

Calvary Bible College

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Mark: The Servant Gospel, NT352

Part II *cont.* The Servant's Work: Not to be Ministered to, But to Do Ministry. Chapters 1:14–10:52

Class 3

Chapter 4

Joey: The Servant Teaches Thru Parables to Many Different Hearts

There is a new saying going around: 'The harder the heart the simpler the story'. So, it is with the hearts of many of Jesus' listeners.

v.1 And again He began to teach (Matt. 'He spoke') by the sea.

-This is the fourth time in Mark that Jesus is 'by the sea' of Galilee.

v.1 cont. ... And a great multitude was gathered to Him, so that He got into a boat and sat in it on the sea; and the whole multitude was on the land facing the sea.

2 Then He taught them (Matt.: 'He spoke') many things by or 'within' parables, and said to them in His teaching (Matt.: 'saying'):

-**Edwards:** The Gospels record some sixty different parables of Jesus, most of which are found in Matthew and Luke, fewer in Mark, and none in John. The word "parable" means something that is placed alongside something else for the purpose of clarification.

-**Lane:** Apart from the Olivet Discourse in Ch. 13:3–37, Mark's grouping of parabolic material in Ch. 4:1–34 constitutes the largest unit in his Gospel devoted entirely to the teaching of Jesus.

-Whether someone is 'saying'/'spoke' in Matt. or 'teaching' in Mark, depends here on the listener, for in both Gospels the words are closely exchanged from Matthew to Mark! So the difference has to be the listener: Is the listener receiving teaching or just being spoken to.

v.3 "Listen (up)! Behold, a sower went out to sow.

-Though they could see Him, we cannot, He is now in Heaven, so we are restricted to just hearing Him!

-Though Israel is about the actual land of Israel, our residence, our place is in Heaven, which is not visible to us.

-'Listen-up' is for them who could see Him, and it is even more so for us who cannot see Him.

-They have 'pictures' and 'word' memories, we have only to remember His Words, many of which as with the Parables, draw a picture for us!

-What is one picture we never have of Jesus? Answer: What His face looks like.

v.4 And it happened, as he sowed,

-He' sows and 'he' sows. 'Jesus' sows and 'we' sow.

-In the future, we will read of those who 'have sown spiritual things' (we will read of this in 1Cor. 9:11)

-In the future, we will read of those who sow our money, 'he who sows bountifully or sparingly, reaps bountifully or sparingly' (we will read of this in 2Cor. 9:6)

-In the future, we will we will read of our sowing our natural bodies of corruption, of weakness, of dishonor and we will reap an incorruptible, powerful, glorious, and spiritual body (we will read of

this in 1Cor. 15:42,43, & 44).

v.4 cont. that some seed fell by the wayside (*alongside of 'the path'*); **and the birds of the air came and devoured it.**

-no penetration, easy pickin's

v.5 Some fell on stony ground (*'ground' characterized as being stony beneath the surface, but looks good on the surface*), **where it did not have much earth; and immediately it (Matt. 'they') sprang up** (*instead of growing roots down first*) **because it had no depth of earth.**

v.6 But when the sun was up it was scorched, and because it (Matt. 'they') had no root it (Matt. 'they') withered away.

v.7 And some seed fell among thorns; and the thorns grew up and choked it (Matt. 'they'), and it yielded no crop.

v.8 But other seed (Matt. 'others') fell on good ground and yielded a crop that sprang up, increased and produced: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred."

-Why does Matthew use plurals, 'they', 'others', for plural numbers of seeds and Mark uses singulars, 'it' seed?

v.9 And He said to them, "He who has ears to hear, (plural, two ears 'balanced' hearing) let him hear!"

-Lane: Mark includes only three parables all about growth (*whether good or bad*): the sower (Ch. 4:3-8), the self-growing seed (Ch. 4:26-29) and the mustard seed (Ch. 4:30-32).

-The second parable, however, is unique to Mark, which is found nowhere else in the Gospels, vs. 26-29

-Servant Sowers are dependent on the Words being powerful to the hearers.

-In the future we will learn how true this is.

-We will learn this: The seed, **the Word of God is alive and powerful and sharper than any two edged sword** but this is no mere physical sword for we will learn this 'word-sword' pierces even to the **dividing asunder of the soul and spirit and will be a critic of the thoughts and intents of the heart of man.**

-This in the future will be written to the Hebrew believers in Jesus.

Matthew's Account, 13:3-9

John: The Servant Explains 'Why Parables'? Before Giving Their Meaning

Jesus tells us 'why' He teaches in Parables before He proceeds to tell us what they mean. The 'why' gives depth to the meaning of the parables, like three gives dimension to two dimensions?

-Matt. 13:36 tells us that He did His explaining in 'the house'

v.10 But when He was alone, those (disciples) around Him with the twelve (Disciples) asked Him about the parable*.

