

"The Kingdom"

Week 1 – The Kingdom Sower

warm-up

Group Ice Breaker: *I DON'T UNDERSTAND...*

Come up with some fun ways to describe complex objects, like a bicycle, coffee maker, etc. Make a game of this: a person is blindfolded while another describes the objects with single descriptive words and hand gestures. Or maybe someone wears ear plugs while another describes the objects without gestures. Discuss the difficulty of guessing without all your senses at play.

word & application

What does God want for me? What does He want for my neighbors? The rest of the world?

In Matthew chapter 13, Jesus reveals how God truly wants us to live – a life in the fullness of His power.

Matthew 13:3-9, 18-23

"Listen! A farmer went out to plant some seeds. As he scattered them across his field, some seeds fell on a footpath, and the birds came and ate them. Other seeds fell on shallow soil with underlying rock. The seeds sprouted quickly because the soil was shallow. But the plants soon wilted under the hot sun, and since they didn't have deep roots, they died. Other seeds fell among thorns that grew up and choked out the tender plants. Still other seeds fell on fertile soil, and they produced a crop that was thirty, sixty, and even a hundred times as much as had been planted! 9Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand."

*"Now listen to the explanation of the parable about the farmer planting seeds: The seed that fell on the footpath represents those who **hear the message about the Kingdom and don't understand it**. Then the evil one comes and snatches away the seed that was planted in their hearts. The seed on the rocky soil represents those who **hear the message and immediately receive it with joy. But since they don't have deep roots, they don't last long**. They fall away as soon as they have problems or are persecuted for believing God's word. The seed that fell among the thorns represents those who **hear God's word, but all too quickly the message is crowded out by the worries of this life** and the lure of wealth, so no fruit is produced. The seed that fell on good soil represents those who **truly hear and understand God's word and produce a harvest** of thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times as much as had been planted!"*

Discussion & Application: *Explore these points and questions through in-depth conversation.*

"The Message about the Kingdom" literally translates to "a report of God's mighty power." Jesus tells us this parable to help us understand how we can accept and believe the good news of God's power that is present and active in our lives. But there are things that prevent us from accepting this good news.

- What things in our lives keep us from believing and accepting the power of God's kingdom?
- Why could this message be hard for a non-believer to accept?
- What is our role in preparing others to understand God's powerful and good news?
- How can we prepare our hearts daily for God's incredible plans, and protect the hearts of those who may not know Him yet?

Talk about these ideas and implications together as a group.

prayer

Ask members to shape their prayer requests to align with the principles above. Agree in prayer together over each request. Ask God to begin to reveal His power in our lives, and for us to begin to expect and accept it.