

The Kingdom of God

Part 4

Mark 12

28 One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, “Of all the commandments, which is the most important?”

29 “The most important one,” answered Jesus, “is this: ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. **30** Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ **31** The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”

32 “Well said, teacher,” the man replied. “You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him. **33** To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.”

34 When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” And from then on no one dared ask him any more questions.

- This teacher of the law walks into a debate Jesus is having with the Sadducees regarding the resurrection of the dead...
- He has this proving question to ask Jesus...
- Of all the commandments, which is the most important?
- In his heart he has to know what will this Jesus say regarding perhaps the most important thing in all of scripture...
- Jesus resets the conversation around this question and brings it back to the first and greatest commandment...

- Perhaps this confirms something in his mind about Jesus...
- He even agrees with Jesus ...
- He stands at the edge of believing in Jesus...
- Jesus says to him, “You are not far from the Kingdom of God”
- What will he do with the Jesus?

Mark 4

3 “Listen! A farmer went out to sow his seed. **4** As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. **5** Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. **6** But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. **7** Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants, so that they did not bear grain. **8** Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up, grew and produced a crop, some multiplying thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times.”

9 Then Jesus said, “Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear.”

10 When he was alone, the Twelve and the others around him asked him about the parables. **11** He told them, “The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables

— — —

13 Then Jesus said to them, “Don’t you understand this parable? How then will you understand any parable? **14** The farmer sows the word. **15** Some people are like seed along the path, where the word is sown. As soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them. **16** Others, like seed sown on rocky places, hear the word and at once receive it with joy. **17** But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. **18** Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; **19** but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful. **20** Others, like seed sown on

good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop—some thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times what was sown.”

- In Mark 12 with the story of the teacher of the law listening to Jesus and agreeing Jesus said “You are not far from the kingdom of God.”
- The teacher of the law was not far because he agreed and understood, what Jesus was saying but will he receive the word, believe in Jesus and enter eternal life?
- There are those who hear and understand, but will they allow word of God to take root inside of them and in their lives?

James 2:18-19 Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds. **19** You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.

Now in Mark 4 Jesus shares a secret of the Kingdom of God
This is a picture of how we encounter the Kingdom of God
God sends his Word like a seed that is intended to grow

Jesus says, A farmer went out to sow his seed.

In **Luke 8:11** “The seed is the word of God.”

In the Parable:

- Jesus is the farmer sowing seed
- The seed is the Word of God
- The soil is the listener
- The different kinds of soil reflects the different kinds of listeners and different conditions of the heart.

I think it's important to note **Vs. 10,11**

10 When he was alone, the Twelve and the others around him asked him about the parables. **11** He told them, “The secret of the kingdom

of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables

Matthew, Mark and Luke each recorded this for us...

This Secret of the Kingdom that Jesus shares with his disciples is also passed down to us...

We are not like those on the outside but we are given the same treasure Jesus gave his disciples...

Set up Illustration:

The Path

14 The farmer sows the word. **15** Some people are like seed along the path, where the word is sown. As soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them.

Luke 8:12 Those along the path are the ones who hear, and then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved.

- This is the person that's heard a thousand sermons and it doesn't matter...
- Until the soil is broken, it cannot receive the Word of God...
- This is the person you pray for, and pray for, in hopes that one day their hearts will be soft so they can hear and be changed...

Stony Ground

16 Others, like seed sown on rocky places, hear the word and at once receive it with joy. **17** But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away.

In Vs. 5 Jesus says, It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow.

This is interesting to me...

- Jesus explains that the seed germinates quickly and springs up quickly because it was shallow...
- it doesn't last long because it never went deep...
- The deeper the seed goes the longer it takes for the shoot to appear... but the more substantial it is for difficulty because it has a deep root...
- For the Stony Ground, the shot appears quickly but don't be too impressed because what appears for a moment won't last when trouble or persecution comes...
- The challenge it faces is beneath the surface: It's not always obvious but hidden, on the surface everything seems good but in reality the problem is beneath the surface...
- The stony ground seems good on the outside but there are rocks and hard places underneath that need to be dealt with so the root of God's Word and the work of the Holy Spirit can go deep and produce real fruit...
- This makes me ask the question, are there any areas of my life that I have not yielded to Jesus. Are there any areas that I have not allowed the Holy Spirit to have full access. If so I need to surrender those things to Him...

Thorny Ground

18 Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; **19** but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful.

Thorny Ground is the opposite of Stony Ground...

The Thorns are on the surface while the soil beneath is good...

The seed of God's Word goes deep...

The roots are good...

The challenge with Thorns is it chokes out, gets in the way and hinders the seed from bearing fruit on the outside...

Vs. 19 KJV

And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.

Cares don't seem to bad do they... unless they get in the way of me doing what God has called me to do...

I didn't know that Riches were deceitful... unless they cloud our priorities and keep us from serving and worshipping the one true God...

The lusts of other things are simply the distractions of life that spring up and try to take precedent...

All of these things have a tendency to grow fast...

Ever notice weeds grow even where they aren't wanted...

They seem to even thrive where good grass struggles...

I have noticed the weeds will grow so much faster that it will overshadow and even choke out the other things that are more valuable...

Weeds after lots of rain are only good for one thing...
to be cut down and thrown away...

Story: The other day the Youth had a service at Imperial Gardens Cemetery...

Pastor Tony shared a powerful thought from that service...

He said what's crazy is the Cemetery is right across the street from the city dump...

Many of the people buried in that cemetery worked their whole life for things that are now buried in that dump...

Good Ground

20 Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop—some thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times what was sown.”

- You know what makes good soil good?
- The rocks have been removed and the weeds have been pulled out...
- I think of all that God has poured into my life and I hope I can take that and multiply that back to Him...

- I know in my life I keep finding rocks here and there...
- I also have my fare share of pulling weeds...
- If I want to have any hope of being fruitful, thirty, sixty, a hundred fold for the Lord, I can't give up doing the humble work of a spiritual gardening in my own life...

Closing Song: