

Life Group Notes 7/9/2023
Pastor Mark Warren: The Kingdom Part 1

[If you have observations or questions feel free to send me an email with your comment or observations at tbeachhead@comcast.net.-Pete Mehegan, the Scribe.]

Remember: Be good to one another. Be sensitive and kind. Let God heal our hearts...and guide our discussions. **PLEASE PRE-READ THESE NOTES AND CHOOSE THE DIRECTION THAT IS APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR GROUP. The purpose is to unite, not divide; to facilitate discussion and to discern the freedom the gospel brings. Any part of these notes might be appropriate as a crowd breaker for your own group. The goal is to create memories from Sunday that will serve for a long time.** BE COGNIZANT OF YOUR GROUP'S TIME AND BE SENSITIVE! **Some groups would like to dwell on a single idea. Let the Spirit be your guide. Never feel obligated to complete this study. This study is also a great devotion, taken slowly through the week.**

Note: I have highlighted suggested discussion questions that Pastor Mark has raised this week, 7/9. Let's allow the Holy Spirit to guide all our discussions, using the highlights as trail blazes. **The purpose is to minister to one another.** Do not be daunted by the number of pages. As an editorial decision, I include each of the passages mentioned in full to facilitate the enjoyment of these notes, rather than having you, the reader, look up each reference. If your Bible is open beside you, you can transfer and annotate from these pages with ease. This week has several footnotes on vocabulary, doctrines and principles of the church. Footnotes are not meant to distract, but enhance the reading, and to help find answers to questions that arise. This week's footnotes include:

1. [On the Greek meaning of the Word. The difference between a Logos Word and a Rhema Word.](#)
2. [On the gospel of the kingdom.](#)

***Please **Note:** At the very [end of these notes](#), I've included passages that were mentioned in this week's message for deeper study using SOAP journaling and further study during the week. ***

Pastor Mark begins by saying his goal in bringing the message to Grace Capital, the gathering, is to hear what the Spirit is saying, and to convey that message in its purity and clarity. It is to help more people to meet Jesus face to face. He says, we're going to do a mini-series on the kingdom of God: "The Kingdom of God is here and now. We do not need to wait to experience the Kingdom of God."

1. **What does this bring to mind?**
2. **Do you understand that?**
3. **Can you prove it?**

He asks the question, "Have you ever asked the question, 'There's got to be something more?'" **Answer him. Look up Revelation 1. 17** When I saw him, I fell at his feet as

though dead. But he laid his right hand on me, saying, “Fear not, I am the first and the last, [18](#)and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades. Pastor Mark says, “There are some areas in our life that still feel dead. And Jesus wants to unlock those areas so that we can live life and life to the uttermost, as He promised, but sin has a way of doing damage to us, and really to our heart.” **Have you become aware of this?**

Look up John 10:9-10 [9](#)I am the gate. If anyone enters through Me, he will be saved. He will come in and go out and find pasture. [10](#)The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come that they may have life, and have it in all its fullness. **Explain.**

Pastor Mark says, “Jesus promises to give us a new heart. The whole concept is difficult to me, but He has a way empower us to unlock things that have been locked up.” **Look up Ezekiel 36:24-27** [24](#)I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land. [25](#)I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. [26](#)And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. [27](#)And I will put my Spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

1. What does the new heart bring with it?
2. What is the fruit of the new heart?
3. Where we were slaves of sin, what does this promise say we will become?

Mark says, “Jesus is saying, ‘I have a whole life for you. I want you to experience what it means to be fully alive.’” **Look up Jeremiah 31**[31](#)“Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, [32](#)not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. [33](#)For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people.[34](#)And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

1. What is in the New Covenant God promised through the prophets in the Old Testament?
2. In what way does this speak of the abundance of which Mark is speaking?
3. What is the fruit of this new covenant?
4. Compare Jeremiah’s prophecy with Ezekiel’s? What do they have in common?

