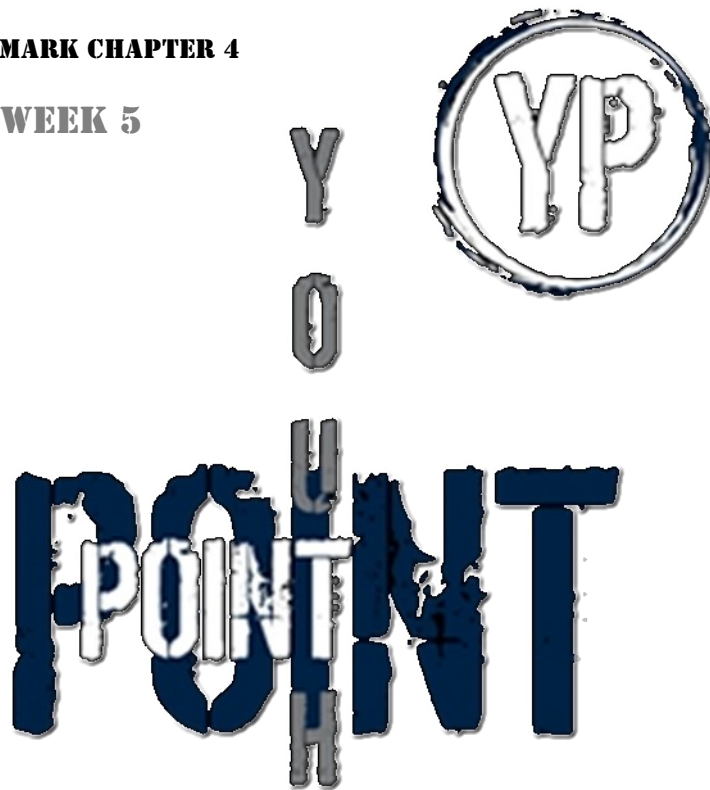




MARK CHAPTER 4

WEEK 5



Week 5 — Mark 4

Day 1

Things to notice or take note of while your reading:

- ⇒ Notice how large the crowd was that He had to get into a boat
- ⇒ Jesus begins to teach in parables
 - ⇒ Why?
 - ⇒ How would you title each parable?
- ⇒ The apostles still don't get it

Mark 4

Again he began to teach beside the sea. And a very large crowd gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat in it on the sea, and the whole crowd was beside the sea on the land. And he was teaching them many things in parables, and in his teaching he said to them: "Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured it. Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil, and immediately it sprang up, since it had no depth of soil. And when the sun rose, it was scorched, and since it had no root, it withered away. Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain. And other seeds fell into good soil and produced grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold." And he said, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

And when he was alone, those around him with the twelve asked him about the parables. And he said to them, "To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside everything is in parables, so that

"they may indeed see but not perceive,
and may indeed hear but not understand,
lest they should turn and be forgiven."

And he said to them, "Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables? The sower sows the word. And these are the ones along the path, where the word is sown: when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them. And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: the ones who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy. And they have no root in themselves, but endure for a while; then, when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away. And others are the ones sown among thorns. They are those who hear the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. But those that were sown on the good soil are the ones who hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold."

And he said to them, "Is a lamp brought in to be put under a basket, or under a bed, and not on a stand? For nothing is hidden except to be made manifest; nor is anything secret except to come to light. If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear." And he said to them, "Pay attention to what you hear: with the measure you use, it will be measured to you, and still more will be added to you. For to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away."

Week 5 — Mark 4

Day 1 continued

And he said, “The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground. He sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows; he knows not how. The earth produces by itself, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. But when the grain is ripe, at once he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come.”

And he said, “With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable shall we use for it? It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when sown on the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth, yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants and puts out large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.”

With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it. He did not speak to them without a parable, but privately to his own disciples he explained everything.

On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, “Let us go across to the other side.” And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. And other boats were with him. And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they woke him and said to him, “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?” And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, “Peace! Be still!” And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. He said to them, “Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?” And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”

- ◆ How many soils were there in the first parable?

- ◆ Which soil do you see yourself being?

- ◆ Look up what a mustard seed looks like.

Week 5 — Mark 4

Day 2

Purpose of the Parables

Well, last week we had a short parable, but now Jesus really gets into the swing of things with parables. Remember though Mark doesn't go into too many parables or teaching segments, he just tries to keep the story going.

Why did Jesus teach in parables? He is/was God, why didn't he say everything in a way that everyone could understand? Read what He says in Mark, Luke and Matthew:

Mark 4:10-12

And when he was alone, those around him with the twelve asked him about the parables. And he said to them, "To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside everything is in parables, so that
"they may indeed see but not perceive,
and may indeed hear but not understand,
lest they should turn and be forgiven."

Luke 8:9-10

And when his disciples asked him what this parable meant, he said, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God, but for others they are in parables, so that 'seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.'

Matthew 13:10-17

Then the disciples came and said to him, "Why do you speak to them in parables?" And he answered them, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. For to the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. Indeed, in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled that says:

""You will indeed hear but never understand,
and you will indeed see but never perceive."

