



STORIES: The Greatest Treasure (Parable of The Treasure and the Pearl)

Pastor Derek Sanford

May 6, 2018

Life Group Discussion Questions:

1. Thinking back on this week's sermon, was there a particular point or passage that challenged you, confused you, or caught your attention?
2. Read **Matthew 13:44-46**. How are the two parables similar and how are they different?
3. For a deeper understanding of the Kingdom of God, consider sharing this Bible Project video from Right Now Media with your group: [Gospel of the Kingdom](#). (To set up a RNM account, contact sarah@whoisgrace.com)
4. Many Christians would say that they recognize the infinite worth of the Kingdom, and they would say that Jesus is Lord in their lives. However, each of us struggles with "selling everything we own", turning every aspect of our lives over to the Lord. Would any group member be willing to share an area where it is difficult to come fully under the Lordship of Jesus?
5. Both the treasure and the pearl are hidden. Why is it that the greatest treasure, the Kingdom of God, is sometimes hard to find? Read **Matthew 7:13-14** and **Jeremiah 29:13** and **Psalms 51:17**.
6. Pastor Derek recommends creating a balance sheet or profit and loss table measuring the costs of following Jesus vs. the rewards of a life under the Lordship of Christ. Take some time now to discuss these.
7. In the time remaining, discuss the value and impact of the parables of Jesus. Do you have a favorite, one that has been most meaningful and instructive to you?

Next Steps: Within your group, create a list of actions that we can take to help us to move toward "selling everything we own". For example: reading scriptures from your chair

Prayer Thought: Lord, help us to gain a clear picture of the value of a life lived fully under your Lordship. Help us to recognize the relatively small price you ask us to pay in order to receive your blessings through eternity. Lord, we ask that your Holy Spirit would guide us, teach us and encourage us as we seek to grow stronger in our faith. Amen



STORIES: Don't Give Up! (The Parable of the Persistent Widow)

Sarah Burrtt

May 13, 2018

Life Group Discussion Questions:

1. Thinking back on this week's sermon, was there a particular point or passage that challenged you, confused you, or caught your attention?
2. **Read Luke 18:1-8 and Matthew 7:7-11.** Why did Jesus tell this parable? What effect did the widow's persistence have on the judge? How does God's character differ from that of the judge in the parable? How should that affect our prayer life?
3. **Read Matthew 6:7-13.** What does Jesus teach His disciples to pray for in this model prayer? Why do you think He used the plural pronouns 'us' and 'our'? How can we practice praying more for our communal needs and not just our individual needs?
4. **Read Colossians 4:2; 1 Timothy 2:1,2; 1 Thessalonians 5:17.** Paul talks in these verses about intensity and consistency in prayer. As a group, how can you encourage and remind one another to develop more consistency in the area of prayer?
5. **Read John 14:13, 14; John 15:7, 16; John 16:23, 24, 26 and James 4:2, 3.** Why does Jesus keep repeating the theme of asking and receiving? What does it mean to ask "in My name"? What does James say about why our prayers may not be answered?
6. **Read Revelation 5:8 and 8:5-8.** Every one of our prayers of faith is precious to God—whether we see an answer or not. If possible, watch this short video from John Piper together – "Your Prayers Please God" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u-tG6xGIWIA> Since our prayers have so much value to God, how can we, as a group, learn to value prayer more?

Next Steps: a) Decide as a group one specific way you will make prayer a priority

b) Individually decide on at least one thing you are willing to commit to pray for persistently. If possible, share this with your group and commit to pray together.

Prayer Thought: Use the ACTS model to pray as a group. First ADORE and praise God for how He loves us. Then CONFESS the ways you have not made prayer a priority in your life. THANK Him for faithfully hearing and answering every prayer (in His time and in His way for our good) and then SHARE YOUR NEEDS and in Jesus' name ask God to do in your life and the lives of others what only He can do.



STORIES: How's Your Heart (The Parable of the Sower)

Preacher: Derek

Date: May 20, 2018

Life Group Discussion Questions:

1. Thinking back on this week's sermon, was there a particular point or passage that challenged you, confused you, or caught your attention?
2. Have you ever tried to tell someone something but they refused to listen? What made them resistant to your message?
3. Read **Matthew 13:1-23**.
4. Consider viewing this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MRehBbBTxbQ>
5. Review the key points of the sermon. Identify some of the words that are repeated throughout the passage. Discuss the significance of those words in the passage.
6. Have group members identify times in their lives when their openness to the Word could have been called "hard soil." During the sermon we were told that a hard heart can be caused by bitterness, resentment, disappointment and cynicism. Were any of these a contributor to the times of hard soil?
7. Some respond to God with quick growth but suddenly growth stops. Respond to the following statement, "The Christian life is a marathon and not a sprint." What does that look like in a believer's everyday life to be in a "marathon?"
8. In the parable we identified the thorns as clutter. Have group members identify the clutter or meaningless pursuits that try to choke their spiritual life. What are they doing to remove that clutter from their life?

Next Steps:

- Share what environment for growth they are in right now (sun, rain, dryness or plowing).
- Have the group discuss how they can help provide an environment for the gospel to grow/reproduce in each other's lives?

Prayer Thought:

- **ADORATION:** Praise God for being the sower of the Word.
- **CONFESSION:** Confess the clutter that is choking the full impact of God in our lives.
- **THANKSGIVING:** Thank the Lord for how wonderfully he has blessed Grace Church in the past.
- **SUPPLICATION:** Ask God to use your group to help prepare the people of your community to have hear the message of the gospel. Express our desire to

Memory Verse: Proverbs 4:23 *Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.*



STORIES: The Surprising Kindness of God (Parable of the Laborer's in the Vineyard)

Live at all Sites

May 27, 2018

Life Group Discussion Questions:

1. Thinking back on this week's sermon, was there a particular point or passage that challenged you, confused you, or caught your attention?
2. Read **Matthew 19:16** through **20:34**.
3. What elements in the context of these teachings help to orient us to Jesus' intended message in this parable? What does the content of **19:30** suggest?
4. Look again at **Matthew 20:1-16**. How do you think the disciples reacted to the vineyard owner's actions towards the laborer's? How do you respond? Are his actions *fair*? To what extent does the point of a parable turn on some unexpected action of a key character (consider the action of the father in the parable of "The Prodigal Son")?
5. In what ways does this parable about vineyard workers help us understand an essential principle of Kingdom life? Who is identified as the vineyard owner and what are we learn about him from this parable? Is this important for us today? Why?
6. What does the expression "the last will be first and the first will be last" mean in the light of this parable? How does this principle operate in your life and your relationship with God?
7. Does the teaching of this parable have any relevance today to the way we do church? What would be its application?
8. What is the primary blessing of kingdom life? Are you satisfied with that?

Next Steps:

- Do something for someone who (in your opinion) doesn't deserve it.
- Take it even further and do this in each of the four circles of our Transform 1:8 Vision: Your Relationships, Your Site, Your City, Your World

Prayer Thought:

Have everybody share their Next Step and pray for each other in the execution of it.