

Life Group Notes 9/15/2024

Pastor Mark Warren You are Not Your Own Week 7

[No doctrine is a given unless it has been found in the Word given by the Holy Spirit and received by you. If you have observations or questions, feel free to send me an email with your comment or observations at tbeachhead@comcast.net. Thank you for taking the time—Pete Mehegan, the Scribe.]

Remember: Be good to one another. Be sensitive and kind. Let God heal our hearts...and guide our discussions. **PLEASE PRE-READ THESE NOTES AND CHOOSE THE DIRECTION THAT IS APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR GROUP.** BE COGNIZANT OF YOUR GROUP'S TIME AND BE SENSITIVE! **Some groups would like to dwell on a single idea. Let the Spirit be your guide. Never feel obligated to complete this study.**

Note: I have highlighted suggested discussion questions that Pastor Mark has raised this week, 9/15. Let's allow the Holy Spirit to guide all our discussions, using the highlights as trail blazes. **The purpose is to minister to one another.** I include each of the passages mentioned in full, to facilitate the enjoyment of these notes. Footnotes are not meant to distract. This week's footnotes include:

1. [On Jewish custom and ten virgins at the wedding feast.](#)
2. [On David and Fearfully and Wonderfully Made, Psalm 139.](#)

*****Important:** At the very [end of these notes](#), I've included passages that were mentioned in this week's message for deeper study using SOAP journaling to help further your study during the week. ***

Pastor Mark evokes the parable of the ten virgins to highlight once again the need to prepare the church in readiness for the days ahead. Look up Matthew 25: [1](#)"At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. [2](#)Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. [3](#)The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take along any extra oil. [4](#)But the wise ones took oil in flasks along with their lamps. [5](#)When the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and fell asleep. [6](#)At midnight the cry rang out: 'Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!' [7](#)Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. [8](#)The foolish ones said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.' [9](#)'No,' said the wise ones, 'or there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.' [10](#)But while they were on their way to buy it, the bridegroom arrived. Those who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet, and the door was shut. [11](#)Later the other virgins arrived and said, 'Lord, lord, open the door for us!' [12](#)But he replied, 'Truly I tell you, I do not know you.' [13](#)Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.

1. What do you see?
2. What is more important, the wedding feast or the number of virgins who were awaiting the bridegroom?
3. Is the virgins' job to wed the bridegroom, or to bring light to the wedding? ([See footnote below.](#))

4. Who weds the bridegroom?
 5. What is more important in this parable, the lamps or the virgins? Explain.
 6. What's more important in this parable, the lamps or the oil in the lamps? Why?
 7. What is the purpose of the lamp?
 8. How effective is a lamp with no oil?
 9. What is the purpose of the oil?
 10. Jesus said, "You are the light of the world...let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father Who is in heaven." Explain.
 11. Why can't one Christian "virgin" just turn and borrow oil from a better Christian "virgin"?
 12. How does one get oil?
 13. The five foolish virgins came back. Did they have oil when they came back?
 14. When is it "too late?"
 15. Explain why the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Explain how
 16. Jesus awakens this precept in His teaching. Why is it good to be alert and prepared?
 17. What is needed for the darkness of the days ahead?
 18. What will the next series, "Grounded," help us purchase?
- Pastor Mark has named this message, "Living Someone Else's Plan."
1. What do you remember?
 2. Whose plan is it?
 3. When did He start planning? How do you know?
 4. Review Psalm 139. ([See footnote 2 below.](#)) Look closely at vv. 13-17 "*[13](#)For You formed my inmost being; You knit me together in my mother's womb. [14](#)I praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Marvelous are Your works, and I know this very well. [15](#)My frame was not hidden from You when I was made in secret, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. [16](#)Your eyes saw my unformed body; all my days were written in Your book and ordained for me before one of them came to be. [17](#)How precious to me are Your thoughts, O God, how vast is their sum!"* What do you know about God's plans for David? When did He begin planning?
 5. Looking at David's offspring, for whose days was God also planning ahead, through David?
 6. How many years in advance was this plan made?
 7. Looking through Jesus, Son of David, for whom was He also making plans in advance? What do you know His plans for you?
 8. When did you realize that you, too, were fearfully and wonderfully made?
 9. Review Jeremiah 29: *[10](#)For this is what the LORD says: "When Babylon's seventy years are complete, I will attend to you and confirm My promise to restore you to this place. [11](#)For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, to give you a future and a hope. [12](#)Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you...."* What do you see?
- Pastor declares, "We have free will. We can plot our course, and choose our own path, or we can surrender our lives."
1. Which path promises greater freedom.
 2. The US constitution, according to the preamble, says its purpose is "...to secure the blessings of liberty unto our progeny..." What are the blessings of liberty?
 3. How does one secure and then pass on these blessings?

