

# THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

## JUNE 21ST–22ND, 2025 // GOSPEL OF MARK

### LIGHT ON A LAMPSTAND (MARK 4:21–25)

Jesus has just spoken about the Parable of the Sower (4:1–20), and the various types of hearts that will respond to His truth.

- The last soil (“the good soil”) represents the person who hears God’s Word, welcomes it, and produces fruit thirty, sixty, and a hundred times what is sown (v. 20).
- What does it look like to hear God’s Word, welcome it, and produce abundant fruit?

### EXPOSING AND PROCLAIMING TRUTH (VS. 21–24)

Every one of us is responsible for the light or knowledge that we have received.

- You do not take a lamp and hide it under a basket or a bed—you put it on a lampstand.
- The purpose of light is to reveal hidden, concealed, and darkened things.
- Truth is the same way. Each of us is responsible for the measure of it we have received.

The truth of God has a way of revealing things to us about reality that were previously hidden.

- God’s truth reveals to us things about ourselves that are sometimes hidden by the deception of sin, pride, and the busyness of life.
- God’s truth exposes falsehood and reveals reality to us in profound and liberating ways when we have ears to hear and we actually listen (v. 23).

We must “pay attention” to the things we hear. This is a call for active listening, not passively or lazily consuming.

- By the measure you use...—the effort, openness, and sincerity you bring to wanting to understand Jesus’ teaching will directly affect how much benefit or understanding you gain from it. If we seek God wholeheartedly, we will find Him (Jer 29:13).

### “...AND MORE WILL BE ADDED TO YOU.”

If you approach God with just a tiny morsel of interest, hunger, and desire, you will get back from Him a tiny morsel of revelation, blessing, and intimacy.

- But if you come to God with all your heart, desire, attention, and affections, you will receive more from Him than you can possibly expect or imagine.

### “...WHOEVER DOES NOT HAVE...”

There is a great danger in spiritual apathy or heart hardness.

- Those who listen passively, dismiss, or ignore spiritual truth, or refuse to apply it and let it change them will have understanding and the opportunity to respond eventually taken away from them.
- Truth unheeded becomes truth lost.

### HEARING AND WELCOMING THE WORD

To listen is to seek to truly understand what God is saying through His Word.

- We know that we are truly listening when we know how to lean in, pay attention, and make the subject matter at hand the most important activity of the moment.
- To “welcome” God’s Word is to joyfully and faithfully apply it to our lives with obedience.

### PRODUCING FRUIT

If you’ve heard God’s Word and His truth, you are now responsible for doing something with it.

- We produce fruit when we apply God’s Word to our lives—we OBEY and FOLLOW.
- We produce fruit when we take what God has shown us and we tell others. We shine the light of God’s truth through our actions, words, testimony, and love to the world.

### PARABLES OF SEEDS (MARK 4:26–34)

#### THE MYSTERY OF UNSEEN GROWTH (VS. 26–29)

You do not know you’re growing while you’re growing—it is unseen in the immediate.

- Not only that, you can create an environment to grow, but you cannot make yourself grow. There is this mystery of an unseen force deep within us that causes us to grow.
- When a farmer plants seeds, the seed sprouts and grows, but the farmer does not know how.
- A good farmer does his job of planting the seed and caring for it as it grows, but the soil produces a crop by itself. There is a self-contained power within that seed to produce growth and life.
- Eventually, that seed will grow to maturity to where it is ready to produce fruit at the time of harvest.
- So what is this parable talking about?

The Kingdom of God starts small with the seed of God’s Word. The Kingdom begins humbly, almost unnoticeably through the faithful planting of truth within a receptive human heart.

- Spiritual growth is a mystery and a process—the Kingdom grows by the power of God and His Word, not through human manipulation.
- Growth is gradual, but steady and sure; it is not instant, but happens in stages.

Where the seed has been planted on good soil, eventually the harvest will come. God has an appointed time of fruitfulness for each of His children.

- When God’s Word gets in a receptive heart, it brings life and produces something amazing!
- Often this is a mysterious, gradual, and unseen (in the immediate) growth, but true growth always results in fruit being produced.

### BIG THINGS WITH SMALL BEGINNINGS (VS. 30–34)

A mustard seed is about the size of a pinhead or a grain of sand (1–2 millimeters in diameter).

- Yet, if this seed is planted in good soil, its tree can eventually grow anywhere from 8 to 30 feet tall.
- Such a tiny seed can grow into something that creates shelter for birds to nest on its large branches.

The Christian movement started with a small, humble, and ordinary beginning: 12 disciples/students from blue-collar jobs.

- This movement grew from 500 after the Resurrection (1 Cor. 15:6), to 3,000 on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2), then to perhaps 10,000 by the end of the First Century.
- Today, there are approximately 2.4 BILLION (30% of the world) who profess faith in Christ.

