

Life Group Notes

Lessons in Language & the Kingdom of God

'What is the Kingdom of God like? What shall I compare it to?'
Luke 13:18

To begin

- Share some examples of seeds that grow into something that is massively bigger than the seed. What does this tell you about the Creator of the seeds?

Read Luke 12:18-21

Questions for discussion

1. The mustard seed is a small black seed that can grow into a tree large enough for the birds to perch in its branches. In Ezekiel 31:1-9, the tree is a symbol of empire in which birds can find protection. How does the Kingdom of God differ from the empires of men?
2. If the birds are representative of people, what does it mean for them to perch in the branches of the tree? How does this encourage you? [NB Leaders: you could speak about the wide variety of birds that there are, and compare this with the wide variety of people]
3. In his sermon, Tim spoke of how Mark, Matthew and Luke differ slightly in their parables of the Mustard Seed. Luke realises that his Roman readers will not plant their seeds in a field (as in Palestine), but in a garden. In this way, he adapts the story to relate to his readers. How might we share the gospel with our friends/family/colleagues in ways to which they relate?
4. The parable of the Mustard Seed speaks to us of increase in the Kingdom of God. How can we partner with God in bringing increase – personally and as a church?
5. In Luke 12:1, Jesus warns his disciples to 'be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy'. How does such yeast affect society? What contemporary examples can you think of?
6. How does the yeast of the Kingdom differ from the yeast of the Pharisees (see also Matthew 16:12)?
7. How can followers of Jesus bring the influence of the Kingdom of God to our world today? Where should we be involved?
8. How does it encourage you that from the small beginnings of the mustard seed and the yeast comes amazing increase and influence? Encourage one another by sharing examples in your life, our church and our world that you have known this to happen!

To Close

With which people do you long to share the gospel and see his increase as they believe and enter the Kingdom? Where do you yearn for God's influence to be made known? Pray for these people and these things.

This is the prayer used by Tim on Sunday. It is based on a song by Andy Flanagan (www.andyflan.com):

Father God, thank you that you invite us to partner with you to see your Kingdom come.

We are blessed to bless a world in pieces. We are loved to love where love is not. We are changed to be the change you promised. We are freed to be your hands, O God.

Show us who to bless, where to love, how to change that we might be your hands and your voice in the power of your Holy Spirit. Amen.

Tim Edworthy
18/11/17

NB Another example of Luke's attention to language so that he engages his readers: unlike the other gospels, he doesn't use the Aramaic word 'rabbi' for Jesus. He knows it will mean little to them. Instead, he settles for 'Teacher' to avoid an unnecessary barrier to their understanding.