* corrupt text has plural, 'parables'.

-a larger group of disciples than the Twelve inquired concerning "the parable."

-Verse 13 bares out that singular 'parable' not 'parables' is correct, for Jesus says in v.13 **And He said to them, "Do you not understand (oida) this parable** (*the singular parable of the sower*)?

-But First, before I explain this parable to you, I will tell you why I speak in parables to them ...

Matthew adds that they also asked Him:

13:10 and the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?"

-Why do you use the parabolic method and not just speak plainly, directly to them?

v.11 And He said to them, "To you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God;

-Dr. Arnold on the word mystery: In **Matthew 13**, Jesus introduces the Mystery Kingdom, one of the eight

positive mysteries in the NT. In verse 11, Jesus mentions the *mystery of the kingdom of God*. In verse 35 of Matt. 13, He said, *I will utter things hidden from the foundation of the world. Hence a mystery is something hidden since the foundation of the world....*

-Dr. Arnold goes on to summarize the meaning of the word:

To summarize what the word mystery means, then, 'it is the secret thoughts, plans, and dispensations of God that are hidden from humanity and must be revealed by divine revelation.' The word mystery in the New Testament does not carry our modern English meaning, i.e., something that is inexplicable. In the New Testament, the word mystery is something unrevealed until now, and being revealed only now, now being New Testament times. Therefore, it is now understandable and explicable.

-Having that definition' what is the '**mystery of the kingdom of God**'?

In the Gospels, 'mystery' is used only of the Mystery Kingdom: in Matthew 13:11 'the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven'; in Mark 4:11, 'the mystery of the kingdom of God'; In these contexts, the Kingdom in its present *earthly* form is co-existing with evil. These passages also emphasize the inability of unbelievers to understand or translate Kingdom terminology when in it comes in parabolic form.

So, what do non-followers hear?

v.11 cont. ... but to those who are outside, all things come in parables,

-parables (*verbal natural pictures that come along side of spiritual truths*) BUT generally without any interpretation ...

-What are the last noted people or people groups that were **outside**?

-We have three classifications of outsiders here in Mark 3 and 4:

-In 3:19 it says that Jesus and His appointed twelve went 'inside' into a house, with other followers.

-Then we find these three groups that are 'outside':

-The multitudes in 3:20

-The Scribes from Jerusalem in 3:22

-And His own family in 3:21 and 3:31-32

-The most twisted of these three or the most spiritually dull of these three groups are who?

-The Scribes, who could not deny His miracles but figured out how to account for them by attributing them to the Satanic power

-The multitudes are not there yet, His family is not there either, but both are outside.

v.12 so that 'Seeing they may see and not perceive (*'to see' that He is speaking spiritually*),

-So when we read of 'they' in v.12 which group do you most think of?

-They will 'see the verbal picture' but not perceive its meaning

v.12 cont. ... And hearing they may hear and not understand (*have spiritual insight*);

-'Not understand', here has this meaning: they will hear the words, they will employ their own capacity for understanding but not arrive at a correct spiritual insight.

-And what spiritual understanding does He want them to come to?

v.12 cont. Lest or in order that they should turn or turn around, and their sins be forgiven them.' "

-What is the chief goal that He has for His people?

-Is it found in the healings? Or the casting out of Demons?

-As with the paralytic, sins forgiven first, then get up and walk!

Matt.13 Adds here from **Isaiah**, explaining what has happened to these people, what have they done to themselves?

15 For the hearts of this people have grown dull. *Whose fault is this?*

Their ears are hard of hearing, *Is He speaking of natural hearing or spiritual hearing?*

And their eyes they have closed, *Who closed them?*

Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears,

Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn,

So that I should heal them.' *So forgiveness in our v.12 brings what?*

Matthew's Account, 13:10-17

Joey: The Servant Sower Explains the Key Parable

Scriptures often have key passages that explain key and often difficult teachings. So here we have the key that starts the engine of 'parabolic understanding'.

v.13 And He said to them, "Do you not understand (oida) this parable? How then will you understand (ginosko) with correct knowledge and thus be able to interpret all the parables?

-Two things here:

1- The keys to parabolic understanding lies with these kingdom parables and understanding them.

2- We know on this side of the cross that understanding comes from the Holy Spirit (see from the future, 1Cor. 2:11)

-We are to seek understanding from the Father, who gives us His Spirit, who gives spiritual understanding in order that we might correctly know and use this understanding as a foundational key to understand all parables.

