

MARK CHAPTER 4 – “THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER; THE PURPOSE OF PARABLES; THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER EXPLAINED; LIGHT UNDER A BASKET; THE PARABLE OF THE GROWING SEED; THE PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED; JESUS’ USE OF PARABLES; WIND AND WAVE OBEY JESUS”

OBSERVATION

Monday 7:00pm, H 105 (1st floor, High School--foot of stairs, behind the gym, by the vending machine area), Tuesday 7:00am, Family, Room, CCCM – **Phil Twente, cell #714 425 9221; email – ptwente@gmail.com** For past studies, audio plus notes, go to: <http://www.missioncalvary.com/> Click on “Bible Studies” on the left column. References include commentaries by numerous pastor/teachers.

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER:

Main Point of Parable:

“A man’s reception of God’s Word is determined by the condition of his heart.”

Mar 4:1 And again He began to teach by the sea. And a great multitude was gathered to Him, so that He got into a boat and sat in it on the sea; and the whole multitude was on the land facing the sea.

Mar 4:2 Then He taught them many things by parables, and said to them in His teaching:

Mar 4:3 "Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow.

Mar 4:4 And it happened, as he sowed, that some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds of the air came and devoured it.

Mar 4:5 Some fell on stony ground, where it did not have much earth; and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of earth.

Mar 4:6 But when the sun was up it was scorched, and because it had no root it withered away.

Mar 4:7 And some seed fell among thorns; and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no crop.

Mar 4:8 But other seed fell on good ground and yielded a crop that sprang up, increased and produced: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred."

Mar 4:9 And He said to them, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

Mar 4:10 But when He was alone, those around Him with the twelve asked Him about the parable.

THE PURPOSE OF PARABLES:

Mar 4:11 And He said to them, "To you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to those who are outside, all things come in parables,

Mar 4:12 so that 'SEEING THEY MAY SEE AND NOT PERCEIVE, AND HEARING THEY MAY HEAR AND NOT UNDERSTAND; LEST THEY SHOULD TURN, AND THEIR SINS BE FORGIVEN THEM.'

v. 1 Taking advantage of the natural acoustical properties of water, Jesus spoke from a boat offshore to the group of perhaps thousands who listened to Him on the beach.

vs. 2-10 Before explaining the meaning of the parable to His disciples, Jesus told them they were those to whom the mystery of the kingdom of God would be revealed. In the Bible, the Greek word *mysterion*, or “mystery,” refers to a truth previously hidden but now revealed. There are a number of mysteries of which the New Testament speaks, among them the mystery of iniquity, revealed through an understanding of spiritual warfare (2 Thessalonians 2:7), and the mystery of godliness, revealed in the Person of Jesus Christ (1 Timothy 3:16). Here, Jesus is about to reveal to the disciples the mystery of the kingdom of God...

vs. 11-12 Why would Jesus want to keep anyone from being converted? The answer lies in the fact that because He could have spoken so powerfully that people would have been forced to concede to the logic of His argument and converted against their will, Jesus chose to speak in a way that would not manipulate people or force them into a decision. Because He will not force His will upon anyone intellectually, emotionally, or spiritually, Jesus spoke in parables in order that only those who wanted to hear would hear, in order that only those who wanted to see would see

Chapter 4 - In Mark’s portrayal of Jesus as Servant, in chapters 1–3, we saw the Servant’s works. Here in chapters 4 and 5, we’ll see the Servant’s words. Although our Western belief is that “talk is cheap,” Hebrew writers and thinkers viewed words as being arrows that, when shot, would carry packets of energy that would leave a lasting impression upon the hearers. This being the case, in the first part of chapter 4, we see insight from Jesus’ words; and at the end of chapter 4 and into chapter 5, we see the impact of His words.

v. 9 Do you use your ears to “hear”?

Application: How obedient are you to the command, “*He who has ears to hear, let him hear!*”

Vs. 11-12 Parable – para (along side); ballos (to throw) A parable is a story that takes a story that is well known, understood and can be seen and along side that known story, is a story of spiritual significance, which cannot be seen. Parables both **conceal from those who don’t want to hear** and **reveal to the hearts that do want to hear**--depending on the heart of the listener.

Application: Which is your heart?

