

Life Group Notes 7/23/2023
Pastor Mark Warren: The Kingdom Part 3

[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, 7/23. 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, if not otherwise noted from the ESV translation that Pastor Mark is using, 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 Enoch.](#)
2. [On having more faith.](#)
3. [On the "scribe who is trained in 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 opens with a verse from Hebrews 11. **Look up verses 5 and 6:** ⁵By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he was taken, he was commended as having pleased God. ⁶And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that He exists and that he rewards those who seek Him.

1. How does one seek God?
2. What reward does he seek?

Mark started out showing a paper with an X on one side and 0 on the other. All saw the same paper, but some saw the front and others the back.

1. Did all see the same thing?
2. Did all see the same piece of paper?
3. What made the perception different?
4. What is the point?
5. Can there be two sides? Are there always two sides?
6. Is it good to know both sides? Why? Can you have a preference?
7. Have you ever seen it happen where two people read the same parable and it says two different things to them? Do you have a testimony?

The Mustard Seed and the Leaven

31He put another parable before them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his field. **32**It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is larger than all the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.”

1. Read this parable again. Paraphrase it in your own words: What is the kingdom like?
2. What did the man do with that seed?
3. Is that man’s field “the world...” as in last week’s parable? If not, what is that man’s field...where will this seed grow?
4. Describe the seed. How much seed is necessary to grow adequate shelter for the birds?
5. Were you brought to Christ by nagging? Or by an idea that was planted, and that grew on its own as you meditated on the thought the idea inspired? What made that idea so compelling?
6. How is the “Word of God” a seed? What does it do to the mind?
7. Does the size of the seed matter?
8. What does matter?
9. Does the seed burst into a tree in one hour? Is it important that time is required? Why?
10. What are the “birds of the air?” Are nests a good thing or a bad thing? Why?
11. Pastor Mark says, “Sometimes we think the Christian life is about ‘me and Jesus,’ but what if it weren’t? What if the Christian life were about you and Jesus, and the people around you. Your co-workers and your family? Answer him.
12. What do you know of “safe trees for building nests in?” Do you know of a Christian people were so comfortable with, they enjoyed their company and felt safe?
13. What hope does the seed planted provide to others?

33He told them another parable. “The kingdom of heaven is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, till it was all leavened.”

1. Read this parable again. Paraphrase it in your own words: What is the kingdom like?
2. Who is the woman? What is the flour? What are the three measures of flour? Why three? (I’m just asking...don’t get too distracted. Details are fun and instructive sometimes—The scribe)
3. Besides adding the leaven, what else does the woman have to do to the flour for the lump to be leavened?
4. What happens when the kingdom sits in the “flour?” Is it automatic?
5. What must she not do? What happens if she kneads the flour every five minutes?

6. How much nagging does it take to raise a lump of dough? How much warmth? Look up Hebrews 11:1 [1](#)Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. [2](#)For by it the people of old received their commendation. [3](#)By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.

1. What is “assurance?”
2. Where does the hope come from? How does the Word of God provide hope?
3. How does that hope become assurance?
4. How does that hope become actual evidence? Which is stronger: assurance or evidence?
5. According to this passage, how was the universe created? Was faith involved?
6. What assurance did God have that His Word would come to pass as He hoped?
7. What was God’s hope in creating the universe? Have you ever considered that you are God’s hope, and you are the joy God set before Christ, that enabled Him to endure the cross?
8. How does the Promise of God become leaven? What happens to you when you hear a promise from someone you trust?
9. Describe the impact of the hope Pastor Mark is describing in his messages.
10. Pastor Mark says, “The Kingdom of God is meant to expand.” Look up Isaiah 9: [6](#)For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government will be upon His shoulders. And He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. [7](#)Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish and sustain it with justice and righteousness from that time and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of Hosts will accomplish this. To what extent is the kingdom “meant to expand?” What are the limits? What can prevent the kingdom’s expansion? What happens when the Kingdom of God expands?
11. How is this like leaven?
12. What is the evidence of the Kingdom of God in you? What are you becoming more aware of each day?

Prophecy and Parables

[34](#)All these things Jesus said to the crowds in parables; indeed, he said nothing to them without a parable. [35](#)This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet:

“I will open my mouth in parables;
I will utter what has been hidden since the foundation of the world.”

