

# THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JUNE 15TH, 2025 // GOSPEL OF MARK

## A PARABLE TAUGHT (MARK 4:1-9) THE USUAL CROWD

As we see throughout the early part of all the Gospels, Jesus tended to draw a crowd wherever He went. There were those who followed Him to have a loved one healed or be healed themselves, those who wanted to hear truth, and those who wanted to see a performance.

- Many times, parables were used as a divisive method, as we see here.

### WHAT IS A PARABLE?

Parables were commonly used by Jesus in the Gospels. They can be seen as illustrations of the intended message, and many times they are more like a riddle or a puzzle.

- This is not to say that Jesus intends for the message to be difficult to understand, but rather, **through rooted interest**, to provide an **opportunity for the listener to be inquisitive**.

### HIS SPIRIT REVEALS MYSTERIES OF THE FAITH

When mysteries, or secrets, are unknown to us, we are faced with curiosity or confusion which ultimately motivates our actions.

- Instead of sharing straightforward truths, parables gave listeners an opportunity to respond. In every instance, Jesus is available to answer questions. **When interest is present, passion drives investigation.**

### FAMILIARITY IS KEY

Jesus used a parable that contained subject matter with which the crowd would have been very familiar. By relating with the people, Jesus gave them ample opportunity to understand the parable through commonality.

- When we share the truth with others, it is advantageous to find likeness between us and those with whom we are sharing.

### SEED FELL IN DIFFERENT PLACES

In this passage, we understand that seed fell in four different areas: **the path, rocky ground, thorns, and good soil**. Planting seeds was done by hand and therefore less precise.

- This is not to imply that the sower threw seed without intention. **The state of someone's heart does not remove the responsibility of the sower** (1 Corinthians 3:6-9)!

### "THIRTY, SIXTY, AND A HUNDRED TIMES."

When the Word is well received, it should produce fruit in a Believer's life. The Holy Spirit will produce His fruit in us. For multiplication to happen, we must use the gifts we are given to glorify Him. "For to everyone who has, more will be given..." (Matthew 25:29).

- Healthy things grow.** We receive the Word, allow it to take root, and growth will happen.

### RESIST COMPARISON

In verse 8, Jesus uses three examples of exponential growth to showcase the potential for compounding production. Though, there are times in our faith when we may be tempted, through envy, to compare our walk with those around us.

- We all have unique callings. Some will lead thousands and others will lead five. Regardless, **Kingdom advancement should be celebrated!**

### ANYONE WITH EARS

We can never know for sure, but we can assume that most, if not all, of the crowd, had ears. So, what was Jesus implying?

- Jesus' words in verse 9 are pertinent to virtually any parable that He would go on to use. **Anyone can use their ears to hear, but to listen, passion and interest are necessary.**

### WHY PARABLES? (MARK 4:10-12)

#### THE SECRET OF THE KINGDOM

The crowd, and even those closest to Jesus, were a little confused by the parable. Therefore, they asked for clarity.

- We should never shy away from asking questions.** The Word will provoke questions, which should then cause us to inquire further and help us understand truth with certainty.

### INSIDERS VS. OUTSIDERS

Jesus was not keeping secrets. **He used the parable to differentiate between those who had a desire for more and those who would never be receptive to truth.**

- Jesus quotes Isaiah 6:9-10 to show the correlation between the crowd and a people group that was unreceptive to a prophetic message.

### IS JESUS CONTRADICTING HIMSELF?

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus says that if we seek, we will find, and if we knock, the door will be opened for us (Matthew 7:7-8). It seems like here, in verse 12, Jesus does not want unbelievers to understand and be forgiven.

- Instead of the phrase "so that," it is better understood to be "as a result." **Because of unbelief, hearts will be unaccepting to truth.**

### LET'S SYMPATHIZE WITH THE AUDIENCE

In the crowd Jesus was speaking to, there were many vocations and backgrounds represented. To each of those individuals, the message of this parable was easily misunderstood.

- The investor:** "I need to invest wisely so that I know my investments are worth it."
- The mother:** "When I speak, I need to make sure that my kids are listening."

- The entrepreneur:** "There is an opportunity to start farming with higher efficiency than other farmers. Maybe I can create something to help them."
- Without the Holy Spirit's wisdom to reveal the mysteries contained in the Bible's various parables, the message can be interpreted many ways. With the Holy Spirit's wisdom, the message of this parable is extremely clear.

## A PARABLE EXPLAINED (MARK 4:13-20)

### "DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND...?"

This is still early on in Jesus' ministry with His disciples, and in verse 13, we see a glimpse of their need for clarity in Jesus' teachings. Knowing the use of parables was going to continue, Jesus insists that the disciples understand how to navigate this parable.

- Spending time with the Teacher drastically improves understanding.**

### THE SOWER AND THE SEED

The Greek word used in verse 14 for "Word," is "Logos." Therefore, this passage could be talking about the gospel message, or it could be talking about Jesus himself (John 1:1).

- Regardless, the parable is clear about the way in which we receive the message and the type of soil that most represents us.

### AN EXAMPLE FOR US

In all the examples of seed being sown, the message never changes. **The seed is always the same.**

- Whether it is the Lord doing the sowing of truth in our hearts, or it is us sharing the gospel message with others, the parable remains. **As a sower, we do not alter, mix, or replace the seed with another** (Revelation 22:18-19; Galatians 1:6-9).

### "SOME ARE LIKE THE WORD SOWN ON THE PATH"

The first example of soil, or lack thereof, is those who are like the Word sown on the path.

- This person has no space/time for the gospel.** They want nothing to do with truth and are content without Jesus. Satan wants to prevent every opportunity for the gospel to take root (1 Peter 5:8). A heart must be plowed before seeds can be planted (Hosea 10:12).

### "SEED SOWN ON ROCKY GROUND"

The second example of soil is those who are like seed sown on rocky ground. Unlike the previous "soil," rocky ground has patches of grass but is ultimately unable to sustain roots.

- This person chases emotion based on their initial response to Christ.** Eventually, in our faith, the "newness" wears off. The beginning is great, but to sustain growth, roots are necessary.

### "SEED SOWN AMONG THORNS"

The third example of soil is those who are like seed sown among thorns. The soil may have potential for good growth but bad growth as well.

- This person is extremely influenceable.** They have heard the Word and are affected by it, but they also allow the world to equally affect them. We cannot serve two masters (Matthew 6:24), and the desire for other things can suffocate us.

### "SEED SOWN ON GOOD GROUND"

The fourth, and last, example of soil is those who are like seed sown on good ground. The health of the soil accepts the seed and welcomes growth.

- This person is the true hearer of the Word.** Notice how hearing the concept does not produce the same result in everyone. If it did, there would not be multiple types of soil! **Not all who hear, listen.**

## HOW DO WE RESPOND?

- Let us not just hear the message of Jesus.
- To produce fruit in our faith, we must be driven by interest and passion, which should lead to inquiry and investigation.
- Do not be afraid to ask questions!**
- Are we sharing the gospel?**
- As Believers, we have a responsibility to sow seeds without worry about the harvest.**

## WHAT TYPE OF SOIL ARE WE?

- Have we made time for Jesus?
- Do we chase emotion in our faith?
- What is influencing our lives?
- Have we adequately heard the Word? If so, are we doers of the Word? (James 1:22).**
- We must receive Jesus, allow Him to change us, and share Him with others.**