

8/2/20

Mark 4

Jesus having encountered opposition and series of conflicts in first two chapters now turns to the sea of Galilee again to teach giving emphasis on how and what man hears regarding the word of the Kingdom of God.

4:1-9 The Parable of the Sower.

* The parallel passages. Matt. 13:1-9; Lk. 8:4-8

4:1 The setting for the teaching.

- 1) The location was the Sea of Galilee, “And again He began to teach by the sea.” vs. 1a
 - a) Again indicates having withdrawn from the synagogue. Mk. 3:7
 - b) On the same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the sea.’ Matt. 13:1
- 2) The situation as Jesus was about to teach, “And a great multitude was gathered to Him.” vs. 1b

* The people sought Jesus out constantly.
- 3) The alteration for His teaching, “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.” vs. 1c-d
 - a) The word boat “ploion”, indicates a larger vessel, not the smaller one “ploiarion”. Mk. 3:9

- b) The multitude facing the sea providing a natural amphitheater to hear Jesus.
- c) Matthew confirms this. Matt. 13:2

4:2 The Parabolic method of teaching.

- 1) The teaching was now new, “Then He taught them many things by parables.” vs. 2a
 - a) The word parables “paraballois”, as noted means to throw alongside. Mk. 3:23; 2:19-22; Matt. 13:3
 - b) Parables use a common understood truth, placed alongside the unknown to know the unknown.
 - c) It has a central theme and not everything has particular meaning, unless it is given in the parable.
 - d) Parables do one of two things, either compare or contrast and they have a punch-line.
- 2) The Lord Jesus began to teach, “and said to them in His teaching.” vs. 2b

4:3 The introduction of the parable.

- 1) The emphasis is on attentiveness to understand the important truths never revealed before, “Listen!” vs. 3a
 - a) The word listen “akouo”, means to attend to, consider what is about to be said and percieve the sense of it.
 - b) Call to hear this truth. Matt. 13:35; Mk. 4:1, 9, 13, 23, 34

- 2) The familiar imagery for the parable,
 “Behold, a sower went out to sow.” vs. 3b-c
- a) The word Behold “idou” means to see, an imperative command in the middle voice, indicating each person is responsible to do it.
 - b) Sower is the Son of Man. Matt. 13:37
 - c) Secondly the believer. 1Cor. 3:5-8
 - d) The sowing is the seed, the word. Mk. 4:14; Lk. 8:11
 - e) This is the key parable to understand all parables. vs. 13

4:4-9 The four kinds of soil.

- 1) The first ground, “And it happened, as he sowed, *that* some *seed* fell by the wayside; and the birds of the air came and devoured it.” vs. 4
 - a) The soils are said to represent the hearts of sinners hearing the word of the kingdom, their receptiveness. Mk. 4:15; Matt. 13:19; Lk. 8:15
 - b) The wayside “hodos”, means hard ground where the farmer walked, so the seed did not penetrate into the soil, therefore did not germinate.
 - c) Consequently the birds devoured “katesthio”, simply means to consume or eat up by the birds that represent evil in Scripture. Matt. 13:4

* Matthew says the wicked one comes and snatches away “harpozo”, the seed, suddenly and violently, same word for the rapture. Matt. 13:19; Mk. 4:15

- 2) The second ground, “Some fell on stony ground, where it did not have much earth; and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of earth. But when the sun was up it was scorched, and because it had no depth of earth.” vs. 5-6
 - a) The stony ground indicates shallow ground with bedrock under it not allowing roots to go down deep.
 - b) The outcome is that the sun scorched “kaumatizo” burned it, having no root it withered away, but clearly sprouted.
 - c) The words of Jesus will tell us the heard and received the word, the problem was the heart.
- 3) The third ground, “And some *seed* fell among thorns; and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no crop.” vs. 7
 - a) The thorns indicates ground that is crowded with weeds that deplete nourishment and choke the seed.
 - b) Once again the heart is the soil, the problem, a divided heart, allowing things of the world to crowd out the word of God.

