



Groups

Thanks for checking out our sermon-based Study Guides!

If you've never used our Study Guides before, you'll find some basic instructions towards the end of the document.

- ☐ These study guides will be written by thoughtful and experienced Life Group Leaders.
- ☐ Use these guides as a head-start in your own preparation as the needs and culture is different from each group.

NEW THIS YEAR:

As we enter this new season at Grace Chapel in search for the next Senior Pastor, we invite you to consider the significance of this moment and to incorporate a time of prayer for the search.

Outline

- I. Introduction and Main Scripture Readings
- II. Group Discussion Questions
- III. Prayer for Senior Pastor Search
- IV. The Journey Resources
- V. Support for the Leader

How to Use These Study Guides:

1. **Before the meeting:** Consider sending out the Scripture passage to your group members ahead of time.
2. **Check In:** Begin each meeting with a short time checking in with one another.
3. **Read Scripture:** You may want to begin the discussion by reading the Scripture passage together out loud, or by summarizing the passage if everyone has read it ahead of time.
4. **Ask Questions:** Don't feel like you need to discuss every question included in the Study Guide. Pick one or two to start with and see how the conversation flows.
5. **End with Prayer:** Be sure to set aside time for sharing prayer requests and praying together.

If your group meets over Zoom:

- ☐ Expect to do more overt facilitating over Zoom than you would in person. Feel free to call on people to invite them to share.
- ☐ Be sensitive to attention spans over zoom. Keep meetings shorter than they would be in person.

Group Leader Support:

- ☐ Please reach out to your Campus Pastor if you have any questions about leading your group or concerns about your group dynamic.
- ☐ If you have questions about or feedback on the Study Guides, please reach out to Pastor [Tim Ghali](#) or [Grace Lee](#) from the Group Life team.

LIFE GROUP STUDY GUIDE

for Sermon given on November 12, 2023

by Pastor Bryan Wilkerson

YOU GET WHAT YOU GIVE – Mark 4:1-32**I. Introduction**

Coming out of Global Awareness Week, I hope that many of you were able to hear updates from our visiting partners and learn various ways that you can support their ministries. Today we begin a new series, *Seeds of Grace*, where we will be exploring what Scripture has to say about finances and stewardship. Today we'll get the big picture of why money is so important to our souls and to the Kingdom of God. Next week, your campus pastors will be speaking very practically and personally about how to become a better steward and a more generous person. And in two weeks, on Thanksgiving weekend, we'll conclude the series by celebrating Grace Chapel's 75th anniversary, and by inviting every one of us to take a next step on our generosity journeys.

Questions: What kind of sower do you want to be? The kind who sows generously, joyfully, almost recklessly? Or the kind who sows sparingly, fearfully, stingily?

Bottom Line: Seeds of grace are sown generously, grow mysteriously, and bear fruit

Let's begin in prayer before we begin reading and discussing our text.

Main Scripture Readings:Mark 4:1-32

⁴ Again Jesus began to teach by the lake. The crowd that gathered around him was so large that he got into a boat and sat in it out on the lake, while all the people were along the shore at the water's edge. ² He taught them many things by parables, and in his teaching said: ³ "Listen! A farmer went out to sow his seed. ⁴ As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. ⁵ Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. ⁶ But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. ⁷ Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants, so that they did not bear grain. ⁸ Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up, grew and produced a crop, some multiplying thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times."

⁹ Then Jesus said, "Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear."

¹⁰ When he was alone, the Twelve and the others around him asked him about the parables. ¹¹ He told them, "The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables ¹² so that,

"they may be ever seeing but never perceiving,
and ever hearing but never understanding;
otherwise they might turn and be forgiven!"

¹³ Then Jesus said to them, "Don't you understand this parable? How then will you understand any parable? ¹⁴ The farmer sows the word. ¹⁵ Some people are like seed along the path, where the word is sown. As soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them. ¹⁶ Others, like seed sown on rocky places, hear the word and at once receive it with joy. ¹⁷ But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. ¹⁸ Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; ¹⁹ but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful. ²⁰ Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop—some thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times what was sown."

²¹ He said to them, "Do you bring in a lamp to put it under a bowl or a bed? Instead, don't you put it on its stand? ²² For whatever is hidden is meant to be disclosed, and whatever is concealed is meant to be brought out into the open. ²³ If anyone has ears to hear, let them hear."

²⁴ "Consider carefully what you hear," he continued. "With the measure you use, it will be measured to you—and even more. ²⁵ Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them."

²⁶ He also said, "This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. ²⁷ Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he

does not know how. ²⁸ All by itself the soil produces grain—first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. ²⁹ As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come.”

³⁰ Again he said, “What shall we say the kingdom of God is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it? ³¹ It is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds on earth. ³² Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds can perch in its shade.”

Matthew 6:21-24

²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

²² “The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light. ²³ But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

²⁴ “No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.