As we read this explanation of the Parable of the Sower place each of the four groups from chapter 3 (three outside of the house and one inside the house) with the four heart soil reactions!

v.14 The sower sows the word.

v.15 And these *(as if He is pointing to the side of the pathway and at a bird pecking seeds)* **are the ones by (para) the wayside** *(next to the path) **where the word is sown.***

-To the sower this looks like good ground versus the pathway itself, but it too is very hard like the pathway, though off to the side and seemingly softer.

v. 15 cont. When they hear, Satan comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts.

-Which group fits in here? outsiders (Scribes from Jerusalem)

v.16 These *(as if He is pointing to the side of the way and at plant growth on rocky soil)* **likewise are the ones sown on stony ground who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with gladness;**

-There is nothing wrong with their reception of the Word!

v.17 and they have no root in themselves, and so endure *or last only for a short time. Afterward (after they so joyously spring up), **when tribulation** (afflictions, distresses) **or persecution arises for the word's sake** (attacks because you are sharing the Word, explaining your changes), **immediately they stumble** (are 'scandalized', 'offended' at God not so much the persecutor per se, not expecting this reaction).*

-For some this is not what they expected? This Jesus is different than the Jesus they grew up with?

-they are confused, perhaps even stumbled or offended!

-Which group fits in here? outsiders (His family)

v.18 Now these (as if He is pointing to good soil where good seeds are struggling to grow amongst taller, stronger, thorny plants) **are the ones sown among** grown plants with **thorns; they are the ones who hear the word,**

v.19 and the cares or anxieties of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires or cravings for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.

-Which group fits in here? outsiders (The Multitudes)

v.20 But these (as if He is pointing to good soil where good seeds are producing and others are coming on to produce even more fruit) **are the ones sown on good ground, those who hear the word, accept it, (para-dechomai: to come along side of, examine and come to believe to be true) and bear fruit: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred."** (What was expected as a good yield, was six-fold)

-There is a mind-to-heart transition that takes place here:

1-Hear it

2-'para' come alongside it, examine it, listen some more, examine, weigh the evidence

3-Come to the place where your heart believes it and accepts it for you!

-Which group fits in here? The insiders, (His disciples)

Matthew's Account, 13:18-23

John: The Servant Explains Why Ears are the Windows into the Soul

The old saying is: 'The eyes are the windows into the soul'. That is not only old but wrong! The correct path into the soul is not the eyes, but the ears that see as well.

v.21 Also He said to them (those in the house), **"Is a lamp brought into a room to be put under a basket or under a bed in a room?"**

-The obvious answer is what? No! It is not brought in to continue the darkness in the room!

-How would the darkness continue in the room with a lit lamp in the room?

-Two ways it would continue to be a dark room: You put it under a basket, thus covering it up or you put it under the bed!

-Either way the room remains dark.

v.21 cont. Is it not to be set on a lampstand (so that light is provided for the room)?

v.22 For (with proper lighting) **there is nothing hidden which will not be revealed, nor has anything been kept secret or carefully hidden, unveiled (as N.T. Mysteries) but that it should come to light or be made clear.**

-In the future we will learn that Jesus is the light of the dark world and we also will learn that the Holy Spirit will bring the light of Jesus to everyone at the same time, He does not have Jesus' physical limitations.

v.23 If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear."

- Why the shift from 'lighting up a room' to 'ears that hear' in v.23?
- Since when do ears require light to ear?
- Or is this a different kind of "(en) light (enment)"?
- Think spiritually, not naturally

But not just hearing anything

v.24 Then He said to them *(His inside followers),*

Four Things:

#1- "Take heed what you hear.

- Since most had to hear the what, who did they typically hear the 'what' from in the synagogues?
- Scribes, 'False teachers' will bring you false 'whats'
- Scribes and Pharisees will bring you opinions, and traditions that suit there objectives, their power
- You are responsible for the 'what' that comes into your ears, and that often involves who(m) you place yourselves under!

#2- With the same measure you use, it *(your measure for others)* **will measure you *(a more literal translation);***

-**Matt. 7:2-3** explains and verifies this:

2 For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.

Then He gives an example

3 And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye?

- People looking for tiny specs in others really have planks in their eyes, but they have a different measure for themselves and a very tough measure for others
- 'Measures' have to do with the standards we use for judging others and hopefully we judge ourselves with the same standards.
- But if we determine that those standards are too harsh on ourselves and we will adjust and judge righteously as well as equitably.
- And to you who hear with the ears to hear from v.23, more will be given.

#3- v.25 For whoever has *(from correct hearing and measuring), to him more will be given;*

#4- but whoever does not have *(correct hearing and measuring), even what he has will be taken away from him."*

No Matthew Account

Joey: The Seed is Self-Powering but a Servant Is Not

I often subtly act like the Word of God needs me not only to sow it but to aid it growth. I must stop thinking like that.

v.26 And He said, "The kingdom of God is as if a man *(any man)* should scatter seed on the ground *(quality of ground not defined and here the quality of the ground is not the point!),*

v.27 and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how.