- 4) The fourth ground, “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.” vs. 8
- a) The good ground is turned over, weeds are removed and the seed is able to penetrate deep and grows to be fruitful.
 - b) This is a committed heart abiding in Christ.
- 5) The exhortation, “And He said to them, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear!” vs. 9
- a) The word hear "akouo", depicts the endowment and faculty of being able to hear, no one is at a disadvantage.
 - a) Just as there are varieties of soils, so there are varieties of men’s hearts towards the word of God. Mk. 4:15
 - b) The problem is not with the seed or the sower, but with the heart of the hearer!

4:10-12 The expamation on the purpose of a parable.

* The parallel passages. Matt. 13:10-17; Lk. 8:9-10

4:10 The question about the parable of the sower.

- 1) The time is indicated, “But when He was alone.” vs. 10a
- 2) The one are indicated, “those around Him with the twelve asked Him about the parable.” vs. 10b

- a) The many disciples of Jesus that He called to the mountain to chose twelve apostles. Matt. 10:1-2; Mk. 3:13-14; Lk. 6:12-13
- b) The twelve selected as apostles.

4:11-12 The distinction between those open to the gospel and those who are not.

- 1) The ones that believe, “And He said to them, “To you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God.” vs. 11a-b
- a) The twelve were chosen by God to reveal the mystery of the Kingdom of God.
 - 1) The word mystery “musterion” means something previously hidden, but now made known by Jesus.
 - 2) Matthew tells us that the Kingdom Parables in Matthew were the fulfillment of revealing “things kept secret from the foundation of the world”. Matt. 13:35
 - 3) Every time the word is used in the New Testament it refers to something revealed clearly, not hidden. Rom. 11:25; 1Cor. 15:51; Eph. 3:5; 5:32; 2Thess. 2:7; 1Tim. 3:15; Rev. 1:20
- b) So Jesus explained all to them because they believed in Him.
 - 1) Born again.
 - 2) Disciples and apostles.

- 2) The one that do not believe, “but to those who are outside, all things come in parables.” vs. 11c-d
 - a) The parabolic method as we will see was not to hide or hinder their understanding.
 - b) The parabolic method was to stimulate and cause them to think and come to the truth of the parable.
- 2) The problem again is with the heart, “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.’” vs. 12
 - a) At first it seems Jesus is teaching that the purpose of the parabolic teaching was to hinder or obstruct understanding, repent and be forgiven.
 - a) But Matthew is quoting “Is.6:9-10”, Isaiah tells God to send him to preach His word and God describes the result due to the condition of Israel’s stiff neckness and hard heart, ending with greater spiritual dullness and blindness.
 - * Matthew said this was fulfilled by the Jews. Matt. 13:14-15
 - b) So the parabolic teaching was not to hinder or obstruct understanding. but rather to stimulate and cause them to think in hope that they come to the truth of the parable.

- 1)) Common words and language had been rejected by the people. Matt. 13:13
- 2)) The Parables would be used to prompt curiosity and stimulate the mind and heart to understand the message.
- 3)) For if parables hid and hindered truth, then the lost would be free from personal responsibility to respond.
- 4)) The greater exposure brings greater responsibility. Matt. 11:23-24

4:13-20 The interpretation of the Parable of the Sower.

* The parallel passages. Matt. 13:18-23; Lk. 8:11-15

4:13-14 The interpretation of the first heart.

- 1) The Parable of the Sower is the key foundational Parable to understand all the other Parables, “And He said to them, “Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables?” vs. 13
 - * A mild reproof to the twelve.
- 2) The proclaimer of the gospel, “The sower sows the word.” vs. 14
- 3) The hard-hearted hearers, “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.” vs. 15

- a) The hard hearted are sinners unwilling and unable to receive by their own doing, the only one not born again.
- b) Satan takes away the word sown in their hearts, they do not receive it, therefore it does not penetrate, let alone germinate.
 - * The birds are symbolic of Satan and evil. Matt. 13:19; Mk. 4:4

4:16-17 The interpretation of the second heart.

