

STUDYING STORIES:

1. Always pray and asks God to give you understanding.
2. Read the story slowly. You may have to read it several times.
3. Try to understand the scene.
 - a. What going on?
 - b. Who are the main characters?
 - c. Who wrote it?
 - d. Where and when does it take place?
 - e. What was happening historically at this time.
 - f. What is the lesson in this story?

Mark 4:35-41 On the same day, when evening had come, He said to them, 'Let us cross over to the other side.'³⁶ Now when they had left the multitude, they took Him along in the boat as He was. And other little boats were also with Him.³⁷ And a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling.³⁸ But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to Him, 'Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?'³⁹ Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, 'Peace, be still!' And the wind ceased and there was a great calm. ⁴⁰ But He said to them, 'Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?' ⁴¹ And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, 'Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!'"

Who are the characters in the story:

1. Jesus: The Son of God and Humanity (sleeping)
2. The Disciples: Followers of Jesus.
3. The wind and the sea: Nature

Picture the scene: Imagine what it would feel like to be there.

1. Jesus had spent the full day teaching the crowd parables, and now it is evening.
2. Jesus and the disciples are crossing the Sea of Galilee at night, and the Sea is known for sudden storms.
3. Jesus is traveling in a boat surrounded by other boats
4. It's dark and a storm is raging on the sea.
5. The waves of the storm crashes into the boat, and was threatening to sink it.
6. Jesus is comfortably asleep in the stern, and He is completely calm despite the chaos around Him.
7. The disciples are panicking and fearful, and they awake Jesus and asked Him. Do You not care that we are perishing.
8. Jesus stands and rebukes the wind. Jesus took authority and commanded the sea, Peace be still!
9. Immediately, the storm stopped and great calm settled over the water.
10. Jesus turned to the disciples and asked them, "why are you so fearful? Why is it that you have no faith?"

11. The disciples are left in awe and fear wondering, who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him.

What are the themes in this story:

1. Storms can come suddenly, can pound on us heavily, and overwhelm us. Vs.37
 - a. Jesus trusted God He had divine peace and was sleeping during the storm. Sometimes we may feel like God is asleep when we are going through our storms, but He is always in control.
 - b. Jesus is in control even when circumstances look hopeless. vs.38
2. The disciples were fearful and doubtful. (Do You not care that we are perishing? Vs. 38).
 - a. The disciples panic in the storm which revealed their lack of trust
 - b. Shows fear vs. faith. The disciples' fear contrast with Jesus' calm faith.
 - c. Do you not care that we are perishing shows human doubt.
 - d. We must trust that God is present and attentive to our needs even when He seems silent.
3. Jesus stood up and rebuked the storm, and the wind and waves immediately obeyed Vs. 39
 - a. Jesus standing up reveals His divine authority.
 - b. Standing up was a change in position from resting (human position) to action (divine authority).
 - c. Rebuking the storm showed His authority over creation.
 - e. This reveals Jesus' divine identity as more than a teacher or prophet.
4. Jesus rebuked the disciples for their fear and lack of faith. Vs.40
 - a. Fear and faith cannot live together.
 - b. Faith brings peace even when life feels overwhelming.
5. The disciples are getting a revelation that Jesus is more than a man. He is the son of God in flesh. Vs.41

What did I learn from this story: (Let them write down something they learned from this story)

1. Even when following Jesus, we are not promised a storm-free life.
2. I must trust God during the storms.
3. I must replace fear with faith because fear and faith cannot live together.
4. Jesus has authority over every storm in our life.
5. Peace comes from trusting God and not our circumstances.
6. Our faith grows as we walk with God through life storms.
7. Do I really know who Jesus is?

Comments or Questions on Studying Stories.

Studying Parable:

What is a parable? A short simple story that uses everyday situations to illustrate a deeper moral or spiritual truth, Jesus often used parables to teach His followers in a way that was both memorable and thought-provoking.

Mark 4:30-32 *"Then He said, 'To what shall we liken the kingdom of God? Or with what parable shall we picture it? 31. It is like a mustard seed which, when it is sown on the ground, is smaller than all the seeds on earth; 32. but when it is sown, it grows up and becomes greater than all herbs, and shoots out large branches, so that the birds of the air may nest under its shade.*

What is the kingdom of God? God's reign and rule, both now and in the future, encompassing His righteousness peace, and joy, and ultimately a transformed world under His sovereign authority.