- 'a man', any man, has no involvement in the growth of the seed other than sowing.
- The seed is on its own, and does just fine without human involvement.

Who is the chief agent or medium of growth?

v.28 For the earth yields crops by itself (*automatos*): first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head.

- Remember though that the earth does not sow the seed, but gives the seed the environment it needs to thrive and bear fruit.

v.29 But when the grain ripens, immediately (*key word of Mark*) he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come."

No Matthew Account

John: The Servant Compares the Kingdom of God to a Mustard Tree

It is common today to see the normal become 'wrong-normal'. Animation and CAG with a little imagination have made for us super beings. Outside of Greek mythology Jesus' listeners had no such illusions (except a few Demon Possessed men). So, what we hear and thus see next, has to catch our attention, for it is certainly is a 'wrong-normal'.

v.30 Then He said, "To what shall we liken or compare the kingdom of God? Or with what parable shall we picture it?

- Here He is going to make a comparison to what the Kingdom of God will look like, will grow to on earth, when as Dr. Arnold said, the kingdom in its present earthly form will co-exist with evil!

v.31 It is like a mustard seed which, when it the mustard seed is sown on the ground, is smaller than all the seeds on earth (that was how it was thought of amongst sown seeds);

- Again, smallest amongst sown seeds at that time!

v.32 but when it is sown (in our parabolic picture), it grows up and becomes greater (megas) than all herbs, and shoots out large (megas) branches, so that or it enables the birds of the air may nest and rest under its shade."

- so, an herb, a plant goes on steroids and develops 'mega' branches that comfortably houses evil birds per **Matt. 13:19.**

- This is not so much about the mustard seed per se as opposed to what happened to the seed in terms of its grossly abnormal growth

v.33 And with many such or like parables He spoke the word to them as they were able to hear it.

- 'like parables' as in as in **Matt. 13: 33**, The parable of the woman inserting leaven into the fellowship meal offering

- And in **Matt. 13:24-30** the parable of the good seed sown, and at night while everyone was asleep the enemy sowed similar but bad seed in the same field, amongst the good seed.

v.34 But without a parable He did not speak to them (outsiders). And when they were alone, He explained all things to His disciples.

- Did He explain all of the 7 seven parables of Matthew 13?

Matthew's Account, 13:31-32, 33-35

Joey: The Servant Uses Nature to Instill a Greater Fear

It amazes me when I think of the things or situations the I am or was afraid of. Sometimes God will give us a greater fear in order to not fear the storms anymore!

v.35 On the same day, when evening had come, He said to them, "**Let us cross over to the other side.**"

-not: 'you go to the other side and I will join you later', as in Mark 6:45, BUT all of us will go to the other side

-Again, they are traveling at night across the Galilee

v.36 Now when they had left the multitude, they took Him along in the boat as He was (*very tired, see v. 38*). **And other little boats were also with Him.**

v.37 And a great windstorm arose (*and the other little boats probably skedaddled!*), and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling up with water.

v.38 But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they continuously worked to awake Him and said to Him, "Teacher (*not Lord*), do You not care that we are perishing?"

-It is not that He said uncaring or hurtful words.

-It was not strange teachings that they haven't heard before.

-It was inaction-You would have thought that He was asleep!

v.39 Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "**Peace, be still!**" And the wind ceased and there was a great calm.

-The word 'peace' here is not 'eirene', which is used for peace with God and peace of God

-Rather it is 'siopao', be silent, be quiet ...

-The second word is 'be still', not only be quiet, but continue to be silent.

-Interestingly He used this word towards demons in Mark 1:25, when Jesus said 'Be quiet (same as 'be still' in our verse) and come out of him!

v.40 But He said to them, "**Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?**"

-No faith in me and what I told you, that we together are going to the other side!

-The void of little or no faith is often filled by fear!

v.41 And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, "Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!"

-Their fear of nature at its worse has now been replaced by their fear of the one who can control nature!

-Why? Because they were ignorant of 'who' and thus 'what' this man, 'this teacher' was capable of?

-Do we, as the disciples did here, overlay our capabilities onto Jesus?

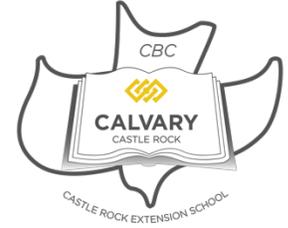
-Is He is just a teacher or Lord of nature as well?

Matthew's Account, 8:18-27

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Class 3

Chapter 4

The Servant Teaches Thru Parables to Many Different Hearts – Joey

1 And again He began to teach by the sea. And a great multitude was gathered to Him, so that He got into a boat and sat in it on the sea; and the whole multitude was on the land facing the sea.

a great multitude was gathered -

Did Jesus know the motivation of every person that came that day?

