

*LIFE OF A SERVANT***The Kingdom and the King Mark 4:26–41**

“Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!” Mark 4:41b

Before you read:

In Mark 1:15 Jesus proclaimed, “The time has come. . . . The kingdom of God is near.” What do you think of when you hear the phrase “the kingdom of God”?

Day 1: Read Mark 4:26–29.

1. What does the seed that is sown represent? (see 4:14; Matt. 13:19))
2. The sowing of the seed and the process of germination began with Jesus’ earthly ministry. What does the harvest represent?
3. In the passage, after sowing the seed, what does the farmer contribute to its growth? Can he even see the seed germinate?
4. The farmer confidently expects a harvest, and his confidence is justified.
 - a. As believers, what confidence do we have about the kingdom of God?
 - b. How can this encourage us as we see war on the nightly news or read about corruption in the newspaper?

Day 2: Read Mark 4:30–32.

5. How does the world tend to assess things—people, houses, neighborhoods, cars, schools, companies, countries?
6. What might the appearance of the mustard seed lead you to expect? Yet what happens to this seed?
7. How does our perspective need to change so that we can perceive the kingdom? (You might consider the following: Is. 53:1–4, 10–12; Mt. 11:25; 18:2–4; 20:25–28; Lk. 1:46–53; 1 Cor. 1:18–29.) What are the consequences of overlooking it?
8. In what ways have worldly values distorted the way you look at people, the church, and even God? How can these parables of seeds help realign our thinking?

Day 3: Read Mark 4:33–34.

9. Hebrews 4:12 says that “the word of God is living and active,” and that it “judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.” How do you think parables fit this description? What do parables require of listeners (or readers)?

10. Everyone in the crowd hears Jesus’ parables, but only the disciples get his explanations. What do these undistinguished people have in common, that they should receive this special instruction? (Mk. 4:10) How is this relevant for us today?

Day 4: Read Mark 4:35–41.

11. Who initiates the trip across the Sea of Galilee? What time of day is it?

12. How do the disciples react to the “furious squall”? What does this reaction show about them?

13. What is Jesus doing as the storm rages? How do the disciples interpret this? What does it in fact show about Jesus? (Ps. 4:8; Prov. 3:23–26)

14. Like the disciples, we sometimes doubt whether God cares about us.
 - a. What circumstances bring out this question in your heart?

 - b. Read Mt. 6:25–34 and Joshua 1:9. Write specific ways you have seen God’s care for you in the past week. Ask God to help you place your trust in his care for you.

Day 5: Read Mark 4:35–41.

15. Jesus rebukes the storm, and it ceases. How do the disciples react to this miracle? Why do you think they react this way?

16. Who alone has mastery over the sea? (Ps. 89:8-9; 104:5-9)

17. What does Mark want his readers to conclude about Jesus? (Mk. 1:1)

18. Mark’s original readers were probably experiencing persecution.
 - a. How would this story encourage them?

 - b. How does it encourage you?