

BRIARCLIFF CHURCH

Small Group Study Guide: Mark

Week of November 4th (Week 12)

Mark 4:21-34



Sermon Overview

Parables were the public persona of Jesus the teacher. By means of graphic images from everyday life, Jesus teased, tantalized and tested his audiences, inviting them to an insider experience of the kingdom and of fellowship with himself.

In Mark 4:21-34, Jesus is again teaching in a crowd of people. In this section, Jesus utilizes three parables: one household parable (regarding a lamp), and two agricultural parables (regarding seeds) to illustrate his identity (as the lamp) and the puzzling nature of the kingdom of God.

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Getting Started

1. Jesus consistently addresses crowds of people in parables that, at times, can seem more confusing than instructive. Why does Jesus choose to reveal his identity and coming kingdom in this partially veiled way?

Starting with God

2. Reread the first parable in Mark 4:21-25. Beds and bowls/baskets were common household items capable of masking a lamp, another common item. Mark's original readers would have considered it as foolish to hide your only source of light. Therefore, the point of Jesus' parable has to do with the wisdom of what we do with "the light." What is Jesus talking about?

3. Read 2 Samuel 22:26-31. The Jewish listeners would have recognized the connection between Jesus' parable and this Old Testament reference (as well as several OT references to God being like a lamp). How does this help deepen the meaning of Jesus' teaching?

Living God's Word

4. The first parable ends with the statement, " ... With the measure you use, it will be measured to you, and still more will be added to you. For to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away" (vv. 24-25). This can be a challenging statement to understand. What is Jesus telling us about his identity and his kingdom?
5. Mark 4:26-32 includes two parables about the kingdom of God. Both parables are stories of surprise. What is surprising about the parable of the seed growing in vv. 26-29, and in the parable of the mustard seed in vv. 30-32?

Prayer

*Father God,
Thank you for giving me ears to hear your liberating message of hope and renewal. Please continue to shape my heart in a way that values walking with Jesus more than anything else. Give me the wisdom and peace to point others to the hope found in Jesus through the way I live, act and believe.
Amen.*