- 1) The shallow hearted, “These likewise are the ones sown on stony ground who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with gladness.” vs. 16
 - a) These receive the word and it germinates!
 - b) They are born again.
- 2) The reason for their departure, “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.” vs. 17
 - a) The shallow-hearted person endure only for a time or season, due to not getting grounded or rooted in the word of God.
 - b) Therefore after a time of gladness are stumbled for the word's sake by tribulation or persecution. Matt. 5:10-12

- 1)) The word offended “skandalizo”, means the Word became a stumbling block or impediment to trip or fall.
 - * Causing a person to distrust and desert one whom he ought to trust and obey.
- 2)) Due to affliction “Thlipsis” means a pressing together, pressure, anguish or trouble.
 - * The word is used 45 time for Christians in the New Testament.
- 3)) Due to persecution "diogmos" from the root "dilo", to make to run or flee, being harass or mistreated. Matt. 5:10-12
 - * They love their lives more than giving them up for Christ!

4:18-19 The interpretation of the third heart.

- 1) The divided heart, “Now these are the ones sown among thorns; *they are* the ones who hear the word.” vs. 18
 - a) The word hear “akauo”, menas to be endowed with the ability to hear.
 - b) Having the given ability to understand, percieve what is being said.
- 2) The reason for their departure, “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.” vs. 19

- a) The divided heart allows the word and Jesus to be crowded out by the priorities of the world system and cares, anxieties and worry, not seeking the Kingdom of God first and stop being fruitful, don't miss that detail. Matt. 6:25-34
- b) The deceitful riches, "For the **love** of **money** is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." 1Tim. 6:9-10
- c) The desire for other things, things not in accord with God's will or word hindering growth and development, being born again.

4:20 The interpretation of the fourth heart.

- 1) The good heart, "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." vs. 20
 - a) This is the tender heart that is open and receives God's word to penetrate and breaks up the hardness.
 - b) The result is allowing God to cleanse, prune and nourish them becoming fruitful.

4:21-25 **The Parable of the light or candles.**
purpose of light.

* The parallel passages. Matt. 13:12; Lk.8:16-18

4:21-23 Light is to expose darkness.

- 1) The question is rhetorical, in the negative, having only one correct answer, "Also He said to them, "Is a lamp brought to be put under a basket or under a bed?" vs. 21a
 - a) The answer is no!
 - b) The word brought "erchomai", literally means to come.
 - c) There is also an article "the lamp" indicating Jesus is speaking of Himself who had come as the light. Jn. 1:4. 9
- 2) A second rhetorical question follows, in the positive, affirming the true purpose of a candle, lamp or light, "Is it not to be set on a lampstand?" vs. 21
 - * The answer is yes!
- 3) The truth of the word of God sheds light on all things to expose or reveal, "For there is nothing hidden which will not be revealed, nor has anything been kept secret but that it should come to light." vs. 22
 - a) Temporary concealment of sin and evil.
 - b) Truth and ignorance are illuminated to bring a person to repentance for salvation or fellowship.
- 4) The punch-line of the mini parable, "If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear." vs. 23

- * The word hear “akauo”, means to attend to and consider what has been stated, having the ability to. hear!

4:24-25 The responsibility and accountability to the light received.

- 1) The warning about truth and error, “Then He said to them, “Take heed what you hear.” vs. 24a
 - a) The phrase take heed “blepo” means to be careful to examine and discern, “what” refers to the words that they listen to, whether truth or error.
 - b) The tense is the present active, ongoing.
 - c) Luke says, “take heed how you hear” referring to the judging the words heard. Lk. 8:18
- 2) The benefit of truth, “With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given.” vs. 24
 - a) The truth of God’s word lived out in the measure received, will result in spiritual growth and increase as a believer.
 - b) Opportunity and privilege result in responsibility and accountability.
- 3) The principle of hearing the truth of God’s word, “For whoever has, to him more will be given.” vs. 25a
 - * Jesus repeats the previous principle that if a person has spiritual light and is a doer, more will be given to him.

