

## I. THE KINGDOM REVEALED (4:1-20)

### A. Verse 1

1. Just like we saw in 3:9-10, Jesus goes into a ship to preach. So picture Jesus in the boat, and the multitude at the shore, and there is a slope going up. And the acoustics were in such a way that you could hear from up to ½ mile a **whisper**. A perfect little amphitheater.

### B. Verse 2

1. **Q** = What is a Parable?...
  - a. The traditional meaning is that a parable is "an earthly story with a heavenly meaning". **But, it's still so much more than that.**
    - 1) "*Parable*" = "*to cast alongside*"; **A parable is an illustration that is placed alongside a teaching to help us understand its meaning.**
    - 2) When you lose the attention of your students, you can draw them back with an illustration. And that's what Jesus is doing here.
2. **Q** = Why did Jesus teach in parables? **The purpose of a Parable is Two-fold:** 1) To **Reveal** , and 2) To **Conceal**. It Reveals Truth and Conceals Truth!
  - a. These little stories are for **Illumination** and **Restriction!**
  - b. **NOTE:** Jesus always started in the Natural, and then went to the Spiritual because the Natural Man doesn't understand the things of God! (1 Cor 2:14)

### C. Verse 3

1. **NOTE:** **For the most part, the people were an agricultural society.** They were all farmers, even those that lived in the city had their little plots of land out in the country where they would go in the summertime and live in these houses where they would farm during the summer. And so they were all familiar with parables that had to do with planting, taking care of sheep and various types of herbs and so forth.

### D. Verse 4-9

1. Over there in the holy land, it's a rocky place. Even the fields that they plant in are just filled with rocks in many of the areas especially around Bethlehem, but these rocky hillsides are denuded of top soil.

There are these holes or little crevices that do have soil in them. And yet, they're only a couple inches deep of soil and then it's just soil that's in these little hole in the rock. And because the rock holds the warmth, these little places where there's a little bit of soil in the rock are usually the first places where the wild flowers will bloom in the spring. But they are also the first places to turn brown because there is no depth of earth, and so it dries out very quickly. **The Jews were very familiar with the landscape and the soil conditions.**

#### E. Verse 10

1. Here, the 12 disciples, and those with them, were having a "**quiet time**" with Jesus!
  - a. When you have your quiet time with the Lord, ask Him questions and expect Him to answer you.

#### F. Verse 11-12

1. "*mystery*" = a truth that was previously hidden that is now being revealed.
2. **Q** = What is the Kingdom of God? That's what Jesus is going to reveal in these parables.
3. **NOTE:** Jesus is saying, "I'm going to **Reveal** the kingdom of God to those that want to hear, but I'm going to **Conceal** the kingdom to those that don't want to hear!"
  - a. **Q** = Why would Jesus NOT want them to be converted and their sins forgiven? I thought that God isn't willing that any should perish? (2 Peter 3:9)
    - 1) **KEY:** Jesus could have spoken so **Powerfully**, that He could have converted them ***against their will!*** **Jesus is saying, "I'm not going to manipulate people in such a way as to force them into a decision."**
  - b. **Because they closed their eyes to the truth, Jesus is not forcing them to see the truth!**
    - 1) **Romans 1:18-28.**
      - a) God's response to man "suppressing of the truth" is "giving them up." God will not force someone to believe in Him!
  - c. Jesus could have converted everyone because He is God, but He didn't want to violate their free will!
  - d. **KEY:** That's why Jesus taught in parables: That those who don't want to hear won't hear, but those that want to hear will hear!

## G. Verse 13

1. **NOTE:** Jesus is saying that this parable is the **KEY** to unlock the other parables!
2. The Key is Expository Constancy!
  - a. "**Expositional Constancy** is a theological phrase used in hermeneutics, whereby, in interpreting scripture, if a figure is used to represent something in one passage, every time that figure is used in a figurative way, it represents the same thing."  
– Chuck Smith
  - b. **EXAMPLE** = In this passage, we see that the SEED is the Word of God. So in the other parables, the seed represents the Word of God. (v. 26-29)

## H. Verse 14

1. "Seed" = The Word of God
  - a. 1 Peter 1:23 "Being born again, not of corruptible **seed**, but of incorruptible, by **the word of God**, which liveth and abideth forever."
2. "Soil" = The condition of men's hearts.

## I. There are 4 kinds of soils here, and is speaking of 4 different kinds of people.

1. And you personally, will have One of these conditions in your heart, and it can change from day to week to month!

## J. THE HARD HEART v. 15

1. Those that hear the Word and are hard-hearted and it doesn't penetrate at all. **They say, "That's for the birds"!**
2. **ILLUST** = Somebody goes to a Harvest Crusade, or some outreach, and they hear about how Jesus died for them and wants a relationship with them, and they think it's stupid.
  - a. **1 Corinth 1:18** "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God."