I LOVE TO TELL THE STORY – Hankey/Fischer (Ford)

*1. I love to tell the story of unseen things above
Of Jesus and His glory, of Jesus and His love
I love to tell the story because I know 'tis true
It satisfies my longings as nothing else can do*

CHORUS: *I love to tell the story 'Twill be my theme in glory.
To tell the old, old story Of Jesus and His love*

*2. I love to tell the story more wonderful it seems,
Than all the golden fancies, of all our golden dreams,
I Love to tell the story, it did so much for me
And that is just the reason, I tell it now to thee. CHORUS*

*3. I love to tell the story, for those who know it best
Seem hungering and thirsting to hear it like the rest
And when, in scenes of glory, I sing the new, new song
'Twill be the old, old story that I have loved so long.
CHORUS*

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INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER EXPLAINED:

Mar 4:13 And He said to them, "Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables?

Mar 4:14 The sower sows the word.

Mar 4:15 And these are the ones by the wayside where the word is sown. When they hear, Satan comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts.

Mar 4:16 These likewise are the ones sown on stony ground who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with gladness; Mar 4:17 and they have no root in themselves, and so endure only for a time. Afterward, when tribulation or persecution arises for the word's sake, immediately they stumble.

Mar 4:18 Now these are the ones sown among thorns; they are the ones who hear the word, Mar 4:19 and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.

Mar 4:20 But these are the ones sown on good ground, those who hear the word, accept it, and bear fruit: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred."

v. 13 This parable is a key to understanding them all.

v. 14 The sower here is one who is scattering seed—which speaks of the Scriptures. “You’re born again not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, that is, the Word of God,” said Peter (see 1 Peter 1:23). The soil upon which the seed is sown speaks of the condition of men’s hearts—not only of the hearts of four different individuals, but of the condition of our own hearts at any given time. When you read this parable, don’t think you’re automatically always the one who has the good soil and the abundant fruit. On any given day, in any given week, this can change. We don’t remain in the same spot. This parable speaks to all of us, depending upon the current condition of our hearts. **Example of ancient Egyptian wheat seed.**

v. 15 The first soil described here **speaks of people who are hard-hearted**. They hear the Word, and it doesn’t penetrate at all. “That’s for the birds,” they say. And the birds come and pluck it away. **The hard heart!**

vs. 16-17 This speaks not of hard hearts, but of shallow hearts. “Jesus is great!” say those with shallow commitments as they put bumper stickers on their cars. They spring up quickly—but their roots aren’t very deep. And when the sun comes out, when persecution starts coming their way, when people start making fun of them, they begin to wither because their roots are shallow. **The shallow heart!**

vs.18-19 This speaks not of a hard heart, nor a shallow heart, but of a crowded heart. The cares of the world speak primarily to the person who is poor financially, and thus, always worried about how he’ll make ends meet. The deceitfulness of riches, on the other hand, speaks of the wealthy man who mistakenly thinks his new ski boat will make him genuinely happy. Don’t get caught up in thinking that if you just had one more thing, you’d really be happy. It’s simply not true. I think **most church goers have this type of heart – good, sincere, people, but because their lives are filled with busy ness, they are generally unfruitful! The crowded heart!**

v. 20 Normally, a crop brings forth eight times the seed sown. So even thirty—to one is an incredible ration. Sixty—to one is astronomical. One hundred—to one is miraculous. Where are you? The fact that you have made a decision to receive the Word and allow it to penetrate the soil of your spirit even as you study right now is indicative of the potential for miraculous fruit in your life. **The fruitful heart!**

Summary - May we have fruitful hearts – good soil, responsive, ready to listen, ready to think, ready to pay attention! what we have heard. To think more deeply than ever before. May we let His word remain in our hearts. May we ask ourselves, “What does His word mean? What does it mean to me? How does it affect me?

V. 14 Jesus sowed the word. That’s the power! It’s in the Word! It’s the seed, not the sower! There is a term called expository constancy in the interpreting of parables. Expository constancy basically declares that where a figure is used to represent something, then there’s this constancy that this particular figure always prefigures the same idea, the same thought. In other words, where the seed here is the word of God that is sown, “the sower soweth the word,” so that the seed is the word of God. Thus, in the parables where you find the planting of the seed, it is the planting of God’s word. And this expository constancy is rather important in the understanding of parables.

Application: Are you sowing the word? (John 17:17)

V. 15 The hard pathway. The hardened heart! The seed went on the 1st soil, but not in! Here it goes in but on very shallow.

Application: Is this your heart?

V. 16-17 The shallow soil. The shallow heart. The hardened heart! The seed went on the 1st soil, but not in!

Application: How shallow or how deep has the word gone into your heart?

V. 18-19 The choked-out, busy heart! The seed went on the 1st soil, but not in! Here the seed when in, but later gets choked out by the deceitfulness (to cheat; gives a false impression) of riches and the cares of this life; the lust for other things!

