



PARABLES

STORIES THAT SHAPE US



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WEEK ONE MARK 4:30-32

WEEK TWO MARK 12:1-12

WEEK THREE LUKE 15:11-32

WEEK FOUR MARK 4:1-20

WEEK FIVE MATTHEW 25:14-30

WEEK SIX MATTHEW 22:1-14

This daily study guide is designed to use the SOAP method of studying Scripture to lead you through the season of Lent and our Parables series. The SOAP method invites you to study Scripture through the lens of a four-step process including Scripture, Observation, Application, and Prayer.

Although we have split each step into a single day, we invite you to read the accompanying Scripture each day.

Throughout this study guide, you will read observations, applications, and prayers written by many different people from our church. Our hope is that this format will serve as an example and an invitation for you as you continue to intentionally study God's Word.



THE PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED

FEBRUARY 22 - 28

SUNDAY: SCRIPTURE

MARK 4:30-32

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."

MONDAY: OBSERVATION

Jesus chooses something very small and ordinary, a mustard seed, to reveal the extraordinary Kingdom of God. At first, the seed appears insignificant and almost unseen. Yet, once planted, it grows into something strong and visible. Through this simple picture, Jesus teaches that God often begins His greatest work in unseen and humble ways. What seems small to us can become something meaningful when placed in God's hands.

TUESDAY: APPLICATION

The parable reminds us that God works through the small things. A prayer, an act of kindness, talking with a friend or neighbor, or acting in obedience when you feel prompted by God to do something. These things may feel minor, but God delights in using small seeds to produce big transformation. For children, this might look like choosing kindness or including someone who feels left out. For adults, it may be offering a word of encouragement or trusting God with a small step forward. God grows His Kingdom through faithfulness, trust, and simple acts of obedience one step, or seed, at a time.



THE PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED

WEDNESDAY: PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank you for reminding us that you work powerfully through even the smallest of things. Teach us to trust you with the little things in our lives and to plant seeds of faith, love, and obedience each day. Give us patience as you grow those seeds according to your perfect plan. Amen.

THURSDAY: OBSERVATION

Jesus clearly knows his audience and has real intention in using the image of a mustard seed. So, what do we know about mustard seeds? Mustard seeds are incredibly small, and for this audience, these would be the smallest seeds that they would directly sow. Mustard is known for its ability to grow quickly and spread. Mustard plants get big and are a great refuge for animals and, in Jesus' parable, birds. It also enriches the soil with nitrogen! The mustard plant is a clear choice for Jesus to share of the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God Jesus is bringing in does start small. Jesus had his disciples who learned from him and were given the power and authority to spread the Good News! It soon multiplies in ways that we see from the book of Acts to today! What starts humble and small ends up having massive impact.

So now we know that mustard is large and can become all-encompassing. A plant with these characteristics creates a perfect environment for animals and birds. The birds find refuge in the mustard's branches. They feel safe, secure, and sound. Is it just one kind of bird? Likely not. Jesus paints a picture of Jews and Gentiles being included in the safety of the mustard's branches. And mustard enriches the soil! The Kingdom of God not only invites others in, but it transforms us from the inside out. We become people who are inwardly sound and others focused. We are people who seek the glory of God by being transformed and renewed by Him.



THE PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED

Jesus saw the Kingdom of God as a growing, living, vibrant, and all-encompassing way of life. What an invitation and honor to be a part of the Kingdom of God!

FRIDAY: APPLICATION

Jesus tells us that the Kingdom of God often begins in ways that seem small or insignificant – just like the mustard seed. Even small acts of faith can lead to incredible growth. Today, look for one simple way to plant a “mustard seed” in someone’s life. It can look like praying for someone, preparing and sharing a meal, or even sending a message of encouragement. Where can you step out in obedience with your eyes focused on the Kingdom of God?

Today, the world can feel chaotic, dark, and even like it’s unraveling. Jesus paints the picture of the mustard plant being a place of refuge and safety. How can you reflect that picture? What can you do to be an agent of hope, light, and refuge?

SATURDAY: PRAYER

Today, take time to reflect on the Kingdom of God – its growth, its inclusiveness, and its promise of refuge. With that image in mind, turn your thoughts into prayer. Pray for the world:

- *Pray for the people groups who have not yet heard or accepted the Good News of Jesus.*
- *Pray for those we might consider enemies, asking God to transform hearts and bring peace.*
- *Pray for individuals who may be in places of refuge yet never truly feel safe or at home.*

Let your prayers echo the Kingdom’s vision: a place where all find belonging, safety, and hope under God’s care.

NOTES

Use this space to apply **SOAP** (*Scripture, Observation, Application, and Prayer*) to your life as you reflect on God's Word and respond to what He is teaching you.

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