

THE GOSPEL OF MARK: PARABLES - Part 2

A Lamp Under a Basket

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Part of The Gospel of MarkParables

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Jesus routinely taught using parables, and his parables were generally intended to teach just one lesson, using real world examples that his listeners would be very familiar with, and his parables always pointed in some way to the Kingdom of God and life in it.

Then Jesus asked them, "Would anyone light a lamp and then put it under a basket or under a bed? Of course not! A lamp is placed on a stand, where its light will shine."

—Mark 4:21 (NLT)

Light in this parable is not only meant to be seen and illuminate everything around it - it has to be seen, unless it's covered.

Light, billions and billions of light-years away, can be seen with the right equipment and enough time, but if I'm not doing anything intentional, consistently, then when I simply look up at the night sky here in Houston, I see almost nothing!

Jesus is saying to us that his light is ultimately meant to be seen.

Jesus: ... "I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life."

—John 8:12 (NLT)

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it.

—John 1:5 (NLT)

Christmas helps us to see that the light of Jesus is a gift that has been given to us, revealed to us, and continues to be revealed as folks open their eyes to see.

Jesus assures us that sooner or later everyone will see the light, no matter how much some may try to avoid it.

"For everything that is hidden will eventually be brought into the open, and every secret will be brought to light."

—Mark 4:22 (NLT)

God's light will eventually shine everywhere, and that should be good news, but it's also judgment for those who have tried to avoid the light or even fought against it.

...God elevated [Christ Jesus] to the place of highest honor and gave him the name above all other names, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue declare that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the

Father.

—Philippians 2:9-11 (NLT)

The Apostle Paul says the day is coming when everyone will understand and acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord over all - his light will be visible to all.

“Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand.”

—Mark 4:23 (NLT)

Then [Jesus] added, “Pay close attention to what you hear. The closer you listen, the more understanding you will be given—and you will receive even more. To those who listen to my teaching, more understanding will be given. But for those who are not listening, even what little understanding they have will be taken away from them.”

—Mark 4:24-25 (NLT)

Jesus is not saying the *more* you listen the *more* you’ll learn, but that the more we listen, the more God will pour out to us, the more we will receive.

Jesus is saying it’s not about our *ability* but our availability, our willingness to cooperate and *receive* from God, and *then* He pours out his light and shines his grace on us.

Just as in the parable of the soils, where it was God that brought miraculous growth to good soil, so it is God who grows us as we cooperate with Him, as we make ourselves available.

When one of you says, “I am a follower of Paul,” and another says, “I follow Apollos,” aren’t you acting just like people of the world? After all, who is Apollos? Who is Paul? We are only God’s servants through whom you believed the Good News. Each of us did the work the Lord gave us. I planted the seed in your hearts, and Apollos watered it, but it was God who made it grow. It’s not important who does the planting, or who does the watering. What’s important is that God makes the seed grow.

—1 Corinthians 3:4-7 (NLT)

One of the most misunderstood principles and realities of spiritual growth is that God is the One who grows us, as *He* wills.

If we aren't cooperating with God, if we aren't making ourselves available to Him, then not only will God *not* grow us spiritually, but He'll allow some or much of what He's already grown in us to wither away.

God desires an ongoing, deepening relationship with each one of us, and that only happens as we stay engaged in the relationship, as we continue receiving His light, so that His image in us becomes sharper, clearer.

God gives, and God can take away - it's all up to Him!

Christ's light is always shining, but only as we put ourselves in places to hear from and interact with God will growth happen.

The more ways we seek to spend time with Christ and his people, the more ways he has to work on us and in us to transform us increasingly into his image and likeness.



Carina Nebula

Next Week - Parables, Part 3 (Mark 4:26-32) *(read ahead)*