

EXPOSED!!

SERMON DISCUSSION NOTES FROM 7/25/21

SERMON SUMMARY

It's safe to say that none of us likes to be exposed. One reason is we naturally don't like the truth of where we really are—we all know how far we fall short from God's standard. But most of the time, exposure is a gift we must cherish. When our faults are exposed, we can face them head on, deal with them, and see growth in the areas of struggle. In Mark 4:1-20 Jesus gives a parable that hits to the core of our hearts. He doesn't hold any punches as He seeks to reveal what's really there. As we engage with this beautiful passage, we are left with one key question, where do I stand in this story? How do I respond to God's Word? Let's dive in this together.

Key Passage: Mark 4:1-20

Be sure to read this Scripture passage together before you proceed to the "Grow" section of our study.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

KNOW—Spend some time finding out how everyone's week has gone. *The questions in this section provide a guide for connectivity; feel free to approach this part of your group time organically over a meal or "connection" activity or with questions appropriate to your context.*

What is one way God is challenging you to trust Him this week?

What are some ways you have experienced God answering your prayers lately?

Who in your life is in need of prayer, physical help, or emotional encouragement right now?

GROW—Grow in the Lord as you engage His Word together.

Jesus calls for us to "listen" and "hear." Why are these two critical words important for the hearer?

Why did Jesus use parables to communicate with His followers?

Can you describe a time when you personally witnessed someone trapped in unbelief?

Can you describe a time where you personally witnessed the power of the Holy Spirit opening the eyes to an unbelieving heart?

Jesus carefully lays out four types of hearts in response to the Word going forth. Together, let's identify the four types of responses Jesus identifies.

How do we know when it is Satan who is hindering us from responding to God's Word and when it is our own sinful desires that hold us down?

Why do people sometimes respond joyfully to God's Word and then soon fall away when things get tough? Does this happen at emotional response events like campfire sermons and emotional church gatherings?

What are the "cares of this world" that often choke out the Word of God in our lives?

What is the evidence of "good soil?"

GO—Talk through ways you can put what you've learned into practice.

As you look at these hearts, which one do you think currently describes you? (Let's really engage this portion with transparency.)

What are the specific distractions in your life that are keeping you from obeying God's Word?

How can you cultivate proper "soil" in your heart so that the Word of God can properly take root in your life? Can we help each other in this process of cultivating receptive hearts?

What kind of fruit do you desire to see in your life that reveals a proper heart of response to God's Word?