

Taking It Home:

- Let's assume that Jesus has lit a lamp in your heart and you desire that His light would shine through you. In what ways can you specifically reflect Jesus' light in the darkness around you?

- Pastor Matthew challenged the audience to, "think small." What does that mean for Bethel Church? What does it mean for you personally?

- How does the anthem of Psalm 115:1 encourage you to orient yourself to thinking small?

Recommended Resources

- *Prayer of Jabez* by Bruce Wilkinson – When not read as a health and wealth promise, this book can be a great encouragement in growing one's faith.
- *Conspiracy of Kindness* by Steve Sjogren – Sjogren writes about a variety of ways we can demonstrate Jesus' love through good deeds.

Piercing the Darkness
Think Small
Mark 4:21-34

Dr. Matthew R. St. John
Bethel Church
September 29, 2013

Think Small

Notes:

For a restatement of Pastor Matthew's sermon points, visit pastormatthew.net and click on the "Write This Down" tab.

For more information about Growth Groups, Growth Group homework, and a podcast of sermons with homework, visit www.bethelcf.com.

Growth Group Homework

For the week of September 29, 2013

Mark 4:21-34

Quick Review: As recorded by Mark in chapter four, Jesus continues teaching in parables that the Kingdom of God is being manifest through His disciples. What was once a mystery and at times seemed hidden is now being brought to light. Jesus instructs His disciples that the light which is shining in their hearts is not to be hidden but to be put on display for all to see. The fruit they see proves the Kingdom of God is upon them. God is working in a special way. Their efforts, big or small, when aligned with the Kingdom vision of Jesus will not be made in vain. Small efforts of faithfulness can give way to great Kingdom expansion.

My Story:

- Have you ever experienced the increased pay out of a small investment made over a long time? What does it feel like when investing small amounts over a long time? What does it feel like when cashing out an investment?
- When have you felt that your efforts to trust and obey Jesus were so small they probably didn't even matter?
- Who is someone that you can thank for doing something "small" for you this week?

Growing Deeper:

Within this short story of Mark 4:21-34, there are three small units each with a different emphasis on the Kingdom of God. Summarize in your own words the emphasis of each unit:

- 4:21-25
 - 4:26-29
 - 4:30-34
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- How does Jesus' teaching about light in Matthew 5:13-16 impact the way you read Mark 4:21-25? What similarities and differences do you notice?
 - Giving special attention to Mark 4:26-29, what do you notice about the process for growth? How is this similar to 1 Corinthians 3:5-9?
 - The life-giving mustard plant was one of the largest garden plants of Jesus' day growing to be 10-15 feet tall. The leaves were used in salads and seeds for condiments. Mention of the birds gives emphasis to the maturity and fruitfulness of the tree. What other evidence do you see of God's increase in Mark 4:21-34?