

Week of Feb 17, 2019 — Focus: Mark 4:1-20

Scripture/Sermon Discussion

Pastor Jonathan alluded to Mark 8:29 where Jesus asked the disciples, “Who do *you* say that I am?”

- Why is our *own* response to Jesus so important? What does this tell us about faith in Christ / Christianity?

Attention

Read Luke 14:25-33. Here is an example of one of Jesus’ harder (to accept) teachings.

- How does this passage relate to *paying attention* to Christ and his teachings?
- How could this passage be used when telling someone about the gospel?

Read Mark 4:11-12. How do you feel about Jesus dividing the world into “insiders” and “outsiders”?

- Why would he do this?

Jesus called his disciples—and any who would hear—to pay attention to what he was saying. If so, he would reveal the secret / mystery of God’s kingdom.

- How can we pay attention to Jesus? Name as many examples as you can
- What is *your* attention span like when it comes to Jesus (and the examples just shared in your group)?
- Why is it so hard to *focus* or *pay attention* in our world today?

You can’t shut your attention off, but you can direct its focus.

- What typically preoccupies your mind on a daily/weekly basis? In other words, where are you directing your attention?

We must be *thoughtful* and *intentional* people as we attend to Jesus and Scripture.

- Pastor Jonathan mentioned mulling and reflecting on Scripture as a rich practice. When was the last time you did this? What were you reflecting on?
- Learn from each other! Share around the group some of your best tips for reading and understanding Scripture on a regular basis

Attitude

Read Mark 4:14-20. Pastor Jonathan compared Jesus' four "soils" in this parable to four conditions of our hearts (hard, shallow, divided, and open):

- As a group, share an example—from your own life or someone else—that exemplifies each of the four soils/hearts mentioned

How does having an overly *intellectual* or overly *emotional* approach to Jesus take away from being his disciple?

- What would it look like to combine the two? Would this be better?

Regarding Mark 4:17, Pastor Jonathan summarized some people's approach to Jesus as, "They don't want a Lord, they want a servant."

- What do you think this means? Share if you've ever had similar thoughts

Re-read Mark 4:18-19, which describes a fairly commonplace issue in our world today.

- Where do you see this occurring in your own life?
- Share some of the concerns you have—even good things like family and career—that take the number one spot in your life
- What does Jesus say is the result of such a lifestyle?

Prayer

- Pray for God to create open and receptive hearts among his people
- Pray that "rocks" would be removed from the garden of our hearts
- Pray that we would seek the truth of Jesus with our heads and our hearts