## K. THE SHALLOW HEART v. 16-17

1. They get excited about the Lord for a while, but then when persecution comes, they wither away! The Word doesn't sink in deeply!
2. **ILLUST** = A lot of people will try this Christian thing, and get excited about Jesus for a while, but when they go college and hear about

evolution, and take a philosophy class, they get confused and just leave the faith. Or all their friends will start drinking and get sucked into it.

- a. John 8:31-32 "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye **continue** in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

## L. THE CROWDED HEART v. 18-19

1. These are people that Paul would call "babes in Christ." These are what I would say are Carnal Christians. (1 Cor 2:14 - 3:15)
  - a. **ILLUST** = I think these people could be like those that go to a worship service to **feel** God and experience **spiritual sensationalism**. They're just looking for the goose-bumps, but not for the Lord!
2. "*Cares of this world*" = (rent, finances, etc.) This phrase is used in other scriptures speaking of the Poor worrying about their finances.
3. "*Deceitfulness of riches*" = This phrase speaks of the wealthy man! He's deceived! "I have this new car, and a nice place to live, but I need that new stereo. Then I will be happy." So he gets a new stereo, and that doesn't fulfill, etc.
  - a. Trent Reznor (Nine Inch Nails) in Musicians Magazine: "I'm aware that I'm fortunate to live in this house, and to do what I've always wanted to do, and be one of the few who got a record deal. But by the same token, I'm not more happy or content with my life than I was ten years ago. I got everything I wanted in life, except, I really don't have a life now. I don't have any real friends or relationships that mean anything to me."
  - b. Eddie Murphy: "I feel a void inside. There's something missing. I don't think that there's anyone who feels like there isn't something missing in their lives. No matter how much you accomplish, how much money you make, how many cars or houses you have, or how many people you make happy. Life isn't perfect for everybody."
  - c. Dennis Rodman: (Special on MTV)
  - d. INTERVIEWER: "Tell us about your life right now."
  - e. RODMAN: "It's alright. I'm still climbing. I want to try everything. Do everything."
  - f. INTERVIEWER: "Well, what's missing?"
  - g. RODMAN: "Fulfillment. I still haven't found fulfillment yet."

- h. Things will never fill that void inside of our heart! Only Jesus Christ can fill that void!
  - 1) Colossians 3:2-4 *"Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and **your life is hid with Christ in God.** When Christ, who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."*
  - 2) 1 Timothy 6:3-17**

- 4. NOTE: The Three fruitless hearts are influenced by a different enemy:
  - a. 1) The Hard Heart = **the devil** snatches the seed (v. 15)
  - b. 2) The Shallow Heart = **the flesh** counterfeits religious feelings (v. 17) *"no root in themselves..."*
  - c. 3) The Crowded Heart = **the world** smothers the growth and prevents a harvest (v. 19)
  - d. KEY: The great enemies of Christians are the *world*, the *flesh*, and the *devil* (Ephesians 2:1-3)

#### **M. THE TENDER (Fruitful) HEART v. 20**

- 1. There are 3 things here that show that we have hearts of good ground:
  - a. We HEAR the Word
    - 1) EXAMPLE: Going to Bible studies, having a devotional life, listening to KWVE, etc...
  - b. We RECEIVE the Word
    - 1) **Q** = Am I willing to receive whatever the Bible says? If it tells me what I am doing is wrong, will I agree with it?
    - 2) **NOTE**: If I think something, and the Bible says something different, I'M WRONG! The Bible is true. I need to conform my thinking to what the Bible says!
      - a) **Rom 12:2** *"And be not conformed to this world: **but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind**, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."*
      - b) Colossians 2:6-10**
  - c. We LIVE the Word (*"bring forth fruit..."*)
    - 1) John 15:4-5**

- a) The word "**Abide**" is another word for **INTIMACY** with Jesus! We need that Intimacy with Him, and the by-product will be FRUIT in our life.
  - b) **Q** = What fruit are we talking about?... LOVE! (Galatians 5:22-23)
2. "*thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred*" = From one seed back then, the ratio for bringing forth fruit was 8:1. So even the least here (30:1) is incredible!