5. What differences do you see between them?

Pastor Mark says, "Jesus holds the key. As much as we can be living heaven today, we can be living hell today." **Explain. Mark asks, "How do we have discernment to navigate the times we live in?"**

Look up Matthew 13: **3**And he told them many things in parables, saying: "A sower went out to sow. **4**And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them. **5**Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and immediately they sprang up, since they had no depth of soil, **6**but when the sun rose they were scorched. And since they had no root, they withered away. **7**Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. **8**Other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.**9**He who has ears, let him hear." Pastor Mark relates how a niece interpreted the seed on the footpath: "You know the path becomes a path because it's well-traveled. I wonder if the path that becomes hard are those things in life that become patterns, that become ritual and so routine that it becomes difficult to receive what Jesus wants for us." **What is your response to this? What are those things that have become so routine that we are hindered from receiving anything new?**

Mark says, "Jesus is the key, He is the door, He is the way for unlocking all these things. When I say Jesus, I mean the Holy Spirit, because He is currently doing the leading. You have to acknowledge that you do want to hear what Jesus has to say. Pray this: 'Jesus give me ears to hear.'" **Take a moment and pray this. Describe what you feel. What do you understand is the need that will be met here? Pray that prayer again, one more time. What are we increasing when we pray this?**

Look up Matthew 13: **11**And he answered them, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. **12**For to the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. **13**This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. **14**Indeed, in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled that says:

““You will indeed hear but never understand,
and you will indeed see but never perceive.”

15For this people's heart has grown dull,
and with their ears they can barely hear,
and their eyes they have closed,
lest they should see with their eyes
and hear with their ears
and understand with their heart
and turn, and I would heal them.’

16But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. **17**For truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous men longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.

1. React to this prophecy, found in Isaiah 6:9-10.
2. How well does this describe the seed on the footpath?
3. Who decides whether the eyes are open and if the ears hear?
4. What two things happen if the eyes are open, and the ears hear?
5. Look at verse 15. How do hearts grow dull?
6. Has your heart ever grown dull? What was the cause?
7. What is the difference between the disciples who remain with Jesus, and those who walk away?
8. What came of those who had eyes and heard? All of them? Any exceptions? What happened to him?
9. Look at verse 17: What were prophets and righteous people looking for? Why didn't they see it?
10. Do we see it now? Explain.

Pastor Mark contrasts learning from the Spirit with what we were trained to do in schools: learning with our mind.

1. What is the key difference?
2. What has been deliberately excluded from schools since the sixties?

Pastor Mark says, spiritual understanding begins with a willingness to hear what the Spirit is saying to our heart, and to respond and say, "Yes." He says he had to become willing, upon the passing of his dog, to feel pain and hurt again, and at that moment he responded to what the Spirit was saying. He says, "We will miss what the Spirit is doing if we do not stay open to the Kingdom of God right now. Jesus is willing to open doors for you, and He will walk with you if you are willing to say, 'Yes.'" **What is happening? Are you open? Have you said "Yes?"** "We have to go to those places that Jesus is taking us, to bring our heart back to life."

Now look at Jesus' own explanation of the parable, given to the blessed to whom was given the secrets of the kingdom: **18**"Hear then the parable of the sower: **19**When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is what was sown along the path. **20**As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, **21**yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away. **22**As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. **23**As for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it. He indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty."

1. How significant is the heart? What is a hard heart? What is a receptive heart?
2. Has the seed still been sown in the heart of the hardened path despite the hardness of the path? How does this speak of God's determination to sow?

What happened to that seed? Why is the enemy so evil? Why does the enemy come?

3. What are we doing, what routines and habits, that is creating hardness, a path too hard for the Word to penetrate? How sobering is it to know, "...even what they have will be taken away?" How active is satan in resisting the new, fresh seed of the Kingdom?
4. What was your emotional response to the Word of Salvation when you first heard it? Did that joy diminish over time?
5. How rapid is the fall when the Word was emotionally received, and not given root? How does one look to the roots?
6. What persecution or mockery have you faced, or do you still face because you are a believer? How do you respond?
7. What weeds do you see, growing in your own soil, and interfering with the abundant life?
8. Remember what Charlie taught last week? What is the problem with having two masters? Why is the love of money the root of all evil?
9. Have you ever known someone who brings forth thirty-fold, sixty-fold or even one-hundred-fold increase? Can you describe them?
10. What limits are there to the abundance that comes from receiving the word in good soil?
11. What is a one-hundred-fold increase? What does it take to produce one hundred-fold?

Pastor Mark introduces the concept of a "Logos" word in contrast to a "Rhema" word. See the footnote below. Ultimately the Word sown in good soil springs to life, and brings Life, Revelation and Motivation to propel us to the next step in our work. Romans 10: 17 says "Faith comes by hearing" the rhema, the Word made alive in us.

Look up Philippians 2: [12](#) Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not only in my presence, but now even more in my absence, continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling. [13](#) For it is God who works in you to will and to act on behalf of His good purpose.

