

The Gospel of Mark – Interested or Committed

Mark 4:1-20 – January 4th, 2026

There is something Jesus speaks on that at first glance, will cause your attention to perk up and a curiosity to start growing. If we are not careful, it will read like Jesus is deliberately teaching in a way so that some people understand and find forgiveness, and others, He deliberately speaks in a way to keep them from finding forgiveness.
[\(The Romans 1 sealing\)](#)

The Parable - Mark 4:10-12

Matthew 13:13-15 Isaiah 6:10 (Here am I send me...)(Stop walking in blindness)

Too bright for the darkness to comprehend it, to turn and shield or close your eyes.

What is a Parable? The purpose of a parable

- Revealing the hidden, secret, and profound things of God.
- *Transferring something from a known realm to an unknown realm. (Transference)*
- Jesus often uses illustrative terms, salt and light, becoming fishers of men, house build the rock, etc. *The use of parables is far more than an illustration; the entire lesson is wrapped up inside of the illustrative story.*

Now... some fun facts about the lesson our Lord has preserved all these years.

1. Mark 4 is a turning point in the ministry and preaching of Jesus.
2. If you compile Matthew, Mark, and Luke's account of this day in the life of Christ, there were 9 parables taught.
3. Mark pens the 3 that are most kingdom principles in focus.
4. All three Gospels record this as the first FULL parabolic lesson and would be the pathway to Jesus' public ministry. (33-34)
5. God actually has a lot He wants you to know about this life and the life to come
6. This was for anyone who would want to know... ears to hear.

The Parable Instructed

Read Mark 4:1-9

The Parable Explained

Mark 4:14-20

Key players

- The Sower – Jesus and those who would eventually do what Jesus was doing.
- The Seed – The Word of God/The Kingdom (Biblical Truth)
- The Soil – The only variable in the experiment
- Note: All 4 have the same starting gun... “When they hear”

Wayside (vs. 15) [Dense]

Jesus was angered and grieved because of the hardening of their hearts.

Wayside = some kind of hardness from compaction

- Could have been a roadway for carts and pedestrian traffic
- Could have been a foot path or game trail that cuts through the field
- Either way, dirt that has become too compacted to receive the seed.

Those who recklessly open their hearts to all kinds of people and influences are in danger of developing hard hearts.

- At their root, are the arguments logical or Biblical?!
- Logical explanation of the Bible, yes. Logical explanation around the Bible, NO!!!

Meriful Statement:

Some have been trampled upon by those who name Christ... do not let that pathway upon your soul last very long. Break up the hardened areas.

Beware areas of fear, hurt, frustration, anger, judgment, and assuming the worst.

Birds = Satan

Satan takes it away (Don't even make it out of the building)

Hard ground gets harder or goes through tremendous life-giving destruction

Stoney Ground (vs. 16-17) (Under the surface difficulties)

Read the ingredients

Only one to say "likewise" Not all that different than the wayside/hardened heart
Gladness and Growth

Stoney ground – not gravel, but most likely a large piece of limestone or bedrock that only has a few inches of dirt on top of it.

WITH GLADNESS: everything from a calm delight to exceeding joyfulness

You can't warm yourself with fireworks... is a small glowing campfire.

There is enough there to receive the seed, the sun warms and germinates the seed, and even grows the seed. *When the sun was up it was scorched, BECAUSE there was no root.* – not because of the heat, but because there was no root to endure the heat.

Received with gladness

No root - IN THEMSELVES

ENDURE only for a time: Anyone can run, but can you run far?

God is not interested in one-night stands... He is in it for the long haul.

It withers away... just kind of wilts, lies down, and disappears.

Slow quiet fade... (Office plant, WATER IT)

What is the sun/what brings the heat?

Tribulation: (Affliction) pressing, distress,

Tribulations are not reasons to give up my walk with God. (Repeat every time)

John 16:33 “These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have **tribulation**; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”

Acts 7:9-10 “And the patriarchs, becoming envious, sold Joseph into Egypt. But God was with him “and delivered him out of all his **troubles**, and gave him favor and wisdom in the presence of Pharaoh,...

Acts 20:23 “except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and **tribulations** await me.

Romans 12:12 rejoicing in hope, patient in **tribulation**, continuing steadfastly in prayer;

Persecution: the infliction of pain, punishment or death upon others unjustly, particularly for adhering to a religious creed or mode of worship

Persecution is not a reason to give up my walk with God. (Repeat every time)

Stephen stoned to death...

Acts 8:1 Now Saul was consenting to his death. At that time a great **persecution** arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.

Acts 13:50 But the Jews stirred up the devout and prominent women and the chief men of the city, raised up **persecution** against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region.

- Paul was scared that his imprisonment would shake their faith
- Cancer, finances, and relationships do not equal God's absence

Romans 8:35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall **tribulation**, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? (Shout “NO”)

Among the Thorns (vs. 18-19) [Distractions]

A crowded heart that is not lacking in emotional experience or enthusiastic response.

Cares of this world

1 John 2:15-17 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world - the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life - is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

There are sayings that are too hard for the crowd, and people walk away.

This one... is extortive or dismissive like the wayside?

1 Timothy 6:8 And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content.

Deceitfulness of riches
Desires for other things

(ENTERING IN – MAY NOT HAVE BEEN THERE BEFORE)

Choke the Word, and it becomes unfruitful

- May not die, but does not bear fruit
(Ring of dirt around the roots of a tree)

- **CHOKED OUT:** You care but don't make time. You know, but never do.
Other things get the resources and nourishment of your life.
- **UNFRUITFUL**

Good Ground (GROUND!!!) [20]

Accept it!!!

Receive – to not reject – to acknowledge as one's own – to take upon yourself.
His will becomes my will, His ways become my ways.

Bear Fruit

Evidence & Sustenance

- **Evidence: Galatians 5 fruit of the Spirit**
- **Sustenance: Service to others**

Good ground is ground that has been made soft

The Lord is purging things out of my life and it's hard to endure!

Farm fields are made not found.

Good ground is softened
Good ground is weeded
Good ground is de-boulderer (Throwing stones)
Good ground is not surface level

IT'S NOT THE SEED! IT'S THE SOIL

Don't be discouraged by other people's harvest. keep going, keep growing.