1. Explain.
2. How does understanding the parables lead to understanding what has been hidden since the foundation of the world?
3. Look up Proverbs 1:1-7 [1](#)*The proverbs of Solomon, son of David, king of Israel: [2](#)To know wisdom and instruction, to understand words of insight, [3](#)to receive instruction in wise dealing, in righteousness, justice, and equity; [4](#)to give prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the youth—[5](#)Let the wise hear and increase in learning, and the one who understands obtain guidance, [6](#)to understand a proverb and a saying, the words of the wise and their riddles. [7](#)The fear of the LORD is the*

*beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction. **Now answer question two above. How does one come to an understanding? Where does one start?***

The Parable of the Hidden Treasure

44“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

1. Read this parable again. Paraphrase it in your own words: What is the kingdom like?
2. Who is the man who found this hidden treasure? What were you seeking when you found it?
3. Pastor Mark says the Kingdom is here and now, not something that is far off. How does that help?
4. How is the treasure hidden?
5. Why were you so filled with joy when you came upon the kingdom?
6. Why did you bury the treasure again?
7. Why would anyone go buy the field, and not just take the treasure with them? (Remember what Pastor Mark said above. “The Kingdom of God is meant to expand.”)
8. Why is the “field” all about the here and now, as Mark points out, and not about the far-off future?
9. What treasure do you know of that can be stored dead on a shelf and *must* be buried before it can impart life and value, and will eventually grow to need an entire field if it is well husbanded? Why is this question more easily answered by a farmer?
10. What does the man foresee when he goes and buys the whole field?
11. Pastor Mark asks, “What if the treasure is you?” Answer him. When reading the parable, does everyone in your group see the same thing?

The Parable of the Pearl of Great Value

45“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, **46**who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

1. Read this parable again. Paraphrase it in your own words: Who is the kingdom like? Be careful. Read this as if you are reading for the first time.
2. Why is the merchant/kingdom in search of pearls? What do merchants do?
3. If the kingdom is the merchant...who is the pearl of great value? How much have you been loved?
4. If you are the pearl, when did the kingdom ever sell all it had to buy you, that is, that pearl?
5. Recite John 3:16. To what extent does God love pearls? What value do they have to Him?
6. Look up James 4: **7**Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. **8**Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. **9**Grieve, mourn, and weep. Turn your laughter to mourning, and your joy to gloom. **10**Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will exalt you. Look again at verse 8. How does this promise paraphrase the two parables above?
7. What happens to the lump of flour if you apply James’ advice?
8. Pastor Mark expands on this idea: When you realize that you are that great pearl, how does that change your perspective on those who are around you?

9. How many of them, like you, are also that great pearl?
10. Describe what is Jesus doing on their behalf. Look up 2 Chronicles 16:9. [9For the eyes of the LORD roam to and fro over all the earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose hearts are fully devoted to Him.](#) What does the prophet Hanani tell King Asa that the “merchant” is looking for? What does He do when He finds that pearl?
11. How does this add up to a relationship, as Pastor Mark and as James describe it, that shows Jesus pursuing us in love as we are pursuing Him?
12. Have you ever read the *Song of Solomon*? What is that about? Who is pursuing whom?
13. How do love relationships grow? Can you describe steps? Can you describe impediments to love?

Pastor Mark tells the story of what he heard this morning of a young man, a Christian in school and active in sports, who had a friend who was not a Christian and not from a Christian home. The Christian behaved differently than the others and was salt and light in a difficult environment. Each went on to college, and the non-Christian friend came to Jesus in college and accredited his conversion to his high school friend. Not only did he give his life to the Lord, got baptized and invited his friend to the baptism. Later that summer, the Christian got an urgent message to call his friend. Apparently, this newly baptized convert had been invited to a lantern lighting ceremony. On his lantern, he had written “faith/family,” reflecting on what had become so meaningful to him. Each was asked to come up and say what they had written on their lantern. A few did. The young man found himself on the platform and shared, “This is what God has done in my life. I was filled with depression, anxiety and hopelessness. I found Jesus. His life grew in me, and I found hope that I had never known.” At the end of this “non-Christian” event, people came up to him and said, “Tell me more.”