- He did!
 - o Does He know our motive or our why when we come to Him today?
 - Is our motive for coming to Him selfishly driven or relationship driven?

Jesus knew a lot most of the people who pushed to get near Him were shallow and insincere in their motive, but His disciples didn't know this. Maybe they were getting caught up in the hype. Man...look at how successful our ministry is. These crowds that Jesus is teaching to in **vs. 1** are larger than ever before. Jesus had to teach His disciples the truth about the crowds and the kingdom.

2 Then He taught them many things by parables, and said to them in His teaching:

He taught – (imperfect tense) repeatedly and continually

- We are always being instructed, but what are we doing with that instruction?
 - o Lord forgive us when we don't apply your instruction

“parable” – an earthly story alongside a spiritual truth to help the listener understand that spiritual truth

- Jesus tells us these earthy stories with spiritual truths in order for you to understand The Kingdom of God

Why did Jesus tell these earthly stories with spiritual truths?

- To test the listener
 - To see whether or not they wanted something from him or wanted to know Him
 - Those that came to Him with motive to hear would hear and those that wanted to see would see

3 "Listen (up)!" (command) Behold, a sower went out to sow.

Pay attention...the following information is important for your spiritual understanding of the Kingdom of God

- NOW...is this an agriculturally community?
 - Do you think they know a thing or two about farming?

What do farmers sow? Seed...without seed, nothing grows (starting point of growth)

- Seed is sown into what? Dirt or soil
 - They would understand that farmers cast seed on the ground and that seed falls on different types of soil.

What was the sower expecting to get when he went out to sow?

- Future growth

I'm going to present this section as though we were there that day listening to what Jesus was saying. We are one of great multitude listening to Jesus instruct us from the boat.

1st environment of the sowers sowing

4 And it happened, as he sowed, that some seed fell by the wayside (*alongside of the way*); **and the birds of the air came and devoured it.**

What happened to the seed (*whatever that is*) that was sown?

1. birds of the air came

2. and devoured it

“devoured” – to eat or devour completely with great appetite

indicative tense: the action of the verb or the state of being describes is presented by the writer as real. It is the mood of assertion, where the writer portrays something as actual (as opposed to possible or contingent on intention)

Could it be that Jesus was pointing to a flock of birds that were devouring seeds right in front of this great multitude?

- Have you seen the **pterodactyls** across the street at Jack in the Box?
 - Some of them are so big they could carry away a toddler

Jesus methodology: see with eyes what your ears are hearing

2nd environment of the sowers sowing

v.5 Some (seed) fell on stony ground (*ground characterized as being stony, beneath the surface, but looks good on the surface*), **where it did not have much earth;**

and immediately it (Matthew adds... 'they') sprang up (*instead of growing down first*) **because it had no depth of earth.**

What happened to the seed that was sown into this environment?

- What do rocks do to roots?
 - They Block roots from establishing depth
 - Depth is key... 1st to its survival and then to the seed maturing to become whatever it's supposed to become
 - It has to penetrate down (beneath the surface) before it can mature and flourish outwardly (where it's continued growth can be seen)

Because this natural agricultural law didn't take place...look at the result in **vs. 6**

v.6 But when the sun was up it (the seed) was scorched, and because it (Matthew adds... 'they') had no root it (Matthew adds... 'they') withered away.

What 3 things happened the seed according to this verse?

1. **"Scorched"** – dried up and then burned up because of the heat that beat down on it
2. **"Had no root"** – no support system was in place to help it grow beneath the surface, so it could survive and flourish above the surface
3. **"Withered away"**
 - a. A deep root system would have protected what sprang up from drying up and dying

3rd environment of the sowers sowing

v.7 And some seed fell among thorns; and the thorns grew up and choked it (the seed) (Matthew adds... 'they'), and it yielded no crop.

What 3 things happened to the seed that was sown in this environment?

1. **the thorns grew up – (thorn plant)**
2. **choked** (*the seed*) – how did it choke it? Crowded around it
 - a. it inhibited its development by crowding around it
 - i. If someone is being choked they are being deprived of life
3. **it yielded no crop** – It didn't bring forth what it was supposed to bring forth

4th environment of the sowers sowing

v.8 But other seed (Matthew adds... 'others') fell on good ground and yielded a crop that sprang up, increased and produced: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred."

What 2 things happened to the seed that was sown in this environment?

1. **yielded a crop that sprang up**
2. **produced: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred."**

Why different results of the seed that was sown?

- Did the seed change that was being sown?
 - Were cheap seed or inferior seeds used on one environment and expensive seed on another

The difference in results was not the seed, but on the kind of soil the seed fell on.

v.9 And He said to them, "He who has ears (plural, two ears 'balanced' hearing) to hear, let him hear!"