4. What do you think: For what purpose were you born, and what are God's plans for you? Pastor relates how he and Audra would pray over Abby when she was a young child, praying for her future husband, his purity and his relationship with Jesus.

1. Can you relate?
2. What was the result?
3. What do you pray for your own offspring?
4. Pastor says, "Remember what Paul stated in 1 Corinthians 6: [19](#) *Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; [20](#) you were bought at a price. Therefore glorify God with your body.*" When we surrender to His plan, where do we find our guide?
5. What was the price?
6. What do we mean when we say, "Jesus is Lord of my life?" To what degree?
7. Ask each other, "How are you doing?" Now pray for one another.
8. What are our next steps?

Look at Jesus' prayer in the Garden in Luke 22: [41](#) *And He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, where He knelt down and prayed, [42](#) "Father, if You are willing, take this cup from Me. Yet not My will, but Yours be done."* [43](#) *Then an angel from heaven appeared to Him and strengthened Him.*

1. What was Jesus' desire?
2. What did He know about His Father's will? How did He learn the Father's will?
3. Look at Luke 9: [29](#) *And as He was praying, the appearance of His face changed, and His clothes became radiantly white. [30](#) Suddenly two men, Moses and Elijah, began talking with Jesus. [31](#) They appeared in glory and spoke about His departure, which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.* How clearly did He know the Father's will before He ever prayed the above prayer in the garden?
4. Review Hebrews 12: [2](#) *Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. [3](#) Consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.* How did Jesus endure the cross. Name the Joy who was set before Him.
5. In Luke's account, at what point in Jesus' life do we know He was determined to follow the Father's will? (Look at Luke 2: [48](#) *When His parents saw Him, they were astonished. "Child, why have You done this to us?" His mother asked. "Your father and I have been anxiously searching for You."* [49](#) *"Why were you looking for Me?" He asked. "Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house?"* [50](#) *But they did not understand the statement He was making to them.*) Do we understand the statement He was making when he was twelve years old?
6. What is the joy that Jesus has set before each one of us? Why is mutual joy the best?

Pastor Mark says, "Our lives were designed to live out a plan bigger than our own." He says this "bullet point" has prophetic implications, as if God Himself were telling us to get ready.

1. Has your awareness of God's plans increased lately? Do you have a testimony?
2. What have you learned recently?
3. Pastor spoke of an 81-year-old who is still working God's surprising plans. Do you remember?
4. How is that encouraging?

Have you ever been distracted from "the plan?" Pastor says, "The world has trained you to become selfish. It has trained you to say, "It's about my life. What school should I go to. What jobs should I get." What form of entertainment should I enjoy.

1. Do you have a testimony?
2. Pastor asks, "How do we return to that plan?" Answer him.

3. Pastor says, we need to ask these questions, "What schools do you have for me? What jobs do you have for me? What spouse do you have for me?" Have you ever done this?
4. How do these questions procure a different kind of answer?
5. Explain this principle: The postmaster general does not hand the day's mail to the carrier to bring that mail to the carrier's own house. To whom is the mail carrier sent? Does he ever leave the post office when there is no mail to carry? Why does he return to the post office every day?
6. Who designed your route? Who's on your route to whom you deliver daily?

Three practices to apply this week to retrain yourself to return to God's plan:

Pastor says, "Sometimes we're on autopilot, waiting for the next promotion...thinking that promotion is our next step." He adds, "The existence of an opportunity is not the guarantee that the opportunity comes from God. Have you taken the moment just to ask, 'Lord what do you have for me?'"

1. Can you explain?
2. Do you have a testimony?
3. What are the risks of jumping ahead without inquiry?

• **Practice preferring others**

Look up Philippians 2: [3](#)Do nothing out of selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility consider others more important than yourselves. [4](#)Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

1. How is this the opposite of false humility?
2. Who does Jesus say is the greatest in the Kingdom of God?
3. Why is the last always first and the first last in the Kingdom?
4. Is this difficult?
5. Stand and turn in a circle: Who is in the center of your physical universe? Now look inside, Who is truly the Whole Center of the world of the Spirit?
6. Why is it that the narcissist forgets this principle?
7. Why must we PRACTICE this? Who does your dishes?
8. If you see trash thrown on the floor in your office or your kitchen, whose trash is it?
9. Whose office or kitchen is it?
10. How does Jesus wash feet today? Do you have a testimony?

• **Practice self-denial**

Pastor says, "Specifically, practice fasting. Practice serving." He explains that there is something that happens in a situation where you can have something, and you choose not to.

