

Study Guide



Matthew 13:24-43, 48-50 – The Parables of Weeds, Mustard Seed, Leaven & Net

Welcome (40 Minutes)

Be intentional to have authentic relationships...

Worship (5 Minutes)

As the group transitions from of a time of fellowship to a time of intentional study of the word, it is important to facilitate that transition with a time of worship. This can look like praying together, singing songs together, or rejoicing in what the Lord has done throughout the week.

Word (45 Minutes)

As we look at Jesus' five discourses in Matthew, we see Matthew and the other disciples "at the feet of Jesus." These teachings are in the context of Jesus' calling and equipping the twelve apostles to go and make disciples of all nations. In our nine months of studying Jesus' five discourses of Matthew we will be sitting at the feet of Jesus learning the ins-and-outs of being disciple-makers ourselves. Our prayer is that we will be challenged to understand that we were saved in order to be disciple-makers and that we will be inspired to sit at the feet of Jesus to be equipped for our calling to be disciple-makers.

For further study on this weeks study please check out the following pages...

Action Step

Discuss with your group how sharing the gospel went this last week. Please share your stories of success or struggle with your group. Both can serve as an encouragement for other group members. Continue to pray for those who heard the gospel and pray for boldness as you continue to have gospel conversations.

Calendar

March 4th- April 15th— Connection Group
March 4th- April 15th— Kids Shine
March 9th— Firm Foundation Fundraiser
March 16th- 18th— DNOW
April 1st— Easter
June 11th-16th— Youth Camp

Welcome (40 Minutes)

As you fellowship with one another, please be intentional about sharing what the Lord is doing in your lives. Get to know one another and encourage one another. Are your conversations pointing one another toward Christ?

Worship (5 Minutes)

If you are looking for a song to sing this week, here are the lyrics to "[Jesus, Firm Foundation](#)":

How firm a foundation, you saints of the lord
Is laid for your faith in his excellent word
What more can he say than to you he has said
To you who for refuge to Jesus have fled

Fear not, he is with us, oh be not dismayed
For he is our god, our sustainer and strength
He'll be our defender and cause us to stand
Upheld by his merciful, almighty hand

How firm, our foundation
How sure, our salvation
And we will not be shaken
Jesus, firm foundation

The soul that is trusting in Jesus as lord
Will press on enduring the darkest of storm
And though even hell should endeavor to shake
He'll never, no never, no no never forsake
He'll never, no never, no no never forsake

How firm, our foundation
How sure, our salvation
And we will not be shaken
Jesus, firm foundation

Age to age he stands
Faithful to the end
All may fade away
But he will remain
He will remain!

How firm, our foundation
How sure, our salvation
And we will not be shaken
Jesus, firm foundation.

We continue in Matthew 13, Jesus' third major teaching (discourse). Here in Matthew 13, Jesus' teaching largely takes the form of parables. These parables tell of a kingdom that, despite being unrecognized and rejected by some, is already accomplishing its purpose in the world, and it will one day be gloriously completed, resulting in eternal judgement for those who reject the gospel and eternal life for those who genuinely trust in Christ and treasure His reward. The four parables we will look at this week continue to give us insight into the nature and development of the kingdom of God so that in our weariness or discouragement we may patiently persevere on mission all of our days. We will look at the parables of the Weeds and the Net together and discuss the parables of the Mustard Seed and Leaven together.

In verses 24-30, 36-43, 47-50, we find the parables of the Weeds and the Net. In the parable of the Weeds (24-30), fruit-bearing plants are sown in the same field as the weeds, which leads the workers to ask, "do you want us to go and gather them?" (vs. 28). Do you want us to remove the bad (weeds) from the good (wheat)? The Master responds by telling them to wait until the harvest and separate them then. Jumping to the parable of the Net (47-50) we find the same point. The fishermen cast a net into the sea and gather every kind of fish. When they gather the net they separate the good from the bad. Putting the good into containers and the throwing the bad away (48). What is Jesus' point in these parables? Jesus is driving home the point that coming judgement is inevitable. That the harvest (judgement) is coming, the day when the weeds (unbelievers) will be separated from the wheat (believers). This day of judgement will be so terrifying for the wicked but a day of triumphant celebration for the righteous (41-43). Those who believe in Christ as King, Lord, and Savior will radiate His glory forever. John MacArthur explains it this way, "The dragnet of God's judgement moves silently through the sea of mankind and draws all men to the shores of eternity for final separation to their ultimate destiny... believers to eternal life and unbelievers to eternal damnation." On the day of judgement all mankind will be divided into two categories according to how we respond to Jesus. Will it be a day of triumphant celebration because the blood of Jesus covers you or will it be a day of terrifying condemnation because you reject Christ as King? We must continue to care about those who do not know Jesus and share with them the work of the cross so that they will join us in celebrating the coming of Christ the King.