- 4) The same principle in the negative, “but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him.” vs. 25b-c
 - a) The one that does not have, would be a sinner being spiritually dead.
 - b) The sinner rejecting the light of God’s word is given over to his hard heart and greater darkness.
 - 1)) To those that much is given, much more is required. Lk. 12:48
 - 2)) Much like a language, if you do not use it, you lose it!

4:26-29 The Parable of the growth of the Kingdom of God.

* This is unique of Mark.

4:26 The Kingdom of God.

- 1) The introduction of the Kingdom is by preaching the gospel, “And He said, “The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground.” vs. 26
 - a) The gospel is preached and if people receive the word they are saved.
 - b) Once saved then they need to be taught the word of God!
- 2) The meaning of the phrase the Kingdom of God.
 - a) The Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of heaven are not synonymous.

- b) The Kingdom of heaven indicates God's rule over the earth referring to the prophecies of the Old Testament concerning the coming of the King from heaven to set up a kingdom on this earth with heaven's standard at the Second Coming. (Only Matthew uses it, 52 times)
- c) But the "kingdom of God" is a broader term encompassing all the creation of God, including angels. (Found 5 times in Matthew, 13 times in Mark)
- d) The church is not the Kingdom of heaven or the Kingdom of God, but it is part of both.
- e) The church will not bring in the "Kingdom", but will return with Jesus, who will set up the Kingdom.

4:27-28 The process of growth of the Kingdom of God.

- 1) The growth is by God, not man, "and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how." vs. 27a
 - a) By His grace and the living Word.
 - b) By the work of the Holy Spirit.
 - c) God adds daily to the church such as are being saved. Acts 2:47
- 2) The effectiveness is through time, "For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade,

then the head, after that the full grain in the head." vs. 28

- a) Generation after generation people repent and are saved comprising the bride of Christ!
- b) Patiently resting in God and looking for Jesus to come for them!
- 3) The prepared final harvest, "But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come." vs. 29
 - a) Every generation has a harvest of those saved,
 - b) There is the ultimate harvest at the end of the age.

4:30-32 **The Parable of mustard seed.**

* The parallel passages. Matt. 13:21-32; Lk. 13:18-19

4:30 The Kingdom of God and deceptive evil.

- 1) The next parable to illustrate the Kingdom of God, "Then He said, "To what shall we liken the kingdom of God? Or with what parable shall we picture it?" vs. 30
 - a) The word "liken" is a similitude introduced by the word "as or like".
 - b) A similitude is the giving of a likeness to something else figuratively, "He ran fast as lightning", but he was not lightning!
- 2) The nature of the seed, "*It is* like a mustard seed which, when it is sown on the ground,

is smaller than all the seeds on earth; “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. 31-32

- a) The mustard seed is the smallest seed known.
- b) It is an herb, it is a bush not a tree, but at time it has abnormal growth.
- c) Consequently the birds confuse it for a tree and lodge in it.
- d) Birds are always evil in Scripture, unless otherwise stated in the context, all three synoptics in their parable interpret the birds as evil. Matt. 13:19; Mk. 4:15; Lk. 8:12
- e) Jesus is teaching that the church in the Kingdom of God during the church age would grow abnormally large and allow evil people, pastors, etc to lodge within it, as history confirms this, even to the present day.
- f) There are those that teach that the mustard seed represents the opposite, that the church is going to grow so large that it will permeate the world and establish the kingdom of God, Wrong!
- g) When Jesus was asked, "Are there few to be saved?" Jesus said, "Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say

to you, will seek to enter and will not be able." Lk. 13:24

4:33-34 The summary statement about the using of Parables by Jesus.

* The parallel passages. Matt. 13:34-35

4:33 The proclamation about the parabolic teaching.

