



## Part 3

### Introduction

Our expectations of future events often determine our priorities and preparation. To expect is to believe that something will happen, and we often harbour expectations about our careers, relationships and even God. Since the Babylonian exile, the children of Israel also harboured the expectation that God's kingdom will eventually arrive to subjugate and rule over the earth, but in Matthew 13, Christ used a series of parables to transform this into a vision of ploughing, sowing, watering and waiting. How then, would such a vision of God's kingdom change the way we establish our priorities and expectations?

### Discussion Questions

1. Have we harboured faulty expectations about God and his will for our lives? Consider a situation which ran contrary to *your* expectations about God's actions. How did you respond?
2. What are some of your major priorities today? Are they aligned with the mission of God's kingdom?
3. In your view, what are some of ways we can sow into God's kingdom? What are the possible challenges if one embarks on this journey?
4. Read Matthew 13. Do an inductive bible study (observations, interpretation and application). You can use the following as a guide:
  - i. Posture your heart. Spend some time in prayer and ask the Holy Spirit to be your teacher. Open your heart to the Lord to speak to you.
  - ii. Read the passage aloud
  - iii. Ask some context questions of the passage:
    - What sort of writing is this? (a letter, a poem, a narrative etc?)
    - Are there any clues about the circumstances under which it was written?
    - What has happened so far in this particular book of the Bible?
  - iv. Some observation questions of the passage:
    - Are there any major sub-sections or breaks in the passage?

- What is the main point or points?
- What surprises are there?
- What are the key words? What words or ideas are repeated?

v. Some leading questions of the text:

- How does this passage relate to other parts of the book?
- How does the passage relate to Jesus?
- What does this teach us about God?
- How could we sum up the meaning of this passage in our own words?

vi. Some application questions of the passage:

- How does this passage challenge (or confirm) your understanding?
- Is there some attitude I need to change?
- How does this passage call on me to change the way I live?

### **WHAT WOULD YOU DO?**

Compared to what the children of Israel were expecting from God, Christ used the parables in Matthew 13 to explain the priorities his people should hold onto, which were to faithfully sow and tend to the work of discipling others. Many of the problems around us today compel some to hope for God's swift and decisive judgement, but we are—like the parable of the mustard seed (13: 31-32)—called to faithfully work and grow the harvest in every small way, as we live in the dawn of God's kingdom.

### **CHANGE YOUR MINDSET**

*"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field." (Matthew 13:44)*