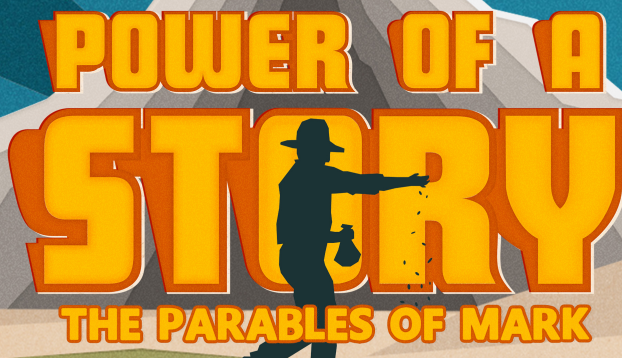


POWER OF A STORY



THE PARABLES OF MARK

DIGGING DEEPER

THE LAMP

FEBRUARY 23

Jesus uses the metaphor of a lamp to teach powerful truths about how God's Word functions in our lives. Light is a central theme in this passage, revealing both our responsibility and privilege in how we handle and share the light of God's truth.

Work through the following questions and scriptures on your own or get together with your group, spiritual running partners, or family to talk through what you are learning.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. If your life were a stained-glass window, what story or message would it tell? What colors or images do you think would shine through? Explain why you chose this message and these elements?
2. Background info on Jesus' use of parables: Jesus often taught about the Kingdom He's bringing and the true nature of the King through these short, sticky stories called parables. Through these collections of parables, Jesus' intentions are not to simply give clear, moral instructions like the surrounding crowd is used to. Rather, Jesus' parables intentionally leave His hearers puzzled and confused. You see, Jesus wasn't just interested in telling people what to do, He wanted them to work for understanding. His parables were cryptic because it would reveal those who were serious about following Jesus and adopting His way of life, the Kingdom way of life, and those who thought Jesus was crazy and would not stick around.

A. For further study on the parables, consider watching this video by the Bible Project: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XX-aAg4_U2Q

3. Read **Mark 4:13-25**.

Make some observations about this passage (What does the text say?):

- What do you notice and what are you curious about?
- What is confusing or puzzling about this passage?
- What connections do you notice between the parable of the sower (or soils) and the parable of the lamp?

Make some interpretations (What does the passage mean?)

- What do you learn about Jesus and His Kingdom?
- What do you learn about humanity?
- How does reading the two parables together enhance your understanding of the second parable?

Now make some applications (what's my response?)

- How are you encouraged, challenged, or convicted by this passage?
- What should be our response to this passage?

4. Read **2 Corinthians 4:5-12** where Paul is defending the integrity of his character and the heart behind his and Timothy's ministry to the Corinthians. Paul refers to the human body as "clay jars". How does this description speak to the fragility of our lives while magnifying the power of God working through us?

- How can we reflect God's light when we are faced with our own flaws or past mistakes?
- How are you currently experiencing the light of God's Kingdom shining through you or others?

5. Remember, Jesus used parables to provoke His listeners to ponder and think on the meaning behind it, requiring an active response from the listener.
- What does it mean to “hear with intention” when reading the Bible or listening to God’s Word?
 - Do you regularly ponder God’s word to the point where it pricks your heart and moves you toward change?
 - What would it look like to practice this way of reading and hearing Scripture more?

KEY SCRIPTURE

Mark 4:13-25 Then Jesus said to them, “Don’t you understand this parable? How then will you understand any parable? The farmer sows the word. 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. Others, like seed sown on rocky places, hear the word and at once receive it with joy. 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. Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; 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. 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.” He said to them, “Do you bring in a lamp to put it under a bowl or a bed? Instead, don’t you put it on its stand? For whatever is hidden is meant to be disclosed, and whatever is concealed is meant to be brought out into the open. If anyone has ears to hear, let them hear.” “Consider carefully what you hear,” he continued. “With the measure you use, it will be measured to you—and even more. Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them.”

2 Corinthians 4:5-12 For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake. For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God’s glory displayed in the face of Christ. But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus’ sake, so that his life may also be revealed in our mortal body. So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.

PRAYER

- Pray for boldness and courage to live as a visible reflection of God’s light in your everyday life.
- Ask God to show you ways you can shine His light in your family, work, and community.
- Pray for the strength to be a consistent and humble witness, not seeking attention for yourself but for His glory.

Prayer Example: “Father, thank You for the ways you are making the Kingdom visible through your followers. Help us live in ways that reflect Your truth and love. Show us how we can let Your light shine through us in our relationships, work, and interactions with others. Help us to be consistent and humble, reflecting You in all we say and do. May our lives be stained-glass windows, telling Your story of love, grace, and redemption to the world around us. Amen.”

PRACTICE

What is one way you can practice living in the light of God’s Kingdom this week? Maybe you know someone who is walking in darkness and needs someone to show them the light of Christ? Maybe you are walking in the darkness of your own sin and shame and need to bring it into the light of another trusted believer? Maybe it’s sitting with Scripture, not just to read it, but to let *it* read *you*. Maybe it’s spending time reflecting on your life with God in prayer and asking Him to help you see areas where you are closed off to the light of His truth? Etc.