1. Do you have a testimony?
2. Has your life ever been impacted by fasting?
3. Look up Matthew 16: [23](#)But Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me. For you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men." [24](#)Then Jesus told His disciples, "[If anyone wants to come after Me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me.](#) [25](#)For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it." What do you see?
4. In context, Jesus was this harsh to Peter, because Peter had just tried to "encourage" Jesus, saying, He didn't have to get betrayed, handed over and crucified. How important is it, when fasting or denying yourself in any way, not to lose sight of the goal?
5. What is Jesus encouraging us to do today, by taking up our cross?
6. Can you see how this step might fit into God's plan for our lives? Can you see how it might help us recognize God's plan?

7. If Peter's words to Jesus above were a satanic distraction, how do we avoid such distraction? ...to keep in mind the things of God and not the things of man?
8. How easy would it be for you to fast from the phone?
- **Practice flexibility. (Be open to new ideas, other peoples' plans and change)**
 1. What does this suggest?
 2. Have you gotten regimented in your routines?
 3. Have you worked with someone so intransigent that success became difficult to achieve? Has that someone ever been you?
 4. Look up Isaiah 64:[8](#)*But now, O LORD, You are our Father; we are the clay, and You are the potter; we are all the work of Your hand.* Does the potter work with hardened clay?
 5. Have you ever worked with clay? Did the clay argue with you?
 6. What can a skilled potter do that the clay cannot do by itself?
 7. If the potter is not satisfied with the pot, what does he do with it?
 8. Why doesn't he just throw the clay away?
 9. How can you know that the potter is not finished with the clay?
 10. Why is flexibility essential in this day? What surprises are ahead?
 11. Pastor answers the question, "How do we stay soft, and supple and pliable on the potter's wheel?" "We have to be learners. We have to say, 'Not my way.' We have to prefer others. We have to be open to change...and this we have to practice, practice, practice." Explain.
 12. Following this analogy: What part does fresh water play in the clay's remaining pliable? What part does the Holy Spirit play in you remaining pliable?
 13. Why does this take practice?
 14. How adaptable are we? What can we do to encourage one another?

Pastor asks, "What will it look like when we start availing ourselves of these practices. What will it look like for you. How do you treat others differently? Whom do you treat differently?"

1. Answer him.
2. What came to mind as he listed the possibilities?
3. Where do you need flexibility? Can you pray for one another?

The Follow-up Application

1. Use the [SOAP journal studies](#) below throughout the week.
2. Practice preferring others, and journal what steps you took. Note what changes, and what it looks like.
3. Practice self-denial. Make a choice this week and keep it: practice fasting or practice serving. Note what changes.
4. Practice flexibility. Make a note this week when a new suggestion, idea or strategy comes up. Note your response. Write it down and bring the testimony to Life Group next week.

Take the time to pray.

Scribe's Notes:

1. **On Jewish custom and ten virgins at the wedding**—The wedding feast Jesus described involved a bridegroom who was late for the feast, and ten virgins called to be a part of the feast. No Jewish wedding tradition ever known involves ten brides. Scholarship suggests that these were members of the Bride's wedding entourage, the bridesmaids, and they were clearly held responsible for illuminating the festivities. I found this excellent article to help explain the nature of the customs more clearly:
<https://hermeneutics.stackexchange.com/questions/406/are-the-ten-virgins-told-in-jesus-parable-multiple-brides-or-just-general-wed>
2. **On David and "Fearfully and wonderfully made," Psalm 139**—Tradition suggests that David wrote this song, which makes the wonder of it more significant because of the chronology of David's birth. Saul reigned for forty years. David was thirty when he rose to the throne. That prophecy that Samuel spoke to Saul, 1 Sam 13:14, that he was taking away the kingdom that was his, and giving it to "...a man after God's own heart..." (whom Paul clearly identifies as David in Acts 13:22) was pronounced seven years before David was born. David's days were actually foreseen years before he had known a single day. David is not being allegorical, but factual and historically accurate.

For further study:

Take a moment each day this week to apply the **SOAP**... (Scripture—Copy the scripture. / Observation—Write what you see. / Application—What is God saying? / Prayer—What is your response?) ...method to some of the scripture we looked at this week:

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| Monday: Matthew 25:8-13 |
| Tuesday: Psalm 139:1-6 |
| Wednesday: Psalm 139:13-17 |
| Thursday: Jeremiah 29 10-14 |
| Friday: Luke 9:29-31, 22:41-44 |
| Saturday: Hebrews 12:2-3 |
| Sunday: Philippians 2:3-4 |

Once again, some passages suggested here have more than the usual number of verses. This is not to increase the burden but to provide clarity of context. Pick the verses that speak to you most clearly, and run these through the SOAP steps.