



# KINGDOMCOME

*parables of the kingdom*

This next Sunday we'll be starting a new sermon series focused on Jesus' parables of the Kingdom of God. In this series we will be covering the key passages in lifegroup ahead of time before the sermons on Sundays. We will begin this week with the Parable of the Sower, which we will study twice in the next few weeks from two different angles. This week we will look at it from the perspective that the soil represents our hearts.

## **FAMILY TIME**

Take some time to share prayer requests and praise reports with each other and encourage folks to keep praying for each other's prayer requests throughout the week and to believe that these will become future praise reports.

## **BIBLE STUDY**

See attached for a printout you can provide to your lifegroup members and for a basic guide on facilitating Bible studies. The passage is long, but the first half informs the second half, which is the key part of this text. Feel free to focus more of the discussion on the second half.

## **APPLICATION**

What is the condition of the soil of your heart? What would it look like to move towards becoming like the fourth soil, which was the good soil?

## **SMALL GROUP**

Break up into groups of 3-4 to share and pray with each other about becoming more like the good soil.

## **MARK 4:1-20 – The Parable of the Sower**

**1** Again Jesus began to teach by the lake. The crowd that gathered around him was so large that he got into a boat and sat in it out on the lake, while all the people were along the shore at the water's edge.

**2** He taught them many things by parables, and in his teaching said: **3** “Listen! A farmer went out to sow his seed. **4** As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up.

**5** Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. **6** But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no

root. **7** Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants, so that they did not bear grain. **8** Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up, grew and produced a crop, some multiplying thirty,

some sixty, some a hundred times.” **9** Then Jesus said, “Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear.”

**10** When he was alone, the Twelve and the others around him asked him about the parables. **11** He told them, “The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables **12** so that, “they may be ever seeing but never perceiving, and ever hearing but never understanding; otherwise they might turn and be forgiven!” [Isaiah 6:9-10]”

**13** Then Jesus said to them, “Don't you understand this parable? How then will you understand any parable? **14** The farmer sows the word. **15** Some people are like seed along the path, where the word is

sown. As soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them. **16** Others, like seed sown on rocky places, hear the word and at once receive it with joy. **17** But since they have no

root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. **18** Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; **19** but the worries of this life, the

deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful. **20** Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop—some thirty,

some sixty, some a hundred times what was sown.”

## **FACILITATING INDUCTIVE/DISCUSSION BASED BIBLE STUDIES**

### **STEP 1: OBSERVATION (about 10-15 minutes)**

- Before you begin, pray to ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the truths of the passage and to speak to each person, including yourself!
- Start by giving everyone a printout of the passage and giving them a few minutes to read through the passage on their own. It would be helpful to provide pens and markers for people to make notes or write down questions.
- Then gather the group together and give people an opportunity to share their observations. The purpose here is to identify what's going on in the text and to make sure we're all on the same page since people might notice or miss things others didn't.
- You could ask people to answer the basic investigative questions who (is speaking, are the main characters, is being spoken to), what (is happening, is the cultural context of the passage, is the scene), where (is the passage taking place), when (did the events take place), and how (did Jesus, people respond)?
- You could also pay attention to key words and phrases.

### **STEP 2: QUESTIONS AND INTERPRETATION (about 30-45 minutes)**

- After giving people an opportunity to fill out the details of the passage during observation time, move into a time of questions. Since we want people to engage with the text for themselves and to see who Jesus is for themselves, we want to allow their questions to guide the study.
- You could have people ask all their questions up front and then go through them together afterwards. This way you can start with the questions from the beginning of the passage and move towards the end. This is in case you come across a later question that can't be answered until an earlier one is.
- You will want to write down people's questions as they ask them so you can refer back to them later.
- As you go through the questions, your goal is to get the group to try and answer the question together. Don't worry about having all the answers! Your primary task is to facilitate discussion and to help foster a space where people can think through questions for themselves and be open to how God might want to speak to them.
- If you're short on time, feel free to cut short discussion on some of the less important questions or even to skip them altogether. We want to make sure we focus the bulk of our energy on the more important parts of the passage.
- It would be helpful to read through the passage ahead of time in order to gain an idea of what the key questions or the crucial parts might be.
- Try to limit this section to under 45 minutes so people have time and energy to go into application and small groups.

### **STEP 3: APPLICATION AND SMALL GROUPS (about 15-30 minutes)**

- This is the most crucial part of the whole study! Whereas the first two steps can feel more intellectual, here is where we actively look to see what the passage means for us personally.
- You could give people a few minutes to reflect on the passage and on the discussion and to ask God what he is saying to them personally.
- Beyond general revelations, we also want people to identify how they can practically respond to the passage and put things into action. Putting things into practice is what allows God to change our lives.
- Then break up into small groups of 3-4 so that people can share with each other how God spoke to them through the passage and how they want to respond and also to pray for each other to be able to believe and obey what they heard from God