### BIRDS IN THE BRANCHES?

Some say the birds represent Gentiles and outsiders coming to find shelter, refuge, and inclusion in God’s ever-expanding Kingdom (Ezek. 17:22–24, Dan. 4:20–22).

- Others say that the birds in this parable must mean the same thing they meant in the Parable of the Sower (Satan snatching away the Word).

As the Christian movement has grown, it has grown to become a refuge for the nations. But it has also grown big enough for even the Enemy to roost in its branches.

- The Bible will not let us deal with this thing called Church through the lens of our idolatrous ideals; Church has ALWAYS been messy.
- The point is this: big things often have small beginnings. We can’t despise the small things.

### THE WIND AND THE SEA (MARK 4:35–41)

The hearing of God’s Word is always intended to produce faith (Rom. 10:17).

- Faith must always be tested (James 1:2–4).
- After all this teaching on hearing the Word and producing fruit, Jesus instructed His disciples to travel with Him by boat to the other side of the Sea of Galilee (vs. 35–36).
- The Sea of Galilee is 700 feet below sea level, and it is not unusual for storms to suddenly pop up.

This was a “great windstorm” (Mt. 8, *seismos megas*, “violent shaking”) that led to the boat being swamped by waves (v. 37).

- The disciples, as experienced fishermen, knew about storms and the best way to navigate through them.
- But this storm was too big even for them; so they appeal to the man who had little experience with boats but seemingly great power and authority.

They are looking for His leadership and participation in this crisis, but surprisingly, through this entire ordeal, Jesus was sleeping on a cushion in the stern of the boat (v. 38).

- The one in the position of steering the boat is asleep, almost like He does not care!
- Have you ever been there? Caught up in a great storm (that you’re in despite your obedience to God) and it just feels like Jesus doesn’t care?

As the disciples wake Jesus up, He finds them frantic, fearful, and full of anxiety and doubt.

- Not only that, but they are also questioning His love and care for them (“Don’t you care that we’re going to die?”, v. 38).
- Sadly, it is in our nature to doubt God’s faithfulness in our lives when storms come.
- But the strength of our faith and the presence of God in our lives is revealed during the storms.

Jesus was not caught off guard, frantic, or fearful. He got up, rebuked the wind, and commanded the sea to be still and silent.

- The wind ceased, and there was a great calm.
- With a mix of surprise and disappointment, Jesus asks these terrified young men a very fascinating question—“Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?” (v. 40).
- At first glance, this seems like a dumb question.

### JESUS’ QUESTION IS PERFECTLY JUSTIFIED

His disciples had witnessed clear demonstrations of His authority over sickness, demons, and sin.

- If Jesus was truly the Son of God, doesn’t He have complete and total authority over every storm?
- And if Jesus is in the boat with us, why are we afraid? Is our faith in Him really so small?
- Let’s not misunderstand the point of this text: there is not a promise we’ll never see storms.

Jesus doesn’t necessarily calm every storm in our lives (Acts 27, 14-day storm, shipwreck).

- The point of the passage is deeper and more profound than simply a promise of better circumstances—it is in the identity and nearness of Jesus.
- It is the reality that it was God who was in the boat with these men during the storm!
- Jesus’ presence in our lives changes everything.

### FAITH COMES BY HEARING GOD’S WORD

- To hear God’s Word is to seek to truly understand what God is speaking through His Word.
- Actively listening means to lean in, pay attention, and welcome God’s truth into our lives through seeking to faithfully apply it in obedience.
- Faith in Jesus is awakened in those who listen to His Word, and faith grows in those who listen well. Are you listening?

### GOD’S WORD GROWS IN AMAZING WAYS

- It grows quietly and gradually in the unseen.
- It grows supernaturally, despite human limitations and efforts.
- It grows beyond all expectation. Never discount what God is doing in the small things.
- Are we being patient and trusting God’s timing when we do not see the immediate results of reading or sharing God’s Word?

### FAITH GROWN WILL BE FAITH TESTED

- You don’t really know or understand something until your belief in that idea is tested.
- Storms of life are opportunities for the defects of immature faith to get purged and cleansed out of us. They force us to ask, “Do I really trust and believe God?”
- It may seem like Jesus does not care, but if He is in your boat, the storm is no match for Him.

### WHY ARE YOU AFRAID?

- We have been given a promise by Jesus that He would be with us always (Mt. 28:20).
- Because He is with us, we are to shine His light through sharing our faith, living out our Christian witness, serving the poor, helping the needy, loving the broken, and seeking the lost. We cannot do that when we are afraid of the dark.

### WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU WERE NOT AFRAID?

- Think of how different our church and our community would be if God’s people were bold enough to believe, obey, trust, and follow God without fear even in the storms.
- God never intended for us to live crippled by worry, fear, or anxiety (2 Tim. 1:7).
- The Bible contains over 300 instructions not to fear. Are you listening and believing God?