12. Notice the tenses...why does Paul say, "Continue to work out..."
13. Why does working out our salvation involve "fear and trembling?"
14. Notice the cooperation: Where does your desire come from? Where does your unrelenting steadfastness come from (your unwillingness to give up)?
15. Does it help to know that God Himself is invested in your success?

Review again Jesus' offer to the Laodicean church of Revelation 3: [20](#) **Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in and dine with him, and he with Me.**

1. How does one hear His voice? Have you heard Him? How do you know?
 2. What is on your table that you're offering Him?
 3. What is he bringing the table for you to eat?
 4. How do you open the door?
 5. How do you know it is not too late, and that the time is now?
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The Follow-up Application

1. Use the [SOAP journal studies](#) below throughout the week.
2. Have ears to hear: Pay attention this week to conversations that center around spiritual things. What is new or different? Who initiated the conversation?
3. Allow Jesus access to your heart. Respond to Jesus in the area He is showing you. Say, "I want to have spiritual eyes and ears." Write down what changes and write down what verses He shows you. Write down the agreement.
4. Do your own SOAP on any new verses that come to you this week.

Take the time to pray.

Scribes Notes:

1. **On the Greek meaning of the "Word"**—In Greek, there are two words, both translated "Word": ῥῆμα (*rhema*) a thing spoken, (a) a word or saying of any kind, as command, report, promise, (b) a thing, matter, business. rhēma (from [4483](#) /rhēō, "to speak") – a spoken word, made "by the living voice" (J. Thayer). [4487](#)/rhēma ("spoken word") is commonly used in the NT (and in LXX) for the Lord speaking His *dynamic, living word* in a believer to inbirth *faith* ("His inwrought persuasion"). Look at Romans 10:17: "So faith proceeds from (spiritual) hearing; moreover, this hearing (is consummated) through a *rhēma-word* ([4487](#) /*rhēma*) from Christ" (Greek text). Λόγος (*logos*) a word (as embodying an idea), a statement, a speech Usage: a word, speech, divine utterance, analogy. **3056** *lógos* (from [3004](#) /*légō*, "speaking to a conclusion") – a word, being the expression of a thought; a saying. [3056](#) /*lógos* ("word") is preeminently used of *Christ* (Jn 1:1), expressing the thoughts of the Father through the Spirit. [[3056](#) (*lógos*) is a common term (used 330 times in the NT) with regards to a person sharing a message (discourse, "communication-speech"). [3056](#) (*lógos*) is a broad term meaning "reasoning expressed by words."]

Here is an article that seeks to explain and illustrate the difference. [Two Important Greek Words in the Bible: Logos and Rhema \(biblesforamerica.org\)](https://blog.biblesforamerica.org/two-important-greek-words-in-the-bible-emlogosem-and-emrhemaem/) (<https://blog.biblesforamerica.org/two-important-greek-words-in-the-bible-emlogosem-and-emrhemaem/>)

2. **On the gospel of the kingdom**—Jesus "...went everywhere preaching the gospel of the kingdom." What does this even mean? What exactly did He teach, and why is this so relevant today? If it were that important, would that message not have continued through Acts? Well, in fact, the doctrine of the Kingdom does continue throughout Acts right up to the last chapter, with Paul teaching everything about the kingdom in Rome. One of the most important treatises ever written on the gospel of the kingdom was written in [The Unshakable Kingdom and the Unchanging Person: Jones, E. Stanley: 9781974132935: Amazon.com: Books](#) by E. Stanley Jones. His thesis begins by reminding us all that Jesus told us that the Kingdom does not come with observation, saying look here or look there,

because *the kingdom of God is within us*, just as Pastor Mark said. Without the Laws of the Kingdom of God working, our very bodies would cease to function. As it is written, He holds all things together by the Word of His Power. Understanding this is absolutely key to understanding the gospel.

For further study:

Take a moment each day this week to apply the SOAP (**S**cripture—Copy the scripture. / **O**bservation—Write what you see. / **A**pplication—What is God saying? / **P**ray—What is your response?) method to some of the scripture we looked at this week:

Monday: John 10:9-10
Tuesday: Revelation 1:17-18
Wednesday: Ezekiel 11:18-20
Thursday: Ezekiel 36:25-27
Friday: Jeremiah 31:32-34
Saturday: Isaiah 6:9-10
Sunday: Philippians 2:12-13