Application: Does this describe your life presently?

V. 20 The word goes in and then goes deeper! The word is heard and received! Over time at this heart continues with the Lord, fruitfulness results, with some bearing supernaturally, **some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred! The key point of this whole parable is that the only one of these four hearts which is genuinely Christian is the fourth one, this one!**

Application: Does this describe your heart right now? Is my life fruitful? Would the Lord say, there is one of my children whose life is bearing much fruit?

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INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

LIGHT UNDER A BASKET;

Main Point of Parable: “We have a stewardship to be light, whose purpose is to shine and to bring light to others”

Mar 4:21 Also He said to them, "Is a lamp brought to be put under a basket or under a bed? Is it not to be set on a lampstand?"

Mar 4:22 For there is nothing hidden which will not be revealed, nor has anything been kept secret but that it should come to light.

Mar 4:23 If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear."

Mar 4:24 Then He said to them, "Take heed what you hear. With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given.

Mar 4:25 For whoever has, to him more will be given; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him."

THE PARABLE OF THE GROWING SEED;

Main Point of Parable: “The way God uses His Word in the heart of an individual is mysterious and completely independent of human effort”

Mar 4:26 And He said, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground,

Mar 4:27 and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how.

Mar 4:28 For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head.

Mar 4:29 But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come."

THE PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED;

Main Point of Parable: “Jesus predicts, the church will grow extremely large from just a small start, it will not remain pure.”

Mar 4:30 Then He said, "To what shall we liken the kingdom of God? Or with what parable shall we picture it?"

Mar 4:31 It is like a mustard seed which, when it is sown on the ground, is smaller than all the seeds on earth;

Mar 4:32 but when it is sown, it grows up and becomes greater than all herbs, and shoots out large branches, so that the birds of the air may nest under its shade."

vs. 21-23 People often use this verse to say everything you’ve done wrong, said wrong, thought wrong is going to be exposed. That’s not what’s being said here. Rather, the Lord is saying, “I don’t want people to be in the dark concerning My ways or My heart.”

Mark 4:24, 25 And he said unto them, Take heed what ye hear: with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear shall more be given. For he that hath, to him shall be given: and he that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath. Jesus isn’t saying,

vs. 24-25 “Take heed what you hear.” He says, rather, “Take heed how you hear, the way you hear.” In other words, when you receive truth, if you release it to others, more will be given. If, on the other hand, you simply take in truth without allowing it to flow through you to others, you’ll begin to lose what was given to you previously, and find fresh revelation or insight no longer being given to you.

vs. 26-29 As he sows seed, a farmer doesn’t understand exactly how the seed grows. Yet one day he looks out the window and sees a crop. Keep in mind, Jesus is talking about the mystery of the effect of the Word. And, like the seed sown by the farmer, it’s inexplicable how studying the Scriptures causes the kingdom to be established within us and among us. **Our Lord is teaching us the fantastic truth that God is at work. It does not all depend on us!** Thank You, Lord that I can trust that as I do my part and sow the seed of Your Word wherever I can, You will do the rest. **We must be faithful to sow the seed. Secondly, we must leave room for God to work**

v. 30 After teaching encouragingly about the kingdom, Jesus ends with a warning that the kingdom is like a mustard seed that grows to the point that birds lodge within its branches. Due to the fact that nowhere in the world now or historically has a mustard seed ever grown into a tree big enough to support birds and their nests, I believe Jesus is saying that as the kingdom grows, it will expand unnaturally in its organization and structure; that it will become bigger than it was ever intended to be, that birds—the Biblical symbol of evil—will lodge therein. We see this in so many systems throughout church history, as complexity replaced simplicity and hierarchy swallowed liberty

V. 21-22 The word comes and is to be received and then stewardship of this gift is attached to the hearer/receiver!

V. 23-25 Take heed what you hear! To him who has received, more will be given. But alternately, whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him! **Application: Which are you?**

vs. 26-29 ...and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how. – **This is the key or certainly one of the main keys to the passage.** The life of one receiving and doing becomes fruitful. Even when sleeping by night and rising by day, the seed should sprout and grow, even though the believer does not know how. Our ignorance will never keep the word from doing what God intends. The seed that sows shall reap in kind! But it takes time. This is a picture of the Kingdom of God.

Application: We have the privilege of sowing the fertile seed of the gospel. Do we trust the sovereign work of the Spirit to produce a harvest, or rely on our own effectiveness?

vs. 30-32 A picture here of the Kingdom of God, beginning as the smallest seed that they knew about at that time. But when it’s sown, it grow up and becomes greater than all herbs. Small things matter!