1. How does this illustrate how seeds get planted?
2. How does this illustrate how seeds grow?
3. How does this illustrate how yeast in three measures of flour leaven the whole?
4. What happens to a seed that is never planted? What happens if yeast stays on the shelf?
5. What is our obligation to the seed if we want to enjoy fruit? Describe the steps to eating apple pie when you only have one seed. If you want to feed the neighborhood, why must you purchase the whole field?

The Follow-up Application

1. Use the [SOAP journal studies](#) below throughout the week.
2. Look for evidence of the Kingdom of God in your life around you this week. Write down instances and incidents that suggest God's active role.
3. Do a fruit inventory. Write down the fruit of the spirit from Galatians 5:22-23, and grade yourself, praying over each for an increase.
4. Draw closer to God this week and describe how you do this and describe what happens, good or bad.

Take the time to pray.

Scribes Notes:

1. **On Enoch**—Enoch was the seventh generation from Adam, found in the fifth chapter of the book of Genesis. We do not know much of him, but the timeline is at least clear. His was the shortest lifespan, just 365 years, because he was the first in recorded history to be taken up to God without passing through death. The only other hero to do so was Elijah, witnessed by Elisha. He was born roughly one thousand years before the flood, and he named his firstborn son Methuselah, meaning “man of the javelin/the one who brings the spear/at his death the end comes.” Methuselah was the longest-lived pre-flood patriarch, and indeed, the flood came shortly after Methuselah's death. We know little of Enoch, although two NT authors, Peter and Jude, quote sayings taken from *The Book of Enoch* and ascribe the quotes to him. Thanks to Hebrews, we know that he pleased God, and he could not have done that without faith. Think of people who encountered Jesus in the gospels whose faith pleased Him and he commented on their faith. What did they have? What did they receive? *The Book of Enoch* describes the life and culture of the antediluvian (pre-flood) world and depicts details of the sins of the “sons of god,” also called Watchers, as they were in Daniel, who mated with the daughters of man. Scholars set the authorship of *Enoch* to the intertestamental period after Daniel's book was written, and call it “pseudepigraphic,” meaning the author used a borrowed name. Notwithstanding, the *Book of Enoch* was widely read, studied, and quoted from in Jesus' days, and clearly carried acknowledged authority.
2. **On having more faith**—The parable of the mustard seed demonstrates that faith cannot be quantified, as in, “I have a bucket of faith.” Paul says in Romans 10, “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing [comes] from the Word of God.” The ideas of God are ingrafted in the Word. The more you hear, the more you are able to think on, and the more your ideas grow into His ideas, the stronger your faith becomes. Faith, like leaven and seed, are nothing that can be produced by effort. The Word of Promise is written like seed on the shelf. Faith latches on to a written promise and allows confidence in that promise to do its thing in the mind and heart until the hope inspired by that promise becomes the substance of its fulfillment. More faith, then is simply acquired when one believes more promises.
3. **On the scribe instructed in the kingdom**—Matthew 13:52 says this of the well-instructed scribe: 52And he said to them, “**Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house, who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.**” Think of the best teachings you've ever experienced. How much was review, that is, things “old?” How much deliberately deepened and added to the

knowledge you already had, things “new,” and surprised you with the discovery that there was more to be learned? Have you ever felt in a classroom the smugness that you knew what the teacher was teaching, and then became surprised at how much more there was to learn? How did that discovery enhance your enjoyment of the class?

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: Matthew 13:31-32
Tuesday: Hebrews 11:1-3
Wednesday: Matthew 13:44-46
Thursday: Hebrews 11:5-6
Friday: 2 Chronicles 16:9
Saturday: Isaiah 9:6-7
Sunday: Galatians 5:22-24

(Scribe's note: I have been told that the SOAP method is most effective when limited to two to four verses. Study is most effective when context is clear. At times, I might include more verses for the purpose of clarity and context. You are free to take the verses that speak to you and respond in the context of that verse. As with the notes themselves, this task is to be a joy for you. If at any point you feel you are not "doing it correctly," your grade has already been determined. You ARE A+ because you are reading this.)