We all have physical ears, right?

- Can we be listening but not receive spiritually understanding?
 - WHY?
- Is our mind somewhere else? Are you distracted in your devo time or when you are listening to the sermon?
 - Does God's Word have our full attention?
 - Psalm 119:18
- The disciples are scratching their head...we don't get it

Matthew's Account, 13:3-9

The Servant Explains Why Parables Before Their Meaning - John

10 But when He was alone, those around Him with the twelve asked Him about the parable.

- Ask the Lord about questions you have! He's the best One to go too to get answers

11 And He said to them, "**To you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to those who are outside, all things come in parables, 12 so that 'Seeing they may see and not perceive, And hearing they may hear and not understand;**

- The condition of a person's heart determines its receptivity to the truth
 - o Do we really want to hear from God?
 - Do we really want to know what He says about various subjects?

Lest they should turn, And their sins be forgiven them.' "

- *Quoting Isaiah 6:9-10*
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-
-
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-

Matthew's Account, 13:10-17

The Servant Sower Explains the "Key" Parable - Joey

13 And He said to them, "**Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables?**

The parable of the sower is the legend to the map of the other parables. Jesus won't explain the meaning to some of the other parables to them or us, so we have to use the definitions of certain words that Jesus gives the meaning to in the Parable of the Sower as a legend to unlock the meaning to some of the other parables.

14 The sower sows the word. (unique to Mark)

- Now we know what the seed that is being sown is...it's the Word of God!
 - o Seed = The Word of God
 - What will the seed be in all of the other parables unless Jesus says it means something else?
 - The Word of God

What is The Word being sown into? Vs. 15

15 And these are the ones by the wayside (roadside - the beaten or busy path) **where the word is sown. When they hear, Satan comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts.** (your mind, your emotions, your decision making)

The Word of God is sown into our hearts

Birds = Satan

Birds are bad and speak of wickedness in the other parables

- Satan and his minions don't want the Word of God to take root and produce fruit in you because you will become spiritually productive for God's work
 - o Satan and his minions don't want that to happen that's why they immediately **swoop in** and try to take away the word that was sown

The human heart is like soil: it must be prepared to receive the seed before that seed can take root and produce a harvest. Like seed, the Word is alive and able to produce spiritual fruit in us, but the seed must be planted and cultivated before a harvest will come.

1st condition of the heart - "the hard heart"

"Hard heart" - The seed bounces right off that hard ground; it doesn't penetrate

- Let's do some hard examination tonight...
 - o Does the Word of God bounce off and not penetrate your heart?
 - Is my heart or your heart hard towards the things of God in certain areas and we are not allowing it to penetrate those areas?
 - How does our heart get hard?
 - o _____?
 - o Resist the Word of God
 - Makes it easy to be snatched away
 - o Our own Sin
 - o Too busy for the things of God; other things matter more
 - o People who sin against us...
 - When our hearts get trampled on like a path it gets compacted and if it remains that way nothing grows on trampled ground (5th and Woodlands)
 - we can become bitter from it

Hosea 10:12 tells us to...

Sow for yourselves righteousness; Reap in mercy; Break up your fallow ground, For it is time to seek the Lord, Till He comes and rains righteousness on you.

- We are sown into and we also are the ones who do the sowing

Proverbs 4:23

Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life.

- King Solomon is telling us... Above all else, guard your heart, everything you do flows from it.

2nd condition of the heart – “the shallow heart”

16 These likewise are the ones sown on stony ground who, when they hear the word, immediately receive (taking it in) it with gladness; (with joy)

- Is this how we receive His Word today?
 - *taking it in **immediately?***
 - *taking it in with joy?*
- Some people are like the ground that is rocky but covered with a thin layer of topsoil. They receive the seed of the word with a flash of enthusiasm that quickly burns out.
- there is no depth, whatever is planted cannot last because it has no roots.
 - Depth is key... 1st to its survival and then to the seed maturing to become whatever it's supposed to become
 - The Word has to penetrate down (beneath the surface – inside of us ...we have to willingly take it in) before it can mature and flourish outwardly (where it's continued growth can be seen)

17 and they have no root in themselves, and so endure only for a time. Afterward, when tribulation or persecution arises for the word's sake, immediately they stumble.

Many people have an immediate favorable reaction to the word of God, but when **tribulation or persecution for the word's sake** comes and they are tested, they stumble when it becomes difficult to follow Jesus.

- May this not be said is us!

3rd condition of the heart – “the crowded or divided heart”

18 Now these are the ones sown among thorns; they are the ones who hear the word, 19 and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.

Remember the 3 things that happened to the seed environment in vs. 7 that was sown in this environment?

