

February 5, 2017

The Gospel of Mark "Following Jesus" Mark 4:1-34 Pastor Kirk Gambrell

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Using This Study

❶ EXAMINE His Word

What does God SAY? Open your time with prayer. The words God uses to communicate matters, so go back and pay close attention to the details that are emphasized or repeated in the passage.

❷ EXPLORE His Word

What does God MEAN? Asking questions of the text helps surface how the details relate to the message God wants to communicate.

❸ EMBRACE His Word

Why does it MATTER to me? Embrace God by responding to what you discover in His word in faith and obedience.



This week's passage in Mark is about the parable of sowing seed. The seed is representative of the Word of God that is spread by people doing the work of the Kingdom. Spreading the Word of God is one of the primary responsibilities of the follower of Christ. Therefore this parable that teaches us about spreading the Word is very important to our approach to ministry. God has called us to receive His Word, apply it to our lives, and ultimately bear fruit for his Kingdom. This week we will look at how we can make sure we are cultivating the Word in our own lives, as well as spreading the Word to others in order to bear the maximum amount of fruit for the Kingdom.



Read Mark 4:1-34 (NET)

¹ Again he began to teach by the lake. Such a large crowd gathered around him that he got into a boat on the lake and sat there while the whole crowd was on the shore by the lake. ² He taught them many things in parables, and in his teaching said to them: ³ “Listen! A sower went out to sow. ⁴ And as he sowed, some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured it. ⁵ Other seed fell on rocky ground where it did not have much soil. It sprang up at once because the soil was not deep. ⁶ When the sun came up it was scorched, and because it did not have sufficient root, it withered. ⁷ Other seed fell among the thorns, and they grew up and choked it, and it did not produce grain. ⁸ But other seed fell on good soil and produced grain, sprouting and growing; some yielded thirty times as much, some sixty, and some a hundred times.” ⁹ And he said, “Whoever has ears to hear had better listen!”

The Purpose of Parables

¹⁰ When he was alone, those around him with the twelve asked him about the parables. ¹¹ He said to them, “The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those outside, everything is in parables,

¹² so that *although they look they may look but not see, and although they hear they may hear but not understand, so they may not repent and be forgiven.*”

¹³ He said to them, “Don’t you understand this parable? Then how will you understand any parable? ¹⁴ The sower sows the word. ¹⁵ These are the ones on the path where the word is sown: Whenever they hear, immediately Satan comes and snatches the word that was sown in them. ¹⁶ These are the ones sown on rocky ground: As soon as they hear the word, they receive it with joy. ¹⁷ But they have no root in themselves and do not endure. Then, when trouble or persecution comes because of the word, immediately they fall away.

¹⁸ Others are the ones sown among thorns: They are those who hear the word, ¹⁹ but worldly cares, the seductiveness of wealth, and the desire for other things come in and choke the word, and it produces nothing. ²⁰ But these are the ones sown on good soil: They hear the word and receive it and bear fruit, one thirty times as much, one sixty, and one a hundred.”

The Parable of the Lamp

²¹ He also said to them, “A lamp isn’t brought to be put under a basket or under a bed, is it? Isn’t it to be placed on a lampstand? ²² For nothing is hidden except to be revealed, and nothing concealed except to be brought to light. ²³ If anyone has ears to hear, he had better listen!” ²⁴ And he said to them, “Take care about what you hear. The measure you use will be the measure you receive, and more will be added to you. ²⁵ For whoever has will be given more, but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him.”

The Parable of the Growing Seed

²⁶ He also said, “The kingdom of God is like someone who spreads seed on the ground. ²⁷ He goes to sleep and gets up, night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. ²⁸ By itself the soil produces a crop, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. ²⁹ And when the grain is ripe, he sends in the sickle because the harvest has come.”

The Parable of the Mustard Seed

³⁰ He also asked, “To what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable can we use to present it? ³¹ It is like a mustard seed that when sown in the ground, even though it is the smallest of all the seeds in the ground— ³² when it is sown, it grows up, becomes the greatest of all garden plants, and grows large branches so that the wild birds can nest in its shade.”

The Use of Parables

³³ So with many parables like these, he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear. ³⁴ He did not speak to them without a parable. But privately he explained everything to his own disciples.

o EXAMINE His Word (Observation) (For personal preparation)

What does God SAY? Prayerfully note significant details and terms emphasized in the foregoing passage.

1. Who is involved in the text? Author, audience, main characters.
2. Where and when is this taking place? Geography and timeline.
3. What actions are carried out or commanded? Look for the verbs.
4. Is there anything repeated?
5. What is emphasized?
6. Is there anything in these passages that is related to other areas of scripture?
7. Are there things to be noted that are alike or unlike such as similes and metaphors?

② EXPLORE His Word (Interpretation) (For Community Group discussion)
What does God MEAN?

8. Why did Jesus speak in Parables?

9. What does the seed represent?

10. Who is sowing the seed?

11. What determines if the seed grows?

12. What relationship do you think Mark 4:21 has to the parable of the seeds?

③ EMBRACE His Word (Application) (For Community Group discussion)
Why does this MATTER to me?

13. How can we help to make the seed grow to produce fruit?

14. What prevents the first 3 groups of people from being fruitful?

15. People do not always have the same response to the Word of God. How does this parable impact when and how we share the Word of God?

16. What insight does this parable give followers of Jesus when it comes to bearing fruit in our own lives?

Summarize your thoughts on the passage

Write about what God wants you to KNOW, to FEEL, and to DO...

SERMON NOTES