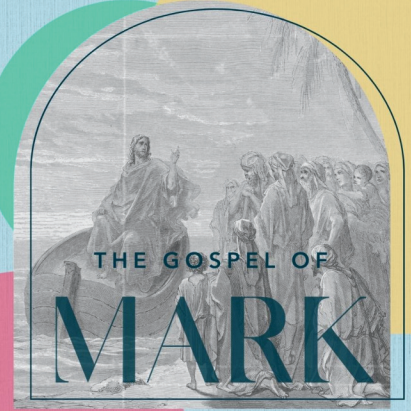


September 10, 2023

THE UNEXPECTED KINGDOM

Pastor Jason Uptmore // Mark 4:21-34



PREPARE YOUR HEART & MIND

Begin this time in prayer, confessing any sins you can recall, thanking the Lord for the gift of His Word, and asking for His Spirit to guide you in your time.



21 And He was saying to them, "A lamp is not brought to be put under a basket, is it, or under a bed? Is it not brought to be put on the lampstand? 22 For nothing is hidden, except to be revealed; nor has anything been secret, but that it would come to light. 23 If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear." 24 And He was saying to them, "Take care what you listen to. By your standard of measure it will be measured to you; and more will be given you besides. 25 For whoever has, to him more shall be given; and whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him."

26 And He was saying, "The kingdom of God is like a man who casts seed upon the soil; 27 and he goes to bed at night and gets up by day, and the seed sprouts and grows—how, he himself does not know. 28 The soil produces crops by itself; first the blade, then the head, then the mature grain in the head. 29 But when the crop permits, he immediately puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come."

30 And He said, "How shall we picture the kingdom of God, or by what parable shall we present it? 31 It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the soil, though it is smaller than all the seeds that are upon the soil, 32 yet when it is sown, it grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants and forms large branches; so that the birds of the air can nest under its shade."

33 With many such parables He was speaking the word to them, so far as they were able to hear it; 34 and He did not speak to them without a parable; but He was explaining everything privately to His own disciples.



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GROW IN THE WORD

- How would you describe the thinking and behavior that Jesus wants his disciples to adopt from this teaching?

- How can you practically "let your light shine" in your personal life and in your communities to glorify God? Prayerfully consider what God might be leading you to do.

02. Jesus taught two parables to illustrate the growth of God's kingdom. In the first, Jesus likened the kingdom to a seed and how it grows in stages after its been planted. In the second parable, Jesus compared God's kingdom to a mustard seed which starts out really small but eventually grows into a very large tree (v. 26-34).

- What stands out to you most about the way Jesus described the kingdom of God?



GROW IN THE WORD

- How is Jesus' description of the kingdom different from what his disciples expected? See Acts 1:6; Luke 19:11.

- In what ways can you apply patience and trust in God as it relates to your own spiritual journey?

UPCOMING EVENTS

PRISCILLA SHIRER SIMULCAST

September 16 | 9 am - 3 pm

Ladies, you're invited to join us and thousands of other women across the globe at this one-day event as we experience whole-hearted teaching straight from God's Word, worship, and more. Register online.



FINANCIAL PEACE UNIVERSITY

Sundays | Starting Sept 17 | 11 am

Would you like to learn how to manage your money wisely? This nine-week class has biblical, practical steps to gaining freedom from debt, stress, and worry. Learn more and register online today!

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Pray to begin your group time. Remind the group why you are meeting: to connect in meaningful relationships, to grow spiritually, and to engage in the life and work of the church together. Reflect on the values you want to share as a group (i.e. confidentiality, authenticity, grace).

CONNECT (30-40 MIN)

Use these suggestions to foster connection and build community in your group. You can break your group up into smaller parts if needed, pick a question to discuss, and let each of the members get to know one another.

- Spend a few minutes catching up with one another. Share something you are celebrating (a high) or something that you are working through (a low) this week.
- Ask one of the questions in the Connect section of the passage guide. You can discuss as a big group or in smaller groups of 2-4 people.
- If your group is new to each other, consider spending more time upfront getting to know each other.

GROW (30-40 MIN)

Gather back as a big group if you broke up earlier and have one person pray over your time discussing God's word. As you discuss, don't worry if there are questions left unanswered or unresolved. Reach out to ministry leaders or pastors for any needed clarification.

- Read each section of Scripture you are focusing on prior to discussion. Select 1-2 of the questions that contain cross-references from each section.
- Read the cross-references together and discuss the questions.

ENGAGE (30-40 MIN)

Reflect on the biblical truth God revealed to you this week and discuss a plan of action to apply what you have learned. Gather in smaller groups of 2-4 again. Discuss your plan of action and pray for one another.

- Spend a few minutes talking about everyone's main takeaway from the passage.
- Select 1-2 application questions from the Grow in the Word section to discuss.
- Spend the rest of your group time sharing prayer requests and praying for one another.