Luke 6:38

³⁸ Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”

II. **Group Discussion Questions:**

1. Pastor Bryan describes parables as “earthly stories with heavenly meanings... these [stories] teach us something true about how things work in the Kingdom of God.”

In the parable of the sower, the farmer spreads his seed, freely, generously, almost recklessly. Jesus describes these seeds as the WORD of the gospel. Pastor Bryan makes the case that these seeds could represent ANY gospel activity or effort – words or actions.

- Share about one incident where someone sowed the Gospel into your life, in word or deed. What is one fruit that resulted in your life?
2. Pastor Bryan calls to attention that gospel seeds need to be sown GENEROUSLY. He states, “you can’t be stingy when you’re sowing seed, because you can’t predict which seeds will make it and which ones won’t.”
 - Take time to reflect the following question: how has God been generously sowing into your life?
 - Why do people sow sparingly? What prevents people/you from sowing generously? What is God revealing to you about Himself and you?
 - In response to God’s generosity and grace towards you, what can generous sowing look like for your personal situation?
 3. Pastor Bryan preaches that “seeds of grace grow mysteriously... small gifts, over time, can bear abundant fruit.”
 - Do you have a testimony to share where your small gift over time bore fruit? Have you witnessed or learned a story that illustrates this mysterious truth?
 4. With the upcoming holidays, you might hear the common expression, “*It is better to give than receive.*”

In concluding today’s group session, take time to give thanks to God for His grace, gospel, and generosity poured out for you. Consider praying together and asking God how He is calling you to “sow seeds of grace generously” in this season.

Take Home Message: 2Corinthians 9:6-8

⁶Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. ⁷Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

Let’s Pray

III. Prayer for Senior Pastor Search

During this next ministry year as we navigate transitions, we invite you to secure time during your life group to pray over the search process. Click [here](#) to access the full resource of the prayer guide.

Prayers for Preparation of the heart

- ☐ Pray for God to reveal to you the condition of your soul or the work of God's Spirit within you, as you consider your feelings about the Senior Pastor search process.
- ☐ Prayer is not just an opportunity to make requests from God, but to listen to what God might want for us during this season of transition. Pause and listen for any invitation from God that he is asking you to enter into.

Prayers for the Purposes of God

- ☐ Pray that God will use the people of Grace Chapel in the fulfilling of his mission to further the Gospel message and for us to be people of peace and healing in a broken world.

Prayers for the People of Grace

- ☐ Pray that Grace Chapel will seek the Lord as we continue our vision to be a vibrant, growing, multicultural community of seekers and believers, discovering life with God for the good of the world. Pray that we will continue with our mission to make and mobilize more disciples for Jesus Christ in Greater Boston and beyond.

Prayers for the Person God's calling

- ☐ Pray that they will have a passion to continue the work the Lord is doing at Grace Chapel and that they will be excited about the opportunities here.
- ☐ Pray that the new pastor will have a clear vision for how to minister to the people of Grace Chapel and the surrounding community.

Prayers for Discernment

- ☐ Pray for God's clear direction in how resumes are examined and interviews conducted.
- ☐ Ask God to bring the right person to the attention of the committee.
- ☐ Pray for the Search Committee to have God's wisdom in all the questions and information they share with the prospective pastor.

IV. The Journey



We're all on a journey. Where is yours taking you?

The beauty of the way of Jesus is that it's not just good for us, it is good for the world around us. But that kind of beautiful life doesn't come from just hearing the words of Jesus. It comes from putting them into practice.

Three kinds of practice, actually:

- ☐ The **with-God life** of our personal habits and routines;
- ☐ The **with-others life** of our genuine and life-changing relationships; and
- ☐ The **for-the-world life** that makes an impact beyond our immediate homes and families, into our communities and beyond.

Growing as disciples of Jesus will make a Kingdom difference in our world and a transformative difference in our lives as believers and as a group. And these resources are helpful in identifying the next steps for our journeys.

Launching by the end of September: The newly, revised Discipleship Planning Tool

We invite your group to [take the assessment](#) and to spend a session to share about the practice and perspective you chose to focus on for the next three months.

V. Support for the Leader

These Teaching Points are provided to help the group leader make connections from the message to their group with both insights from the Biblical text and opportunities in the life of our church.

Teaching Points:

- ☐ Parables are earthly stories with heavenly meanings
- ☐ Gospel seeds, whether words or deeds, need to be sown generously
- ☐ You can't be stingy when you are sowing seed because you can't predict which seeds will make it and which ones won't
- ☐ Thousands of seeds are being sown every week –seeds of grace. And they are made possible by the thousands of financial gifts that come in every week
- ☐ Every dollar given to God's work through Grace is like a seed planted in the ground, that over time, can bear remarkable fruit
- ☐ The way you give to God and others is the way God and others will give to you
- ☐ The measure we use when we give to others, is the measure that will be used when joy, and contentment, and gratitude, and love are given to us