The mustard seeds were the smallest known seeds in the Jewish agriculture life, and they grew into large plants usually 8-12 feet tall, and was big enough for birds to rest or sit in.

Who are the characters in the parable:

1. The Sower:
 2. The mustard seed:
 3. Birds in the air.
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1. The Sower is Jesus spreading the message of the kingdom.
 2. The mustard seed symbolic for the kingdom of God.
 3. The birds of the air represents people from all nations.

Scene:

1. Earlier in the chapter, Jesus sitting in a boat at the shore of the Sea of Galilee teaching the crowd.
2. Jesus begin this parable with two questions. To what shall we liken the kingdom of God, and with what parable should we picture it.
 - a. This cause the listeners or readers to think deeply and personally.
3. Jesus said, the kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed.
4. Mustard seeds are tiny, but they grow into large plants about 10-15 feet tall.vs.31
5. The mustard seed grows and become greater than all herbs.
 - a. Greater in Greek means larger, mightier, stronger or more significant in size or influence.
 - b. The mustard seed plant grew larger than any other garden herbs.
 - c. This is not the mustard green we plant today; it was eastern mustard plant that grew like a tree, and was used for oil, spice, and medicine.
6. Because of its growth, the birds can nest under its shade.

What I learn from this parable? (Let them write what they learned)

Lesson:

Like a mustard seed, the kingdom of Heaven started small with Jesus and a few disciples, but it spread worldwide.

1. Even a small acts of faith can have huge impact.

2. God can take an act of faith, a prayer, or humble desire to do His will and grow it into something extraordinary.
3. God can take small things and transform them into something great.
4. God's Kingdom provides refuge and peace to those who seek it.
5. I must be patience and trust God, just like the mustard seed grows into a big tree; I am growing every day and should be a light to the lost world around me.
6. I must trust that my impact on the world will grow beyond what I see by trusting Christ who gives us strength.
7. May God's perfect will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Comment/Questions on Studying Parables

How to Study a Chapter in the Bible:

1. Read the chapter. You must have to read it several times.
2. You must want to read the chapter in different Bible interpretations.
3. If you have a hard time with comprehension when you read, listen to the chapter on audio Bible.
4. When you read, allow the Holy Spirit to speak to you.
5. After you have read the entire chapter, look for the content of the chapter.
 - a. Who wrote the chapter and who was it written to?
 - b. What was happening historically or culturally at this time?
 - c. Who are the characters in the chapter, and why are they significant?
 1. If the chapter has pronoun, study to know who the pronoun is referring to. (He, she, they)
 - d. Make a list of the major points in the chapter.
6. Identify key words and phrases.
 - a. Look for repeated words and phrases.
7. Identify major theme or lessons in the chapter.
8. Use cross-reference to see how this chapter connects with other parts of the Bible.
9. What did I learn about Jesus or the Godhead in this chapter.
10. Use study tools: Study bible, commentaries, concordances, bible dictionaries, Bible Hub, and Bible Gateway.
11. Write down what you learn.
 - a. Ask what God wants me to know from this chapter.
12. Apply what you learn:
 - b. Ask what the truth of this chapter says to me personally.
 - c. Do I need to repent.?
 - d. Do I need to serve more?

Let study Psalm 23

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. ² He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. ³ He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake. ⁴ Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort

me. ⁵ You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over. ⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life; And I will ^(d) dwell in the house of the LORD ^(f) Forever.

Written by David a shepherd boy that became the King of Israel. The name David means favorite or beloved. David was the 1st king to unite Judah and Israel, and he received the promised from God of a royal messiah in his line. A musician who placed the harp for King Saul when evil spirit troubled him. David was King Saul armor bearer and his son in law. (Married Michal) David was a mighty warrior who relied on God. As a shepherd boy he killed a lion and a bear, He defeated Goliath with a sling and a stone, led Israel armies against many nations. David was a psalmist and a worshiper.

Written as a prayer to God expressing David's trust in the Lord as his Shepherd, and his relying on God. David wrote out of his experience as a shepherd. This psalm speaks to anyone who trust in God.

We do not know the historical time that David wrote this psalm. It is believe he wrote it during the time he was a shepherd during his younger years.