## II. GIVING WHAT WE'VE RECEIVED v. 21-25

### A. Verse 22

- 1. A lot of people will quote this verse and say, "Every bad thing you do will be manifest, and everyone will see it." But that's not what Jesus is talking about here! **He's talking about the truth of the kingdom!**
- 2. Jesus didn't withhold the Kingdom from us. He gave us Everything! He gave us the Kingdom of God.
  - a. **John 15:15** "Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; **for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.**"

### B. Verse 24

- 1. "Take heed **WHAT** ye hear..."
  - a. **Q** = What kind of music are we listening to? What T.V. shows are we watching? What magazines are we reading?
  - b. **Galatians 6:7-9** "Be not deceived: God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption: but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."
- 2. NOTE: In Luke 8:18, it says, "Take heed HOW you hear"! Both are important!

### C. Verse 24-25

- 1. The thought here is that when you give out what you have been given, you'll be given more. But if you don't give out what you've taken in, you'll lose what you've been given.
  - a. **ILLUST** = I notice that I get stagnant when I'm not sharing the gospel or encouraging a brother. I start going downhill until I step outside of myself.

- b. Go witnessing! Share a word with those around you. Even though they might hear the word all the time, they need to hear it again!
- c. KEY: God has not called us just to *LEARN*, but to *LIVE*!
  - a. Q = What causes me to LIVE and not just Learn?... The work of the Holy Spirit through the Word of God! (Ezekiel 36:26-27; Romans 10:17)

### III. THE WORKING WORD v. 26-34

#### A. Verse 26-29

1. **A farmer had no idea how that worked, but he just enjoyed the results.** So it is with the Word of God. I don't know how it changes my life by hearing it, but I just enjoy the results of it! Whether we realize it or not, the Word is working in us when we hear it.
  - a. Isaiah 55:11 "So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it."
  - b. Rom 10:17 "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."
  - c. 1 Thess 2:13 "For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, **which also effectively works in you who believe.**"

#### B. Verse 30

1. It's as if Jesus is thinking out loud here.

#### C. Verse 31-32

1. "*the fowls of the air*" = When keeping with Expository Constancy, we see here that it **refers to Satan and his demons** in verse 4 with verse 15! They come under the shadow of Christianity, and bring false teachers in!

#### D. Verse 34

1. "...and when they were **alone**, he expounded all things to his disciples."
  - a. When I get alone with Jesus, He can expound His truth to me! So it is with you! When you don't understand something, come to Him in prayer, and in His timing, He will show it to you.

Although, sometimes we just can't comprehend it because God is Infinite and we're Finite! (Trinity, God's sovereignty vs. Man's Free Will, etc...)

#### **IV. From Teaching To Testing. (4:35-41)**

##### **A. Verse 35**

1. What was Jesus teaching in the parables?
  - a. The Kingdom as it relates to His Word.
2. What was His Word in verse 35?
  - a. "Let us pass over unto the other side."
    - 1) Paul said, "For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us." (2 Cor. 1:20)

##### **B. Verse 36-41**

1. The geographic location of the Sea of Galilee is such that sudden violent storms are not unusual.
2. **Q** = How could Jesus be sleeping the storm?...
  - a. Jesus deprived Himself of sleep so that He could serve the people! (Mark 1:21-35; 3:7-9, 20; 4:1, etc...)
3. "*Be still.*"
  - a. "Be muzzled"; "Be gagged"; lit. "Shut up" or "Shut it"; "Shut your mouth".
  - b. This is the same phrase used when Jesus cast out the demons in Chapter 1:25. So this could imply that this storm was given by demonic forces.
    - 1) In Job 1:19, the wind was used by Satan to cause Job's house to fall down on his family.
  - c. What do we do when the storms of life come against us?... We rely on God's promises in His Word.
  - d. Some could say, "You don't know what I'm going through! You've never been where I've been." Notice the little phrase in verse 36, "And there were also with him *other little ships.*"
    - 1) This speaks of everybody being in the same boat.**
      - a) 1 Corinth 10:13 says, "No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it."



e. **Q = When Jesus stilled the storm, who else got blessed?... All the other little boats.**

- 1) When you go through a stormy trial, when He gives you that peace that passes understanding, it will bring peace to others as well.

**4. The One that calmed the storm allowed the storm to teach them to trust in His Word.**

**a. Psalm 34:19**

- 1) *"Many are the afflictions of the righteous."*
  - a) Just because you're going through afflictions doesn't mean you're not righteous.
- 2) *"But, the Lord delivers him out of them all."*
  - a) I have prayed fervently and passionately that the Lord would take away a trial. And, sometimes He does. That's when it's easy. But a lot of times He doesn't take away the trial.
  - b) The Lord sometimes says, "No. And it's not going to get better. In fact, it's going to get worse." So, maybe that's not what it means to be delivered.
  - c) The Lord says, "I'm not going to change your circumstances. I'm going to change you."
    1. How does He change us?... Through storms (trials).
    2. We thought that the gate to salvation was narrow. Well it gets even narrower. It gets so narrow, it's just Jesus.