

WORDS OF JESUS

SERMON SERIES

DISCUSSION GUIDE

The Shopkeeper

SPEAKER: Bo Stern Brady

DATE: July 5, 2026

TEXT(S): Matthew 13:10-17, 51-52,
with John 1:16 and Proverbs 2:1-6

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE: *This resource is designed to help you, and your group, step through a progression of engagement with the Bible passage(s) and the speaker's message.*

Our goal is to help you and your group better understand and apply B4's teaching.

MESSAGE SUMMARY + DISCUSSION PROMPTS

Jesus concludes the seven kingdom parables in Matthew 13 by asking His disciples, "Have you understood all these things?" His concern is not merely that people hear His teaching but that they understand it with softened hearts. Kingdom embrace comes through ongoing apprenticeship to Jesus, in which we remain close to Him, receive His words, and invite the Holy Spirit to transform the hard places within us. Those who understand become spiritual "householders," drawing from God's ancient truth and fresh work to bless others. Discipleship is never merely personal enrichment; it equips us to become generous stewards of God's wisdom and goodness for others' sake.

LEAN IN: *These are icebreakers and warm-ups, mostly to get the group talking and start the flow of conversation. Choose one and talk it over for 5 minutes.*

1. What's something you understand much better today than you did five years ago?
2. Who has been one of the most influential teachers or mentors in your life, and why?
3. When do you find it easiest to listen carefully? When is it hardest?
4. If you could become an expert in one subject, what would it be?
5. What word or image from Sunday's message stayed with you most?

LOOK DOWN: *These are questions about the Bible passage(s) from the teaching. Spend about 10 minutes discussing your choice of two or three questions:*

1. Why do you think Jesus asks His disciples whether they understand instead of simply assuming they do?
2. What does Matthew 13 suggest is the difference between hearing Jesus and understanding Him?
3. How does Isaiah's description of hardened hearts deepen your understanding of Jesus' ministry?
4. What do you notice about the description of the "scribe disciplined in the kingdom" in Matthew 13:52?
5. Why do you think Jesus describes kingdom disciples as bringing out both "new" and "old" treasures?

LOOK OUT: *These questions help connect the world of the Bible to today.*
Spend about 10 minutes discussing your choice of two or three questions:

1. What are some ways modern culture weaponizes information without positive transformation?
2. Why do you think we often mistake knowledge about Jesus for genuine discipleship to Jesus?
3. What kinds of experiences tend to harden people's hearts today?
4. What would it look like for Christians to become "storehouses of treasure" for their communities?
5. Why is lifelong apprenticeship increasingly countercultural in the age of "instant?"

LOOK IN: *These questions help you consider how to engage the teaching for yourself.*
Spend about 15-20 minutes discussing your choice of two or three questions:

1. Where do you sense God inviting you to move from hearing His Word to understanding and embodying it?
2. Which of the message's warnings about a hardened heart resonated most with you, and why?
3. How has the Holy Spirit recently brought fresh understanding to a familiar Scripture?
4. What "treasures" might Jesus have been storing in your life that someone else may need?
5. Which of the four practices from the message (receive, listen, ask, and understand) do you most need to strengthen this week?

LIVE IT OUT: *These prayer practices can help you integrate this message into day-to-day life.*
Choose one prompt and discuss how you will embrace it this week (5 minutes):

1. Daily Prayer for Understanding (5–10 minutes): Before reading your Bible each day this week, pray slowly through Psalm 119:18 and James 1:5. Afterwards, pray something like this, "Lord, open my eyes to see wonderful things in Your Word. Give me wisdom. Soften every place in my heart that has become resistant to You. Help me not only hear Your voice but understand it and obey it." Next, read a short Gospel passage, and ask yourself: What is Jesus revealing? What is He inviting me to believe/trust? What is He inviting me to do?
2. Do a "Treasure" Inventory: End each day this week by asking yourself three questions. What treasure did Jesus give me today? Where did I notice His wisdom? Who might need this encouragement tomorrow? Offer Jesus a prayer of thanks, then pray for one specific person who may benefit from what God has been teaching you.

You can find B4's [Series Resources here](#).

