

GBC Discipleship RESOURCE



The Kingdom of Heaven is Like...

Week 01 | Tending the Soil (Matthew 13:1-23)

For a brief overview of why (and how) to engage in each of these practices, you can read the [Guideline For Growing](#) on our website.

<https://www.gymeabaptist.org.au/growing/pages/guideline-for-growing>

What is a Discipleship Menu?

A discipleship menu is a selection of discipleship activities to engage in to continue the conversation that begins on Sunday throughout the week. The aim is to extend our interaction as a community of faith around activities that help us follow Jesus every single day. The activities vary from week to week (though there are some standard activities) and you are encouraged to do as many as you find helpful (like a menu; you don't need to eat everything on it!). Do them on your own (God and you), with a couple of friends (you and a few), or in a Life Group (you and a crew). The important thing is to do a few!

GBC Sermon Podcast and The Big 3

Podcast

The scriptures say a great deal about what the Kingdom of Heaven is like. It provides a variety of images, analogies, and metaphors to help provide some insight for Jesus' followers. Yet the mystery surrounding the Kingdom, what is it, where it is and how we get there, can be overwhelming and confusing. To make matters more complicated, Jesus chooses to use parables to explain the Kingdom of Heaven, which are filled with subtle nuance and can leave us just as lost as we were before.

What's important to remember is that the consistent trend that we see reflected in the character of God through the overarching narrative of scripture is that He very much desires to be known by His people. The heavens declare His glory and His presence. So why parable? It is because Jesus, who began his ministry by declaring that 'the Kingdom of Heaven is here', understands that the magnitude of the Kingdom is too lofty for humanity to obtain, just like the One who reigns over it. Therefore, Jesus creates these parables to provide us with bite sized pieces of the Kingdom. He draws us into the story, inviting us to raise questions and to create discussion.

When do take up this invitation, we see that the parable of the Sower is not concerned about highlighting what the Kingdom of Heaven is like. Rather Jesus is inviting each of us into faithful self-examination as to our ability to see and hear the message of the Kingdom. Where in your life do you have good, rich soil? Is it at home, within your social circles, the ministry you serve in? And where are there some rocks, creating shallow soil, or weeds reading to choke your faith? Is it at work, university, that group you're apart from the local neighbourhood? If we want to be the people who hear and understand, who see and perceive the Kingdom of God, we need to work the earth in our lives, so when the seed is sown, it'll produce a harvest 30, 60 or even 100 times.

Passages to Read

We believe that the Word of God is living and active and that reading and reflecting on it is one way we encounter God. As you read, we encourage people to ask a set of simple questions: What stands out to you? What questions do you have? What is the invitation of God to you? Who can you tell?

The readings this week explore the mysterious nature of the God we seek to know and follow. They demonstrate not only that God's character is beyond our ability to perceive but that His actions display a deep desire to be known and approached.

- Psalm 19:1-6
- Matthew 13:1-23
- Ephesians 1:9-10
- Colossians 1:26-27
- Romans 16:25-26

Meditate

The purpose of a parable is to draw you into the analogy, to gain a closer perspective and to raise questions. Take some time to quietly reflect. Place yourself in the parable.

Where is the Sower? What is your impression of them? What is the seed, can you see the harvest it grows? What does the fruit look like? Where are the birds? what are the rock? why are there weeds? Where do these different types of soil exist in your life? And finally, where is the good soil? What makes it good? How then can we seek to nurture it?

A Prayer to Pray

Pray that God would show you the small ways you can prepare yourself to receive and perceive the mystery of His Kingdom.