

“And he said, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.” -Mark 4:9

Find a quiet place to begin. Take a few deep breaths. Ball your hands up into a fist and think about all of the frustrations, irritations, and worries of the day. Now take a long slow breath. As you release your fists, ask God to take away your anxiety and frustration of the day, and open your heart and mind to the study of his word.

Read Mark 4:1-9

1. Where was Jesus when he began to teach? Who was listening to him?
2. What happens in the parable/story Jesus tells? What do you think he is alluding to?

Read Mark 4:10-20

1. Who was with Jesus as he begins to explain the parable?
2. Jesus says that the secrets of the kingdom have been given to someone. Who was Jesus referring to? What is the secret?
3. Look up Isaiah 6:9. Why might Jesus use this line in Mark 4:12?
4. Who is the sower from Jesus explanation of the parable?
5. What do the seeds represent in the parable?
6. What are the soils/circumstances that the seeds are placed in to meant to represent?
7. What is the outcome for the seeds grown in good soil?
8. What connection is Jesus trying to help his disciples and followers understand from this parable?
9. Honestly take a moment and assess yourself. What soil/circumstance do you believe you are in?

Read Mark 4:21-25

1. What does Jesus say in this passage? (vs. 23 & 24)
2. What does he mean by this?

Read Mark 4:26-29

1. Jesus uses a metaphor to explain what the Kingdom of God is like. What metaphor does he choose?
2. If you've ever kept a small garden, when you finally see mature fruit, it is a great thrill for you to go out there and cut off your tomatoes, or pick your cucumbers, etc. In this

passage, Jesus talks about grain being ripe and ready for harvest. What image does this invoke in your mind about the kingdom of God?

3. Is Jesus saying the Kingdom of God has arrived? What does he mean by it?

Read Mark 4:30-34

1. In this passage, Jesus compares the Kingdom of God to something. What does he compare it to?
2. What is the outcome of the planting of a mustard seed?
3. What does this tell us about the Kingdom of God? What is this telling us about Jesus ministry so far? (hint. It may seem small right now, but..)

Read Mark 4:35-41

1. What did Jesus do after he finished teaching all the parables by the sea? Who went with him?
2. What happened while he was sleeping?
3. How did those that were with Jesus respond to the terrible storm?
4. What does Jesus do?
5. What new area of life does Jesus have authority over?
6. How do those that were with him respond? What do they feel?
7. If you were on a boat that was getting ready to sink, and a man calmed the waves by speaking, how do you think you would have responded personally had you witnessed this miraculous event?

Defining the "Bible-y" Words:

Parable: The window by which we look into God's Truth. Also a parable is a story used to illustrate a spiritual lesson, often used by Jesus as he teaches about the Kingdom of God.

Kingdom of God: The realm that contains the rule and reign of God and Jesus Christ. Jesus will continually define the Kingdom of God as we go along in Mark, but for now we know that the Kingdom of God is the place where God's desire for human flourishing is accomplished. The Kingdom of God also encompasses the people who believe in God and believe Jesus' message about the way humans were meant to live- first in relationship with him and then with the rest of humanity. The Kingdom of God is different from human kingdoms because it has no definite

physical boundaries no does it have a limited reign in the course of history.. The Kingdom encompasses all places and all peoples who are willing to submit to God's rule and reign.