1. **the thorns grew up** – (thorn plant)
2. **choked** (*the seed*) – how did it choke it? Crowded around it
 - a. it inhibited its development by crowding around it
 - i. If someone is being choked they are being deprived of life
3. **it yielded no crop** – It didn't bring forth what it was supposed to bring forth

Jesus defined what crowded this heart

1. **the cares of this world choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.**
 - a. What are the cares of this life?
 - _____?
 - Bills
 - a. Expected and unexpected
 - Work
 - a. People issues, goals and deadlines
 - Our kids
 - What's going to happen in the future?
 2. **the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.**
 - a. I thought that we learned that money is amoral (neutral)
 - Riches have false advertisement
 - a. If you have a bunch of money, you'll be completely satisfied and stable in your life
 - i. You'll be a VIP
 1. Money, it's not bad!
 - a. What makes it good or bad is
 - i. How we use it
 - ii. Our attitude towards it
 - b. Do we own it or does it own us?
3. **the desires for other things choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.**

GUZIK: We might say this ground is *too* fertile. The word of God grows there, but so does everything else. And everything else soon begins to crowd out the word of God.

4th condition of the heart – “the fruitful heart”

20 But these are the ones sown on good ground, those who hear the word, accept it, and bear fruit: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred.

Each of the 4 conditions of the heart heard The Word, but only one brought forth what it should have

The other 3 didn't because they were influenced by a different enemy:

1. the "hard heart"—**the devil** himself snatches the seed;
2. the "shallow heart"—**the flesh** counterfeits religious feelings
3. the "crowded heart"—the things of **the world** smother the growth and prevent a harvest.
 - a. These are **the three great enemies of the Christian**: the world, the flesh, and the devil (Eph. 2:1-3).

SO, each of the 4 conditions of the **heart heard The Word**, but the good heart accepted it (taking it in, believing it and doing it)

- Do we hear with just our ears or do we include our hearts?
 - Taking it in and believing it

Why the variance in fruit bearing in the good heart?

God allowed one to bear **thirtyfold** fruit, **some sixty**-fold fruit, **and some a hundred-fold** fruit."

- They all received the same Word, sown into the same good soil, open to the Word of God and accepted it. (believed it)

Why? Is that fair?

- God is the one who gives the increase
 - Be careful that you are not looking at someone else fruit and comparing it with your fruit with the bad attitude of..." How come they have sixty and I only have 30?
 - Why do they double what I have? It's not a competition!!!

Don't forget what the purpose of fruit bearing is wither it's 30, 60 or 100-fold?

- To bring God glory!!!
 - We are not responsible for the amount of fruit bearing that takes place
 - BUT, we are 100% responsible for the condition of the heart that the Word is sown into. AMEN?

Matthew's Account, 13:18-23

The Servant Explains Why Ears are the Windows into the Soul - John

21 Also He said to them, "Is a lamp brought to be put under a basket or under a bed? Is it not to be set on a lampstand?"

- Illumination is the purpose not extinguishing

22 For there is nothing hidden which will not be revealed, nor has anything been kept secret but that it should come to light.

23 If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear."

24 Then He said to them, "Take heed what you hear. With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given.

- See what you are hearing
 - And it's something they are familiar with
- Take heed to hear, what you hear, how you hear it and who you hear it from

25 For whoever has, to him more will be given; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him."

No Matthew Account

This parable is found exclusively in Mark

- This parable emphasizes the seed's mysterious power to produce a crop

The Seed is Self-Powering but a Servant Is Not – Joey

26 And He said, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the (good) ground,

Seed = the Word of God

27 and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how.

When plants seed and it grows by night, when the sees the seed sprouted in the morning, the farmer worked as a partner with God.

Man has done what he could do – scatter the seed;
God has done what only He can do: grow the seed.

In other words, no man, is involved in the growth of the seed other than sowing it.
-The seed grows on its own, it does just fine without any human involvement.

- Do you or I determine the timing of the growth of the seed?
 - o No, we do not!
 - And we don't determine the timing of the growth in anybody else
 - We cannot speed up the process
 - o It's day and night (sowing, waiting and watching)
 - Are you frustrated because you are not seeing the growth that you want to see in your kids? You spouse?
 - o That's not your job; stop trying to do what only God can do in you and in others
- Though the seed grows by a process that the farmer cannot see nor fully account for, he has faith in the growing process
 - That's our responsibility?
 - Have faith in the God's process
 - Allow it to grow within us and others ...keep sowing the seed
 - o I do not grow as fast as I want to in areas of my life

God Word works *invisibly* within us. God promised that His word would accomplish the purpose for which He sends it (Isaiah 55:11). So, when you hear the word, it works in you – even as you sleep. In works in you spiritually, in a way that it sometimes invisible to our eyes.