For this people's heart has grown dull,
and with their ears they can barely hear,
and their eyes they have closed,
lest they should see with their eyes
and hear with their ears
and understand with their heart
and turn, and I would heal them.'

But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. For truly, I say to you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.

Week 5 — Mark 4

Day 2 continued

So, did reading through those help you to see why He spoke in parables?

Maybe it made you a bit annoyed that he didn't want them to hear because then they would be forgiven?

BUT, that's not what He wanted. People say that in the Greek it sounds better, that it makes it mean something different, that in the Greek it's not so much that He's trying to hide the meaning from them, but that they themselves have made themselves so dull that they couldn't comprehend what He was saying.

It's one thing for Jesus to hide the meaning from them, but quite another for they themselves to be so hardened that they couldn't understand. Jesus wasn't saying this in an angry tone, He was saying it in a tone of love, of regret, of being bummed out by what He saw around him.

So, what's the purpose of telling things in parables?

One scholar divides it into four reasons-four things it does to truth:

- ◆ Truth Concrete—helps you create picture in your mind
- ◆ Truth Portable—helps you remember and carry the story in your mind
- ◆ Truth Interesting—makes it carry your interest or grab your attention
- ◆ Truth Personally discoverable—helps you internalize the truth
 - ◆ Makes it real for you

The best teachers teach in parables.

So, now that you know what the purpose is for parables, tomorrow we'll get into a few of them.

Week 5 — Mark 4

Day 3

One Parable

Today, we continue with one parable. Then tomorrow two more.

Lamp under a basket

Mark 4:21-25

And he said to them, “Is a lamp brought in to be put under a basket, or under a bed, and not on a stand? For nothing is hidden except to be made manifest; nor is anything secret except to come to light. If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.” And he said to them, “Pay attention to what you hear: with the measure you use, it will be measured to you, and still more will be added to you. For to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away.”

Matthew 5:14-16

“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

Luke 8:16-18

“No one after lighting a lamp covers it with a jar or puts it under a bed, but puts it on a stand, so that those who enter may see the light. For nothing is hidden that will not be made manifest, nor is anything secret that will not be known and come to light. Take care then how you hear, for to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he thinks that he has will be taken away.”

This parable is interesting because the second half of the version in Mark and Luke is actually scattered all across Matthew, but anyways the concept is that the truth is meant to be seen and not kept secret. Our lives as Christians are meant to be seen by others and not just seen like everyone else, but seen to be different.

Mark and Luke bring up the subject of listening or hearing differently, one refers to ‘what you hear’ and one to ‘how you hear’. They are both talking about listening or hearing the Lord, but not just that we listen, but that we listen obediently. If your mom tells you to clean your room, it’s one thing to listen to her talk or hear the words coming from her lips, but quite another to actually go and clean up your room. That’s what Jesus is talking about, He’s talking about not just listening his spiel, but going and letting our light, letting the truth, shine.

Week 5 — Mark 4

Day 4

Two Parables

This first parable is only seen in Mark, but it reminds me of another story. Read it and see if it reminds you of another story:

Parable of the Seed Growing

Mark 4:26-29

And he said, “The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground. He sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows; he knows not how. The earth produces by itself, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. But when the grain is ripe, at once he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come.”

Don't know if you know the story of Jonah, but this passage makes me think of the plant that God made to shade Jonah. Jonah got upset at God for killing the plant, but God was using that plant to try to open Jonah's eyes to the fact that God wanted to save all those people because they meant more to him than the plant.

Jonah 4:10-11

And the LORD said, “You pity the plant, for which you did not labor, nor did you make it grow, which came into being in a night and perished in a night. And should not I pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle?”

We are called to scatter the seed, the seed being the Word of God/ the gospel/ the good news. We are not called to worry about who will or won't accept it, yeah we pray about it, but we don't worry, we just scatter, we just proclaim His word. If the word is going to sprout, God is the one that has to make that soil fertile. God is the one that has to turn that person's heart towards Him. He is the one that has to open their eyes.

I like how it says it in Ecclesiastes:

Ecclesiastes 11:5-6

As you do not know the way the spirit comes to the bones in the womb of a woman with child, so you do not know the work of God who makes everything.

In the morning sow your seed, and at evening withhold not your hand, for you do not know which will prosper, this or that, or whether both alike will be good.

Thing is that we don't know, we don't know who will hear, we don't know who's watching our lives, we don't know who we will come in contact with that will hear, so we must proclaim to all without being biased - without thinking 'oh that person they aren't going to listen, but look that one he's going to pay attention.' NO! We aren't called to judge who gets to hear and who doesn't, we are called to GO! To SCATTER!



Week 5 — Mark 4

Day 4 continued

Parable of the Mustard Seed

Mark 4:30-32

And he said, “With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable shall we use for it? It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when sown on the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth, yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants and puts out large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.”

Matthew 13:31-32

He put another parable before them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his field. It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is larger than all the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.”

Luke 13:18-19

He said therefore, “What is the kingdom of God like? And to what shall I compare it? It is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his garden, and it grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air made nests in its branches.”