Christ continues and shares the parables of the Mustard Seed and Leaven (31-33). Again we see the parables make similar points in slightly different ways. Jesus tells the parable of the Mustard Seed to illustrate how the kingdom of God expands from an insignificant beginning to an extravagant end. The kingdom of God is going to start out very small (mustard seed small), but the fruit that is born in the kingdom will lead to an extravagant end (large garden). In verse 33, Jesus tells the parable of the leaven. Showing a little bit of yeast can spread into every part of the dough. The kingdom of God will slowly advance throughout the world. On a personal level, the kingdom of God starts off as a seed in your heart, and slowly starts to make its way through your thoughts, beliefs, motives, affections, and actions. It then works through you into others' lives and through them into more lives. God will continue to grow His church. The gospel and glory of God will continue to grow slow and steady even in the midst of all that is going on in the world. This is encouraging as we continue to call people to repent and believe in Christ as King until the day when Jesus comes and establishes his perfect kingdom with no pain, no suffering, no injustice, and no persecution.

Discussion - Read Matthew 13:24-43, 48-50

1. Discuss with your group how sharing the gospel went this last week. Please share your stories of success or struggle with your group. Both can serve as an encouragement for other group members. Continue to pray for those who heard the gospel and pray for boldness as you continue to have gospel conversations.
2. Read verses 24-30. How many different plants are we told about that are growing in this field?
3. What are the respective purposes for the wheat and the tares? Both were planted intentionally, so what was the desired outcome with respect to each?
4. How did the man who owned the field deal with the attempt to sabotage his crop?
5. Read verses 31-33. In what ways do you understand the Kingdom of Heaven to be like a mustard seed? How might this parable be received if we lived in a city that was less "churched"? Do you ever feel like the Kingdom doesn't have a very robust presence in our society?
6. Three pecks of flour is equivalent to $\frac{3}{4}$ of a bushel. That's enough to make roughly 60-70 loaves of bread. The amount of leaven required is minuscule in comparison to such a great quantity of flour. The impact of the leaven is incredibly great despite its unassuming stature. In what ways have you seen the Kingdom act similarly?
7. Read Psalm 78:1-4. Do these verses run counter to what we discussed in Matthew 13:10-17? Why or why not?
8. Read verses 36-43. What does the field represent? Why is it important that the field does not represent the church?
9. This parable divides all of humanity into two main groups. What are these two groups?

10. These groups serve specific purposes or roles to play in this age. What are their roles?

11. Does the harshness of the destination of the tares in verse 42 make you uncomfortable? Read Ezekiel 33:11. Does your attitude about the lost mirror that of the Father?

12. Read verses 48-50. This is the second time in our passage that Jesus has mentioned a place of torment where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. According to Pew Research, about 72% of Americans believe in Heaven, but only 58% believe in hell. Even amongst self-identified evangelicals, only about 93% of those who believe in heaven also believe in hell. How does a belief (or disbelief) in a literal hell impact your sharing of your faith?

13. Was there any other takeaways from the sermon? Convictions? Explain.

Gospel Resources

1. **[Sharing your faith \(Article\): \(https://billygraham.org/story/sharing-your-faith-101/\)](https://billygraham.org/story/sharing-your-faith-101/)**
2. **[Life Conversation Guide \(Video\): \(https://www.namb.net/video/3-circles-life-conversation-guide\)](https://www.namb.net/video/3-circles-life-conversation-guide)**
3. **[Questions about Sharing your Faith \(Article\): \(https://jdgrear.com/blog/ask-anything-friday-questions-about-sharing-christ/\)](https://jdgrear.com/blog/ask-anything-friday-questions-about-sharing-christ/)**
4. **Download the “Life On Mission” App for all iOS and Android devices. This app helps teach and walk you through the 3 Circles: Life Conversation Guide.**

<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/11/10/most-americans-believe-in-heaven-and-hell/>, accessed on March 8, 2018.

The Commentary section was adapted from Christ-Centered Exposition; David Platt; 2013

All scripture is from the ESV.

Walk (30 minutes)

After enjoying fellowship, worship, and time in God's word together, it is now time to pray together as a group and encourage one another in the faith. It is very easy for this portion of the group time to be consumed by the other portions. However, this segment of the group time is crucially important. It answers the question, how do we apply what we are learning in Matthew to our lives today?

Many groups have found that it is helpful to sometimes break up into a men's group and a women's group for the purpose of being able to be more transparent and honest as we encourage one another and keep one another accountable. I encourage you to try this in your groups.

In addition to praying for, and encouraging, one another, this portion of the group time should also be used for planning how your group can participate in God's work outside the walls of our church – "neighbors and nations." Discuss with your group some ideas on how you can be intentional with building relationships with your neighbors and co-workers. What can your Community Group do to impact the area around you?

Here is a list of local ministries Norris Ferry is actively involved in:

Hub/purchased	Celebrate recovery
Young life	Samaritan counseling
Heart of hope	Last call ministries
First priority	Golden age ministries
Ark-la-Tex crisis pregnancy center	Rescue mission
Community renewal	Luke's lighthouse
Grief counseling	FCA

Here is a list of missionaries Norris Ferry is actively involved in:

Shannon & Carrie Lewis (South Sudan)
Matt & Angie Johnson (Panama)
Meggie Hickson (Tanzania)
Kyle & Suzy Jagers (New Orleans)

May the Lord bless and encourage you as you are in your groups this week! Know that we are praying for you on a weekly basis and that we are here to help you in any way that we can!

Walk

Prayer & Missions

For further information visit
norrisferrychurch.org or contact Jared
Clary (clary@norrisferrychurch.org)

Calendar

March 29th- April 1st— NOLA
June— Serve Shreveport
July— Community Outreach