The point: The process of spiritual growth is spontaneous within the kingdom of God, but it remains a mystery to natural humanity.

28 For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head.

by itself

-Remember that the earth does not sow the seed, but it does give the seed the environment it needs to thrive and bear fruit.

29 But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come."

Many people expected Jesus to overcome Roman rule and establish his kingdom on earth. This verse highlights that when the time is right, when the harvest has come, then the sickle will be put to the grain in the harvest.

We can be confident that growth is taking place by God's grace and that His harvest will eventually come to fruition.

No Matthew Account

The Servant Compares the Kingdom of God to a Mustard Tree - John

30 Then He said, "To what shall we liken the kingdom of God? Or with what parable shall we picture it?

31 It is like a mustard seed which, when it is sown on the ground, is smaller than all the seeds on earth;

32 but when it is sown, it grows up and becomes greater than all herbs, and shoots out large branches, so that the birds of the air may nest under its shade."

33 And with many such parables He spoke the word to them as they were able to hear it.

34 But without a parable He did not speak to them. And when they were alone, He explained all things to His disciples.

Matthew's Account, 13:31-32, 33-35

The Servant Uses Nature to Instill a Greater Fear - Joey

35 On the same day, when evening had come, He said to them, "Let us cross over to the other side."

Training exercise from Jesus...He's taking them on an involuntary field trip

- Taking what they learned in the classroom to the field

36 Now when they had left the multitude, they took Him along in the boat as He was. **And other little boats were also with Him.**

37 And a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling.

Was this a storm that they brought on themselves or a storm that they brought on themselves?

- A storm that was brought on them for a purpose
 - I'm not sure about you, but there have been times in my life that I've brought storms on my own life through making dumb decisions
 - Financial storms
 - Relationship storms
 - Work storms
 - Health storms
 - These storms came through poor decision making

As we go through the storms of life...remember that there are others that are in it them as well. People are going through it with you

Sometimes when you go through a difficult time...you get an Elijah moment

- You're the only one going through it...no one else is going through what you are
 - The truth is that some people have it worse

38 **But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to Him, "Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?"**

Does he know that there is going to be a storm coming? Yes

Is He also tired from teaching all day? Yes

What state is Jesus in...He's resting!

Why?

- He knows where they are going to end up after the storm comes and goes
- **"Let us cross over to the other side."**

Why don't they disciples have the same state? They forgot what Jesus said and promised

The disciples made 2 bad assumptions here

1. Jesus doesn't care
2. This storm is going to kill them

Don't we do the same in our storms of life?

- When the Lord is not taking the action that we want Him to, which is usually “get me out of this storm”
 - We assume that His lack of the immediate action that we want as a sign that He doesn't care about us.
 - You haven't given me a that job
 - You haven't my prayer about...
 - You haven't healed...
 - You're not listening
 - We come up with the worse what if scenario that ultimately leads to our demise

When you are doing this...Remember Jesus words

- **"Let us cross over to the other side."**
 - Jesus is taking you through something in order to help you arrive somewhere

39 Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace, be still!" And the wind ceased and there was a great calm.

“be still” means “be muzzled or silent”

- Who had Jesus been commanding to be silent in our last few weeks together?
 - The demons
 - Was this storm stirred by Satan?
 - I don't know for certain

What I do know is who had power and authority over it just like he had power and authority over the demons

40 But He said to them, "Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?"

- Some of these guys were professional fishermen
 - They have seen waves before; they can swim, right?
- Why were they afraid?
 - These waves were Bearing Sea waves
 - Huge waves...enough to scare the life out of a fisherman

Why did they go through an involuntary storm?

- They went through the storm to show them their fear and replace it with a better fear in order to build their faith for future stronger storms that they are going to encounter

41 And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, "Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!"

One misplaced fear is conquered by the correct greater fear

We're perishing (we are going to die from this storm) was replaced with "can you believe what we just saw Jesus do?" **even the wind and the sea obey Him!"**

We are no longer afraid, we are in completely in awe of Jesus

- They had to go through the storm in order to arrive there

Matthew's Account, 8:18-27

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Name: _____

Mark: The Servant Gospel, NT352 Homework for Class #3

List at least one personal application not mentioned in class under each of our paragraph headings.

Mark 4:1-9: The Servant Teaches Thru Parables to Many Different Hearts

Mark 4:10-12: The Servant Explains Why Parables Before Their Meaning

Mark 4:13-20: The Servant Sower Explains the Key Parable

Mark 4:21-25: The Servant Explains Why Ears are the Windows into the Soul

Mark 4:26-29: The Seed is Self-Powering but a Servant Is Not

Mark 4:30-34: The Servant Compares the Kingdom of God to a Mustard Tree

Mark 4:35-41: The Servant Uses Nature to Instill a Greater Fear