**Where is God?**

**Sermon Based Discussion (April 9, 2017)**

**The Gospel of Mark**

**WARM UP**

1. What is a story/fairy tale/fable that you heard as a child which has stuck with you throughout your life? Share about that story and why it’s stuck with you.

*Stories stick with us, even ones we heard as small children. Sometimes a story stays with us because it frightened us. Other times, we might find a story encouraging.*

*In this session, we will see some of the stories—parables—which Jesus told his disciples. We’ll see how Jesus’ stories can serve to both encourage and warn us.*

**INTO THE BIBLE (Mark 4:21-34)**

1. In your own words, what do you think is the main idea for each of the three parables in this passage:
2. The parable of the lamp
3. The parable of the seed
4. The parable of the mustard seed

**UNDERSTANDING**

1. Jesus’s words in verse 25 might seem unfair or unjust. Why does Jesus teach this principle and what does it mean?
2. Jesus taught these parables—especially the parables of the seed and the mustard seed—to encourage his disciples to share the message of Jesus. How did Jesus intend these parables to be encouraging?

**DIFFERENCE**

1. What situations or factors may discourage Christians from initiating spiritual conversations and/or sharing their faith today?
2. In what ways do Jesus’s encouragements relate to your life?

**APPLICATION**

1. How does Jesus’s warning in verses 24-25 apply to people-- including both Christians and non-Christians?
2. What is one way you can apply this message in your life?