



WEEK 4

The Mustard Seed Revolution

Seeds and Weeds

Pastor Jared Herd

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LEADER'S GUIDE

1. When it comes to getting things done, are you more of a crockpot person, a microwave person, or something in between?

An opener to get your group thinking about what it means to wait on the LORD. Knowing to the degree we are willing/trained/amenable to waiting will help guide the conversation about our attitude toward God's timing.

2. Have you ever said, "God, I wish you would just _____ already!" Are you still waiting?

We are often praying for good things, that seem wholly in line with what God's big will is for His people (that we'd have sons and daughters following after Him, jobs to take care of our families, spouses to share our lives with, marriages that aren't crumbling, bodies that aren't riddled with cancer, safe streets, an end to human trafficking, etc.,) so when God waits, it can seem incongruous with what we already know about Him. It's okay to be honest about how it feels to wait, that it can feel like God doesn't care. It's at times like these we need to hold on to truth, not feelings. The truth is, God is always loving toward us (Psalm 145), even when it feels like He's not; even when it seems He is moving at a snail-like pace. Or not at all.

What have you learned about God in the waiting? About yourself?

3. What's the worst thing about having to wait? What is the best thing about it?

Sometimes it helps to make a list of the pros and cons of a thing because they can often be hard to see until you list them.

Good things about waiting: Gives you time to think and ponder, helps you avoid knee-jerk reactions you will later regret, allows God to bring about something better you could not see coming. What else?

What's the worst thing about waiting? Some possible answers might be, because we aren't in control of the situation, we feel powerless, we we feel unloved and uncherished... others?

4. Take a look at Matthew 13:24-31.

Matthew 13:24-31 (NIV)

24 Jesus told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. 25 But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. 26 When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared.

27 "The owner's servants came to him and said, 'Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?'

28 "'An enemy did this,' he replied.

"The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?'

29 "'No,' he answered, 'because while you are pulling the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them. 30 Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.'"

31 He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field.

What did Pastor Jared say was unique about Matthew's audience?

- They were Jews who did not believe Jesus was the Messiah.
- They had lived their lives – like so many Jews before them – under occupation and oppression.
- They had been promised a Savior/Messiah who they viewed would come as a warrior with a sword. They were not expecting a farmer with seeds.
- They knew the promises. They believed in them. But only in their interpretation of them.

Can you relate to the people he was writing to? How?

A question for the group: Do you feel like sometimes it's your own interpretation of God's promises that you're relying on? What is the danger there? (The danger is we could be

imposing our understanding onto God's revealed truth and that understanding could be wrong; this is what happened to the Jews of Jesus's day. They had expectations based on their own interpretations of the promises regarding the Messiah. That is why they missed the coming of the Messiah completely.

5. Pastor Jared said we often want Jesus to be a warrior with a sword rather than a farmer with seeds. What did he mean? What is the difference?

Pastor Jared said, "The sword is fast, seeds are slow." Talk about what that means. What does a "seeds" way of living require that a "sword" way does not? (patience, trust, etc)

6. What do the weeds represent in this parable? Who is our enemy?

The weeds represent all that makes our planet a fallen place; The world at Creation was perfect; that same world was broken and cursed by what happened in the Garden of Eden. Sin, death, disease, heartache, etc. are the weeds. Our enemy is the devil. Satan is a real entity, a fallen archangel, God's adversary but not God's equal. Jesus speaks numerous times of Satan's existence and what his character is like. Here are just a few references if you want to discuss further that we do have an enemy and he is real: John 8:43-44, Matthew 12:24-28, Luke 10:18.

What does Jesus say about the weeds that is surprising?

Pastor Jared made the observation that Jesus not only acknowledges the weeds' existence, but also that it is the farmer's wish that the weeds be allowed to grow alongside the wheat, which is not what we would call good gardening practice. When we garden, if we see a weed, we yank it up the earliest possible moment and get rid of it. Jesus is saying here that God operates differently and for reasons that may not fully be understood. But He also makes it clear that in the end, the weeds will be consumed by fire and only the good will remain. There will be a time when the weeds are properly and decisively dealt with, but the timing will likely be different than we'd want or expect them to be dealt with.

7. What are the two typical responses we have to pain and suffering? Pastor Jared said Jesus offers a third option. What did he say it was?

1. We avoid/deny pain and suffering (the weeds)

2. We obsess/hyper-focus on pain and suffering (the weeds)

Make sure everyone is on the same page as to what these two responses look like before moving on to the third option.

3. Jesus's option is the inversion of #1 coupled with a redirection of #2. Embrace rather than avoid the weeds (they WILL be there, Jesus said they would— John 16:33) and hyperfocus on your mighty and powerful God who loves you, instead of hyperfocusing on the weeds. **See the weeds for what they are, but see God for who He is.** When you do that, you can live with peace and joy even in the midst of weeds.

8. What does it mean to you that the kingdom of God is within you? Does that truth affect the way you live? Should it? How?

See also Luke 17:20-21 - Once, on being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, "The coming of the kingdom of God is not something that can be observed, 21 nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is in your midst."

When we trust in Christ as LORD and savior, we become new creations, born anew, with a new master and commander and a new allegiance. The Holy Spirit takes up residence in our hearts to help us live out our new, redeemed lives. We become the visible proof that heaven has been brought to earth. We still make mistakes as subjects of this new kingdom, but as we grow in faith and knowledge, we become more like Christ our King, and therefore we bring more of perfect heaven to broken earth. This is our purpose. The kingdom of Jesus is us.

MEMORIZE James 5:7-8 – "Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand." (ESV)

MEDITATE: Are you waiting on God to take decisive action? Do you sense impatience in your heart for Him to move? This week consider the relationship between your desire for God to act with your trust in His love and wisdom regarding you. Meditate on Psalm 30:20-22 and Psalm 27:14 to help you trust where you are impatient for action.