

CALVARY CHAPEL COSTA MESA

COMMUNITY GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

“The Gospel Seed” Mark 4:1-25

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MAIN IDEA

Agricultural metaphors would have made a lot of sense to the crowds in the northern Galilee. Even to this day, this region has remained primarily a thriving farm community. Bible land tours will stop at Mt. Carmel and look out over the valley and see the patch quilt layout. There are two to three simple commodities that make farming work, and Jesus focuses on two of the most important. If someone is going to farm and produce a product, one must have seed and soil. The seed metaphor is popular in the New Testament and is used around 50 times. Often in reference to Jesus’ pedigree from King David, but also for teaching and illustrating truth. This passage in Mark introduces the idea that “seed” is something that is planted into the hearts of people. Jesus gives the interpretive clue that the “seed” is God’s Word, something Jesus, Himself, personified. The sower in first century Galilee would have spread the seed indiscriminately. He by hand would broadly cast the seed, blanketing all of the land. He was not as concerned with seed falling on the bad spots as the good soil would give returns far beyond what was even needed. As the crowds grew to hear Jesus, He preached the Kingdom to a broad audience, but his call to discipleship was the fruit he sought from the hearts that were ready to hear, accept, and produce for Him.

SCRIPTURAL INSIGHT

Seeds contain the DNA of their species and type. Whatever kind of tree or plant it is to be, that little seed contains all of the genetical data necessary to grow and produce fruit for its kind. The idea of spiritual seed germinating in the followers of Jesus was not lost on Peter. The years he spent at Jesus’ feet are reflected in his own teachings. Passages such as Mark 4:14 and John 13:35 are just a few examples of the influence of Christ, and the hundredfold fruit that was produced in the apostles and the early church. 1 Peter 1:22-23 Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever.

READ & DISCUSS

Read out loud together Mark 4:1-25 and discuss below how to apply this passage.

KEY VERSE

Mark 4:14 The sower sows the word.

- As Jesus preached to the masses from the boat, the parable of the sower illustrated timeless truths, but it was also a living metaphor in that moment. God is the sower who casts His seed broadly, but many might say that He wasted seed as so much soil was apparently unfit. *How does the indiscriminate nature of His sowing reflect God’s personality? How might*

this encourage us to enlarge the extent of our relationships? Other than personal conversations, what are the other ways the Gospel is spread through us?

- Only one of the four soils bore fruit, even though all four heard God's word. *What was the difference with the fourth soil that made it both receptive and responsive? What is the difference between being enamored with Christ, and being His follower? What is the actual fruit that is counted thirty, sixty and a hundredfold? Could it be aspects of character? Could it be disciple-making? How does the moral of this parable fit with the commission of Christ in Matthew 28:18-20?*
- *How can this parable be applied to the believer's personal, ongoing spiritual development? Why would cultivating the soil, i.e. our lives, be important? How do we position ourselves to continue having the Word of God planted in our hearts and minds? Discuss ways we can help each other in our spiritual growth? What kinds of fruit would the follower of Christ bear? (See 2 Peter 1:5-11, 3:17-18; Galatians 5:22-23)*

PRAYER & TESTIMONY

We all have social communities or circles or relationships where we live and work. Pray for those places where the Gospel could be a greater influence. Pray for courage to sow or cast God's love in a broader way. Who can you pray for that you previously thought would be too difficult to reach?

SPIRITUAL APPLICATION & PRACTICE

Scripture memorization is a spiritual discipline that tills the soil of both the mind, heart, and soul. There are a host of exercises that strengthen the memory, but this is one which also aids spiritual growth. David said, "Your Word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against You. (Ps 119:11) There are many things we'd like to be able to retain, but God's Word should be at the top of that list. What better way to move towards God in our character than internalizing His Word. Try picking one of the passages from this week's guide, and breaking it down over a week into smaller pieces. You may be surprised how this exercise brings so much change, confidence and growth.

RESOURCES

Emotionally Healthy Spirituality: It's Impossible to Be Spiritually Mature, While Remaining Emotionally Immature. Peter Scazzero. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017.

Discipleship should be transformational in all areas of our lives. How can one make sure that their relationship with Jesus is bringing change in all the aspects of who they are?

https://www.amazon.com/Emotionally-Healthy-Spirituality-Impossible-Spiritually/dp/0310348498/ref=mp_s_a_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1541530419&sr=8-1&keywords=emotionally+healthy+spirituality+by+peter+scazzero



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<https://cccm.com/teaching/jesus-christ-son-of-god-savior/video/the-seeds-and-the-soil/>