

Unexpected Beginnings

August 23, 2020



Reading/Group Discussion

Begin with prayer

As you begin your gathering, designate someone to pray that the Holy Spirit would lead and guide your time together. Before they do so, spend a few moments together in prayerful silence. Then, after a few seconds of quiet and centering, have the specified person pray for the group.

Read this overview

During this 13-week series, we are going to be opening up the Book of Mark together to study the life of Jesus—The Unexpected King. During this series, we will gain a better understanding of who Jesus is and what it really means to be his disciple.

This past weekend Dan preached through Mark 4.

Scripture + Discussion

The goal of your discussion in this week is to discuss (1) how people respond to the kingdom of God and (2) the nature of the kingdom of God both generally and personally.

It's important to note here that in your discussions, many folks will want to answer the questions below in a general, non-personal way. During this discussion, we want to dig deeper and help people think about the ways in which God is reigning in their own hearts and if God's kingdom is growing in their own lives.

Take turns reading all the way through **Mark 4:1-34**.

Here are a few questions to guide this time and hit on the objectives listed above:

- How did this sermon/chapter deepen your faith? How did it challenge you?
- In this sermon and in Mark 4, Jesus tells us about four soils, each representing a different response to the gospel. Growing up, which soil best represented your life? Which soil best represents where you are now? Explain.

- What area(s) of your heart need to be dug up and weeded out? What rocks are still there? What weeds?
- In this sermon, Dan said, “How you respond to Jesus and his teaching reveals the condition of your heart.” Based off this statement, how would you describe the condition of your heart right now?
- Just as different soils can be treated and changed, so too, by God’s grace, can the soil of our hearts change. If you were to add something or change something about the soil of your heart right now, what would it be? Why?
- Jesus describes how we come to him when he says, “With the measure you use, it will be measured to you.” Dan explained this to mean whatever size container we ask Jesus to fill in our hearts and lives, he will fill it to the brim (and even allow it to overflow). What size container are you bringing to Jesus these days? A small bottlecap? A cup? A bucket? A pool? What difference might there be in your life if you changed the size of the measure you bring before Jesus?
- How have you seen the kingdom of God grow and unexpectedly take over in your own heart or in the world lately? What areas of your heart do you think the kingdom still has some ground to cover? What areas of our world do you think the kingdom still has some ground to cover?
- What in one practical next step you are going to pursue as a result of this sermon or this discussion?

Accountability

Take some time again this week to split your group into smaller or gendered groups and share your answers to the questions below. Be sure to follow up on anything that was shared last week.

- What has your time in God’s word and prayer been like this week?
- What have you learned from Jesus this week?
- Have you consistently reflected the love of Christ to those in your life this week (such as your spouse, children, or co-workers)?
- Where have you wrestled with temptation this week?
- What sins do you need to confess right now?
- Have you been 100% honest?

Finish with prayer

You might designate someone in your group to write down everyone’s prayer requests and then send them to the whole group for everyone to be praying about through the week.

- What is on your heart that you need prayer for?
- Who in your life needs prayer?

Have someone close your time together by interceding for the requests that were shared.