Application: Are you sowing? Do you despise small things?

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INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

JESUS’ USE OF PARABLES:

Mar 4:33 And with many such parables He spoke the word to them as they were able to hear it.

Mar 4:34 But without a parable He did not speak to them. And when they were alone, He explained all things to His disciples.

WIND AND WAVE OBEY JESUS” – a storm of obedience – of protection (this is not a storm of correction - Jonah)

Mar 4:35 On the same day, when evening had come, He said to them, “Let us cross over to the other side.”

Mar 4:36 Now when they had left the multitude, they took Him along in the boat as He was. And other little boats were also with Him.

Mar 4:37 And a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling.

Mar 4:38 But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to Him, “Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?”

Mar 4:39 Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, “Peace, be still!” And the wind ceased and there was a great calm.

Mar 4:40 But He said to them, “Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?”

Mar 4:41 And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, “Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!”

vs. 33-35 After teaching about the Word, Jesus now gives His word to the disciples that they would indeed pass over to the other side of the Sea of Galilee—a word Satan would soon test. Mark 4:36 And when they had sent away the multitude, they took him even as he was in the ship. And there were also with him other little ships. We have the tendency to think that no one faces the same temptations, challenges, or storms we do. Paul, however, tells us no temptation comes to us except that which is common to man (1 Corinthians 10:13). That is why there were with the disciples “other little ships” out on the Sea of Galilee.

v. 37 Jesus had taught about His Word, and had given His word that the disciples would make it to the other side. But whether regarding a promise Jesus gave to His disciples, or one He gives to you, after teaching comes testing. Always.

v. 38 If Jesus is in your boat, it can’t sink. If He’s in your life, you won’t go down. He has promised to perfect that which concerns you (Psalm 138:8). And though the storm might rage, causing you to say, “Master, don’t You care that I’m perishing?” He’s not worried. He’s sleeping—not in apathy, but with great security. “The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty....” Zephaniah tells us, “...He will rest in His love...” (Zephaniah 3:17). Thus, concerning the storm you may be going through even now or perhaps will face tomorrow, the Lord is not wondering if you’re going to make it. He’s resting in His love. He knows He’s going to see you through.

v. 39 The Greek word translated “be still” literally means “be muzzled.” This is the same command Jesus issued when He addressed demons, which implies that this storm was actually stirred by Satan. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. When Jesus thwarted Satan’s plan and calmed the storm, not only were the disciples at peace, but all of the “other little ships” were spared as well. So, too, when Jesus makes His power known by the storms He calms for us, those around us benefit as they see His faithfulness to us.

v. 40 The One who calmed the storm was the One who had allowed the storm in order to teach the disciples to believe His Word.

v. 41 It is not the outward circumstances we have to fear, but the inward waves of fear and faithlessness that well up within us. The Lord has given us His Word that He will never leave us or forsake us (Hebrews 13:5). Therefore, no matter how strong the storm might seem, no matter the force of the waves that beat upon our boat, if we love God and are called according to His purpose, all things will work together for good (Romans 8:28); He will complete that which He began in us (Philippians 1:6)—and we can be at peace. **Psalm 107:23-32**

Vs. 33-34 Jesus continues to use the parables widely in His teaching – concealing the truth to those who are against him and giving the truth to those who believe!

Application: Which is your heart?

Vs. 35-26- *Let us cross over to the other side!* The disciples “took Him along” – we’re fisherman, You’re the carpenter!

Vs. 37-38 They are heading into a storm! This is a perfecting storm, not a correcting storm, such as Jonah experienced. Now as the storm develops, the boat “*was already filling.*” They awoke Him crying out for Him that they are perishing and Jesus doesn’t care!

Application: Are you surprised when you’re in the will of God that storms come? Do you then jump to the conclusion that you are perishing and Jesus doesn’t care! Have you ever said or thought that?

V. 39 The He stands up, speaks “Peace, be still!” The wind ceased and there was a great calm!

Application: What is your reaction when you see our Lord doing a great thing?

V. 40 The disciples had been witnessing miracles, healings and the parables of the seed growing and being so fruitful! But here as danger appears, they freak out! Jesus says to them, “*Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?*”

Application: How afraid do you think you would have been?

V. 41 *What manner of man is this that even the wind and sea obey Him?* When they see the awesome power of our Savior, they were so impressed. Their attitude became one of great fear. They knew the Sea of Galilee well and it’s storms. Here they had just witnessed Jesus stopping the wind and calming the sea.

Application: What would your reaction have been?