1) The commentary on the parables, “And with many such parables He spoke the word to them as they were able to hear *it*.” vs. 33

a) The word many implies these are but some of the parables.

b) Matthew has more known as the Kingdom Parables that were in fulfillment of revealing things kept secret from the foundation of the world. Matt. 13:35; Ps. 78:2

2) The word hear “akouo”, again is the act of hearing and understanding.

* The method was not to hide or hinder, but to provoke interest and stimulate the thinking to come and understand the truth.

4:34 The elaboration of Jesus about His teaching of parables.

1) The pattern of teaching parables by Jesus, “But without a parable He did not speak to them.” vs. 34a

- * The parabolic method was not to hide, but rather to stimulate interest and reveal truth, due to the hardness of heart and dullness of ear.
- 2) The interpretation of the parables by Jesus, "And when they were alone, He explained all things to His disciples." vs. 34
 - * The word explained "epluseus", means the unloosening of a knot. 2Pet. 1:20

14:35-41 The stilling of the storm by Jesus.

* The parallel passages. Matt. 8:18; Lk. 8:22-25

4:35-38 The departure and storm.

- 1) The time is stated, "On the same day, when evening had come, He said to them, "Let us cross over to the other side." vs. 35
 - a) The phrase "On the same day" indicated all preceding events. Mk. 3:20-4:1
 - b) The phrase "He said to them" to the apostles appears 16 times in Mark.
 - c) The words of Jesus were "Let us cross over to the other side", a statement of fact., there was no doubt!
 - d) The Sea of Gennesaret or Galilee, fresh water area of approximately 13 by 8 miles, 680 feet below sea level and violent storms are usual.
- 2) The persons are indicated, "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." vs. 36
- a) Jesus and the apostles left from the teaching.
 - b) The words "other little boats" are only found in Mark.
- 3) The crisis at hand, "And a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling." vs. 37
 - a) Jesus now was about to test the disciples on how they had heard what He taught.
 - b) A storm had arisen, in matter of minutes the lake can have 3-7 feet waves.
 - c) Matthew says, "suddenly a great tempest arose and the boat was covered with waves" Lukes says they were filling with water." Matt. 8:24:Lk. 8:23
 - 4) The disciples failed the test, "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?" vs. 38
 - a) Jesus was exhausted from ministering without any doubt, asleep in the back of the boat on a pillow.
 - 1)) This is the only time Jesus is said directly to be asleep.
 - 2)) Jesus was 100% human, He hungered, thirsted, tired and died.
 - b) The disciples fearing for their lives awoke Jesus with the word, "Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?"

* “Lord we perish”. Lk. 8:24-25

- c) They heard, but did not listen very well, Jesus said they were going over to the other side, if Jesus was in the boat they were going to get there, but He did not say under what conditions.

4:39-41 The calming of the storm.

- 1) The authority of Jesus over nature, “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.” vs. 39
 - a) Satan is prince and power of the air, could this have been another attempt by Satan on His life? Eph. 2:2
 - b) The word peace “siopao” means to be silent or quiet.
 - c) Be still “phimoo”, means to be muzzled or be speechless.
- 2) The mild reproof by Jesus, “But He said to them, “Why are you so fearful? How *is it* that you have no faith?” vs. 40
 - a) They had not pay attention to what Jesus said when they left, "Let us cross over to the other side." vs. 35d
* Just like us so often!
 - b) They allowed the circumstances to eclipse the promise, “Why are you so fearful?” vs. 40b

* “God has not given to us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.” 2Tim. 1:7

- c) They failed the test, "How is it that you have no faith" vs. 40c
- 1)) They had not trusted in Him in spite of all they had witnessed.
 - 2)) As long as Jesus is in your boat you can't sink!
- 3) The response of the disciples, “And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, “Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!” vs. 41
- a) They feared more at the rebuke of Jesus than the storm!
* The word exceedingly "megas" means large, abundant or great.
 - b) **They were bewildered**, "Who is He that even nature obeys Him."
* God Incarnate, the Son of God and Savior of the world!