

LifeGroup Study Sheet

May 7th, 2023 – Red Letters: Gospel of Mark (part 16)

This guide is designed to give helpful hints in preparing for your group discussion.

Quick Review

Look back from your sermon notes – Was there anything that particularly challenged you from this sermon? Anything you didn't understand, agree with or connect with?

Introduction

In the passage we are about to read, Jesus teaches in parables. Parables were stories that people could relate to but provided deeper spiritual principles within the context of the story. Have you ever had a teacher, coach, mentor teach you something through a "parable?" How do these stories not only get information across to the listener, but deeper meanings underneath the simple illustrations?

Digging In

Question 1: Read Mark 4:1-20. Jesus teaches this parable with the intention of revealing the condition of one's heart condition (soil) **v.8**. The farmer throws down seed on 4 different types of soil. The first type of soil is "hard soil" (v.4, 14-15). The seed on this type of soil does not have the ability to take the seed, and then Satan takes it away. This soil is like God's Word falling on deaf ears. What are signs in your own heart or life that your heart could be "hardened" towards God's Word? What could some warning signs be of this?

Question 2: Read Mark 4:5-6, 16-17. The next type of soil is the "rocky soil." This type of soil the seed is received with "joy!" But after persecution and trials it withers away because it had no root system. This type of soil is scary because it can give the appearance of true salvation. **Read 1 Peter 4:12-17.** How do these verses relate to this type of soil? What are the warning signs with these verses that your heart might be in the "rocky" soil condition?

Question 3: Read Mark 4:7, 18-19. The third type of soil was "thorny soil." This type of soil has something start to grow, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth chokes out the seed that was planted. What are some of the cares of this world that fights for control of your heart? How have you seen this "choking" aspect happen in your own life when your relationship with Christ becomes "secondary?" One of those desires is the love for money. **Read 1 Timothy 6:9-10.**

Question 4: Read Mark 4:8-9, 20. The last type of soil is the "good soil." Notice, out of all the types of soil, this is the only one that produces fruit! This soil grows, reproduces, and yields a harvest! The imagery shows that this soil is a soft, receptive, and attentive heart to the Word of God. **Luke 8:15** describes it as "hold fast in an

honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patience!” How are you patiently putting yourself in the Word of God, while anticipating fruit to grow in your life?

Taking it Home

Reflect and apply these questions to your life:

1. Evaluate your heart.
 - a. Jeremiah 17:10
2. Cultivate your heart.
 - a. What needs removed?
3. Dedicate your heart.
 - a. What or who are you living for?

Praise / Prayer Requests

Pray for your group with these things in mind:

Adoration – How can I praise God for what this teaches me?

Confession – What sin can I confess because of what this teaches me?

Thanksgiving – How can I thank God for what Jesus has done?

Supplication – What do I need to ask of God in order to grow in light of this?