

STUDY GUIDE

August 9, 2026

START WITH PRAYER

Use this Prayer Prompt



Father, thank You that You have not remained distant from us, but that You have drawn near to us through Jesus. Help us to be honest about the condition of our hearts and the soil of our lives. Give us ears to hear Your Word and hearts that are willing to receive it, even when it challenges us. Help us trust You in the storms we face and remember that You are with us. Grow our faith, deepen our roots, and help our lives bear fruit for Your kingdom. In Jesus' name, amen.

STUDY THE BIBLE

Think through and discuss your reactions as you read through Scripture:

- Mark 4:1–20
- Mark 4:30–32
- Mark 4:35–41
- Isaiah 55:10–11
- John 15:1–11

STIR UP DISCUSSION

How does this week's teaching affect me personally?

1. Jesus describes different kinds of "soil" that represent how we receive God's Word. If you honestly looked at your life right now, what would you say the condition of your spiritual soil is? What makes you say that?
2. The sermon suggested that it is possible to hear God's Word, believe it intellectually, and yet not allow it to transform us. Where do you think that distinction shows up in our lives?
3. Jesus says that the worries of life, the deceitfulness of wealth,

and the desire for other things can “choke” God's Word and make it unfruitful. What kinds of things are most capable of crowding out your relationship with God

4. The sermon emphasized that we don't need enormous faith to begin with—the mustard seed starts small and grows. How does that change the way you think about your own faith, especially when you feel like your faith isn't “strong enough”?
5. The disciples experienced a terrifying storm while Jesus was literally in the boat with them. What are some of the “storms” where it's hardest for you to remember that Jesus is present? What difference might His presence make even if the storm doesn't immediately stop?
6. The sermon ended with the idea that God may be writing a testimony through some of the things we wish He would simply remove. How can we hold onto that hope without minimizing the very real pain people experience?

STEP INTO ACTION

Let's try to apply this by taking some Next Steps.

1. Work the Soil

Spend 10–15 minutes each day creating space with God—reading Scripture, praying, sitting in silence, or simply talking honestly with Him. As you do, ask:

“God, what is growing in me and what needs to be removed?”

2. Name Your Storm

Identify one situation in your life that you're currently asking God to change. Instead of praying, “God, take this away,” spend time praying:

“Jesus, help me recognize that You are with me in this. What are You wanting to grow in me while I walk through it?”

3. Look in the Mirror

Choose one small, concrete act of obedience this week that reflects trust in Jesus—making a difficult apology, forgiving someone, spending time in Scripture, asking for help, joining a group, serving someone, or having a conversation you've been avoiding. Don't worry about having enormous faith. Plant the seed and let Jesus grow it.