In ancient Israel, shepherding was a common occupation. It was a danger, humbling, and intimate job. Shepherds knew their sheep by name. The shepherds were responsible for guiding, protecting, and caring for their sheep. David's knowledge of shepherding allowed him to see God as the ultimate Shepherd.

Who are the characters in this chapter:

1. The Lord:

- a. As a shepherd: lovingly guides, provides, protects and comforts Vs.1
- b. Guide the sheep gently and peacefully
- c. He restores what is weary or broken within His sheep.
- d. The Lord our shepherd is with us through the darkest moments, and He walks through them with us
- e. As a gracious host: feed me, anoints my head, and give me in abundance. Vs. 5
- f. As goodness: God's loyal love. Vs. 6
- g. Mercy: God's covenant faithfulness. Vs. 6
- h. The Lord does not just guide for a season, but He promise eternal fellowship with Him.

2. David: As a sheep

- a. Protected, guided, and care for by God.

- b. David had deep trust in God's provision and presence in his life even during the dangerous moments.
- c. This faith came from David's experiences. He had faced lions and bears, and God had protected Him.

As a guest:

Where was David a guest? At God's table.Vs.5

- a. David saw himself as a guest of honor and not a servant at God's table.
- b. This showed David's humility and willingness to be loved by God.
- c. In ancient culture the table being prepared for a guest was a way of showing honor and friendship.
- d. God does not treat His children as servants in fear, but He honor them as guests at His table.
- e. The table is prepared for David the guest. The table represents abundance and God's faithful care. The table being prepared is provision in the midst of conflict.

Enemies:

The enemies are real forces and opposition. They could be literal foes, fear, death, and other things.

- a. Even when enemies are around, God provides safety and blessings.
- b. The enemies are close enough to see God blessing David, but they cannot stop it. Enemies are powerless in God's presence.
- c. God exalts David in his enemies sight. They may have been present, but they could not rob David of his peace

Goodness and Mercy:

- a. Goodness is God's kindness, blessing and favor.
- b. Mercy is God's unfailing love that never lets go of His children. He shows us mercy when we do not deserve it.
- c. Goodness and mercy follow which means pursue and surrounds David all his life. Goodness and mercy are like bodyguards walking with us to encourage us until we reach God's eternal house.

Vs.1 The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

- a. Key words are Lord, shepherd, my, and want.

- b. Lord: Yahweh is the faithful God.
- c. Shepherd: Shows God guidance, protection, and provision. God is a caring leader.
- d. My: You can make it personal.
- e. Want: I lack nothing because God provides all I need.

Meaning:

- 1. God is a good shepherd who provides, cares, guides, and protects me because I am His child.
- 2. I lack nothing because God gives me all that I need, and I will trust in His provision.
- 3. A sheep relies entirely on his shepherd, As a child of God, I should depend fully on God.

Lesson: Trust in God's that He will provide all you need. Even when I cannot see how He will do it, I must trust that He will and have peace during the process.

Do I believe that God will provide everything that I need?

Vs. 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside still waters.

Who is He and me? He is God and me is you. (child of God)

Key words: lie down, green pastures, and still waters.

- 1. Lie down: Rest in the Lord.
 - a. Sheep lie down only when they feel safe and satisfied.
 - b. He makes me lie down: God leads us to rest, and we have to trust Him and let go of fear and hopelessness.
 - c. We can lie down because we are in the care of the Lord.
- 2. Green pastures: Spiritual nourishment, rest, and abundance. A place the soul can rest.
 - a. A place where sheep are content and cared for.
 - b. What does your green pastures in God look like? It may be season of healing, a time of revelation, a time of peace, a time of security. a time of spiritual growth.
- 4. Still waters: Stands for peace, refreshment, and restoration. Represents God's presence that refreshes and restores the weary soul.
 - a. Sheep are afraid of rushing water; the shepherd leads them to calm waters so they can drink.
 - b. Our souls needs peace and renewing in the spirit of God, the living water to sustain.

Meaning: God brings peace, rest, and refresh my soul.

Lessons: We are dependence on God to provide us peace, safety, and refreshing for our soul. We must let God lead us to true rest for our souls. That rest is found is Jesus, the Good Shepherd.