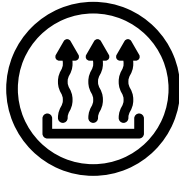




The Gospel of Mark



WARM-UP

What is an irrational fear that you have?

Pray for your time together as a group.



What happened in the first 25 verses of Mark chapter 4?

Read out loud as a group

MARK 4:26-34 (NIV)

The Parable of the Growing Seed

26 He also said, "This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. 27 Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. 28 All by itself the soil produces grain—first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. 29 As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come."

The Parable of the Mustard Seed

30 Again he said, "What shall we say the kingdom of God is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it? 31 It is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds on earth. 32 Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds can perch in its shade."

33 With many similar parables Jesus spoke the word to them, as much as they could understand. 34 He did not say anything to them without using a parable. But when he was alone with his own disciples, he explained everything.



What stands out to you?

Possible Answers: Answers will vary.



Jesus continues to use parables about seeds. But in one the seed represents the Word of God and in the other the Kingdom of God. What does each parable show us about the Kingdom of God?

Possible Answers: 26-29 - The kingdom is a mystery, it's unexpected, it's progressive, it's slow, and it will happen despite what we do. There are things happening that we don't see. We're part of the process, but we don't do the main part. 30-34 - It's life giving to others, it starts small, it's unassuming at first, it's unexpected, it takes time, it's living, it starts out as something and turns into something different.



Based on the parables, what is our role in the Kingdom of God?

Possible Answers: maybe help in scattering and watering the plants (1 Corinthians 3:6-8) but overall we aren't mentioned! We can have faith/trust that God will bring it about and enjoy/find shelter in the Kingdom of God.

Read out loud as a group

MARK 4:35-41 (NIV)

35 That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side." 36 Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. 37 A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. 38 Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" 39 He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. 40 He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" 41 They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"



The disciples felt like Jesus didn't care about what they were experiencing (verse 38). Is there an area where you feel like God doesn't care?

Possible Answers: Answers will vary.



In verse 40, Jesus places faith as cure to fear. What are the implications for your life?

Possible Answers: May vary. You'll still feel many emotions and faith can calm fear. Reminding yourself to look to Jesus in every situation. Etc.

Compare and Contrast Mark 4:35-41 with Jonah 1:1-15

Read out loud as a group

JONAH 1:1-15 (NIV)

1 Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, 2 “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it, for their evil[a] has come up before me.” 3 But Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish. So he paid the fare and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish, away from the presence of the Lord.

4 But the Lord hurled a great wind upon the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship threatened to break up. 5 Then the mariners were afraid, and each cried out to his god. And they hurled the cargo that was in the ship into the sea to lighten it for them. But Jonah had gone down into the inner part of the ship and had lain down and was fast asleep. 6 So the captain came and said to him, “What do you mean, you sleeper? Arise, call out to your god! Perhaps the god will give a thought to us, that we may not perish.”

7 And they said to one another, “Come, let us cast lots, that we may know on whose account this evil has come upon us.” So they cast lots, and the lot fell on Jonah. 8 Then they said to him, “Tell us on whose account this evil has come upon us. What is your occupation? And where do you come from? What is your country? And of what people are you?” 9 And he said to them, “I am a Hebrew, and I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land.” 10 Then the men were exceedingly afraid and said to him, “What is this that you have done!” For the men knew that he was fleeing from the presence of the Lord, because he had told them.

11 Then they said to him, “What shall we do to you, that the sea may quiet down for us?” For the sea grew more and more tempestuous. 12 He said to them, “Pick me up and hurl me into the sea; then the sea will quiet down for you, for I know it is because of me that this great tempest has come upon you.” 13 Nevertheless, the men rowed hard[b] to get back to dry land, but they could not, for the sea grew more and more tempestuous against them. 14 Therefore they called out to the Lord, “O Lord, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not on us innocent blood, for you, O Lord, have done as it pleased you.” 15 So they picked up Jonah and hurled him into the sea, and the sea ceased from its raging.



What are the comparisons and contrasts between these two stories? (Mark 4:35-41 with Jonah 1:1-15)

Possible Answers:

Comparisons: both were in a boat, both boats were overtaken by a storm, both storms described similarly, both were asleep, both groups of sailors wake their passenger with fearful comments of “we’re going to die”, both situations were calmed by divine intervention over nature, both groups of sailors get more terrified after the storm is calmed.

Contrasts: Jonah was thrown overboard immediately, Jesus was thrown overboard later (figuratively on the cross). Jesus calms the storm with a word first. Jesus wasn’t running away but rather running towards his mission. The storm was used to remind Jonah of who God was while this storm revealed to the sailors who God was.



How does this connection to Jonah point to the cross?

Possible Answers: Jesus is a better Jonah. Jesus was thrown overboard into the only storm that could ever truly harm us by his death on the cross

DISCUSSION FOR ACCOUNTABILITY



- Is there an area where you feel afraid right now?
What is a truth about God that you can use when you are experiencing that fear?
- How can you delight in the Kingdom of God this week?