Earlier this week, I told you to look up what a mustard seed looks like. If you did you would see that it's tiny. Now, it's not the tiniest of all seeds, but for those people at that time, for the crowd whom He was talking to - it was. There was nothing that they planted that started off that small and became such a big plant.

We might think at times, I can't do anything, I can't make a difference, what's the point? The thing is that everything has a beginning, but to begin you must start. You weren't born as an adult, but are growing up into one. We are small, but He is big. His word just has to be allowed to grow up in all of us. We put up barriers, but He has torn them all down. His kingdom is to grow and include everyone that loves Him, believes in Him, obeys Him.

He is describing how massive His kingdom will be, but do you believe it? Do you believe what He says? Do you live by it?

Week 5 — Mark 4

Day 5

The Storm!

So, some things to consider.

Remember, Jesus was a carpenter and we know that at least four of his disciples were fishermen - guys that would have been used to rough seas or lakes. :-)

Mark 4:35-41

On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side." And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. And other boats were with him. And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they woke him and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. He said to them, "Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?" And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

Luke 8:22-25

One day he got into a boat with his disciples, and he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side of the lake." So they set out, and as they sailed he fell asleep. And a windstorm came down on the lake, and they were filling with water and were in danger. And they went and woke him, saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!" And he awoke and rebuked the wind and the raging waves, and they ceased, and there was a calm. He said to them, "Where is your faith?" And they were afraid, and they marveled, saying to one another, "Who then is this, that he commands even winds and water, and they obey him?"

Matthew 8:23-27

And when he got into the boat, his disciples followed him. And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea, so that the boat was being swamped by the waves; but he was asleep. And they went and woke him, saying, "Save us, Lord; we are perishing." And he said to them, "Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?" Then he rose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. And the men marveled, saying, "What sort of man is this, that even winds and sea obey him?"

So, now don't you find it comical that these guys were calling the carpenter to fix their issue? This is the first time that Jesus actually performs a miracle for them. He's healed and cast out demons and all sorts of stuff for other people, but this is the first time that He actually does it for this chosen guys.



Week 5 — Mark 4

Day 5 continued

So, just picture it: Jesus was exhausted from healing and talking and just being around tons of people. Think about when you around large crowds, don't you sometimes walk away exhausted, even though you didn't do anything? Now, just imagine how exhausted Jesus must have been. So, it's going to be a while before they get to where they are going and he decides to take a nap. Then a storm picks up. Now, not just any storm, but from what we are to gather a huge storm - their boats are filling with water that it was so bad. So, these seasoned fishermen are freaking out thinking that they are going to die if this storm continues on, but they look and see Jesus all curled up, maybe even snoring a bit. So, they are like 'Dude! We're going to die! We're going to die! Wake up! What's wrong with you?!? Why are you sleeping?!? We're going to die!' Envision 12 guys freaking out saying that and everything else that came to their minds at that moment in time.

Got the picture?

So, Jesus was probably like 'man I just wanted to get some sleep and these morons are waking me up' ok maybe not like that, but kinda.

Regardless, Jesus was upset. He was annoyed because He knew that everything was going to be okay. Yet, He hadn't told them that. He knew that it wasn't time yet. He knew that those guys wouldn't start dying off until after He died, but they didn't know that. They just knew that they were in trouble and that they had seen him do stuff for other people, so why wasn't He doing stuff for them now - that was their mindsets.

That's why He reprimands them for being scared, for not having faith. Mark and Luke put it as having 'no faith' whereas Matthew sees it as 'so little faith'. Either way these guys were slacking in the faith department. They didn't just not have faith, but were scared. They had seen so many things, but now that it was their lives on the line - they were scared of this guy whom they had agreed to follow. Strange, isn't it?

Cause the thing was that usually, you'll go from really bad storm, to the winds dying down, to maybe some light rain, to the waves calming down eventually, BUT nope that wasn't what happened. It went from 'Oh no we're going to die' kind of weather to "great calm", so not just slightly calm, but completely still. Think of the lake becoming crystal clear and perfectly calm. The sky being a nice blue color with no clouds in sight. The wind - oh wait - what wind, it stopped.

So, for someone to go and say "Peace! Be still!" and it happening, well that's a bit scary unless you have faith in the one that said it.

Do we? Do we have faith in God when He says be patient, be still, wait - to actually be able to do, so or are we constantly worrying and trying to do stuff because we think that we should? Do we have faith to just wait for God's timing? Or do we run around scared that we won't get to where we want to be?

NOTES:

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2 Timothy 2:15

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.

It's not just studying and accumulating knowledge, but studying to know Him and be able to do His will. It's studying Him because of how awesome he is and how much you love him that you can't do anything else.

I heard a quote about what happens to us each morning - that we wake up with Satan sitting on our face just waiting to squash our day, to squash our joy. If we don't pick him up and toss him across the room - he'll succeed. And we can't do it. He prowls around like a roaring lion waiting to devour us, he's the ruler of this world, he wins, UNLESS, we resist him.

How?

By being firm in our faith, by having the Spirit interceding for us, by fighting! We must fight! We must contend!



What's your weapon of choice for this fight?

Ephesians 6:10-17 - The Armor of God

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God

