the furtherance of the Kingdom, and at times even to damage it.

Now I say to you that you are Peter (which means 'rock'), and upon this rock I will build my church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it.

- Matthew 16:18

As you know continue to walk this walk of faith and know your place firmly in His kingdom know this...

- **The Truth He Has revealed to us is to be displayed “LET IT LOOSE” on those around you!**
- **As you share that truth, trust that God will bring growth. We are just need to scatter the seed and tend the hearts.**
- **And as God continues to bring His good news to the “Ends of the earth” pray that He might guard us from the enemy in the midst.**

Please allow me to pray, and we will move into a time our communion time!

For I pass on to you what I received from the Lord himself. On the night when he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took some bread ²⁴and gave thanks to God for it. Then he broke it in pieces and said, “This is my body, which is given for you.**” ^f**Do this in remembrance of me.”** ²⁵In the same way, he took the cup of wine after supper, saying, “**This cup is the new covenant between God and his people—an agreement confirmed with my blood. Do this in remembrance of me as often as you drink it.”****