

## Down by the Seaside

Mark 4:1 – 41



~ ***Our Spiritual Safari*** concluded an impromptu family reunion in our last report; and now we are taking off and heading for the beach with Jesus and the apostles. We have been on this coast before in Matthew, and we have seen all of the content in this chapter previously; with the exception of one parable. All of the parables are nature oriented; and then, chapter four of the Gospel of Mark ends with Jesus controlling said nature. These are all action parables, also; they should be moving you. Remember, Matthew told us that Jesus went out of a house and entered into a ship on the sea. If you want some highly symbolic and figurative action from Mark the “house” represents the house of Israel and the “sea” speaks of the Gentile nations; Jesus storms out of the house and turns from His own people onto the high seas of the world to teach and redeem. I think it’s important that we examine these parables in the context of a global situational reference; particularly when we consider the current events happening in our modern world. We are at the height of Jesus earthly ministry at the time in which we are studying; and He is very busy. This is about the halfway point in His three-year ministry, as far as I can tell. There is a lot of pressure on Him and His apostles now. We see Jesus physically weary here in this chapter. We’re actually going to find Jesus asleep before we end this report....

***1 And he began again to teach by the sea side: and there was gathered unto him a great multitude, so that he entered into a ship, and sat in the sea; and the whole multitude was by the sea on the land.***

***2 And he taught them many things by parables, and said unto them in his doctrine,***

***3 Hearken; Behold, there went out a sower to sow:***

**4 And it came to pass, as he sowed, some fell by the way side, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up.**

**5 And some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth; and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth:**

**6 But when the sun was up, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away.**

**7 And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit.**

**8 And other fell on good ground, and did yield fruit that sprang up and increased; and brought forth, some thirty, and some sixty, and some an hundred.**

**9 And he said unto them, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.**

**10 And when he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve asked of him the parable.**

**11 And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables:**

**12 That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them.**

**13 And he said unto them, Know ye not this parable? and how then will ye know all parables?**

**14 The sower soweth the word.**

**15 And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts.**

**16 And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness;**

**17 And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended.**

**18 And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word,**

**19 And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.**

**20 And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred.**

~ The three areas where the seed fell are symbolic of the triune state of being the unsaved man of the world exists in today; that is, lost because they do not accept the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ according to the Word of God. As we saw in Matthew, only twenty-five percent of the seed fell on good ground. The good ground is symbolic of the ones that are saved and received Holy Writ as truth; and they all produce varying yields as a result. Matthew says the birds took away the seed, but Mark just comes right out and identifies Satan as the seed thief of verse fifteen! See, it's actually important we know and understand the ENTIRE Bible before we go off on tangents attempting to teach it, friends.

This is actually a danger warning that Jesus gives as He says, "he who has an ear let him hear." Well, I don't think Jesus would say that unless we needed to stop, look and listen for the oncoming train. Obviously, some of them weren't internalizing all of their lessons because they had to stop and ask Jesus about these parables. Frankly, I doubt they really understood anything about Jesus at this point. When considering Scripture as we are, it is vital to have examined Matthew before Mark because there seems to be

a certain amount of ambiguity going on. I quote Dr. McGee, “.... the reason Jesus resorted to parables from this point to the end of His ministry is arresting. His enemies rejected His teaching and the multitudes had become indifferent to spiritual truths. They were actively interested in the miracles but not the spiritual application. Jesus now resorts to the use of parables to capture their interest. The antagonistic attitude of His enemies and the lethargic indifference and incomprehension of the multitudes necessitated the switch in teaching methods to the use of parables so that those who hungered and thirsted after righteousness would be filled; and those who desired spiritual truth would have their eyes opened.”

Paul said, “.... but as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man” - first Corinthians chapter two.

The things of God must be desired to be known before they will be made real to us in our lives. If we cry out to God to help us understand truth and wisdom, then He will open these truths by the teaching of His Holy Spirit in His Word. Only at that point will God make the things of the Bible real, living and interesting to our hearts and minds. We are all guilty of mistakenly saying that others will be lost if they don't accept Christ as their Savior - but that's not entirely true - because they're ALREADY lost at that time! More accurately, they will CONTINUE to be lost if they CONTINUE to reject the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord.

You are not on trial as a lost person, friends – you’re convicted and condemned. Only your reaction and reception to the Word of God determines any change in your life and whether or not you’ll be saved when you die. Will you trust Christ and accept Him as Savior? This is reality – NOT superstition! God has given us His Word and I am challenging you with it. God has asked you to trust Christ and I am passing that message along every single day in our safari. There are many places this seed falls – which ground are you? Are you among thorns - or are you good ground? Is Satan stealing your seeds before it grows, friends? Killing the planted seed before it grows is what got the sheriff shot, you may remember?

Well, we’ve plowed this ground before and we’ll till it again in Luke’s account of the life and Gospel of Christ Jesus. The Sower is the Son of Man, and the seed is the Word of God. We know the birds of Matthew represent demons and the workers of Satan; and Satan himself is here in Mark! The “stony grounders” are those who led affliction and persecution and their hardened hearts turned them from God. The “thorny grounders” are that huge segment of society in love with this world and the things of the world. These people let worldly things keep them from God! Many people are letting the flesh keep them from God today. The “good-grounders” are, of course, those who hear the Word - and they bring forth certain percentages of a yield. Only one third of the initial twenty-five percent yield one hundred-fold....

***21 And he said unto them, Is a candle brought to be put under a bushel, or under a bed? and not to be set on a candlestick?***

***22 For there is nothing hid, which shall not be manifested; neither was any thing kept secret, but that it should come abroad.***

~ Light always creates responsibility; and responsibility means taking action. Man will be held responsible to the degree that light has been given him. The point is: you and I are in complete darkness until we are saved. Man is not a sinner because he is weak or because he is ignorant; no, man is a sinner because man is evil continually. Paul said, “.... when they knew Him as God they glorified Him not as God!” Man is a willfully disobedient and consciously rebellious sinner. We’re lost before the light comes into

our lives and, if we reject it, we're lost afterwards! See, LOST is the condition of man that rejects Christ. God demands action and faith is action here; faith is acting upon what God has said. This is very important to understand....

***23 If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.***

***24 And he said unto them, Take heed what ye hear: with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear shall more be given.***

***25 For he that hath, to him shall be given: and he that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath.***

***26 And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground;***

~ **The Gospel of Mark** is the only place in the Bible that we'll find this unusual parable. The "Kingdom of God" and the "Kingdom of Heaven" are, of course, different in every possible way. The Kingdom of Heaven is within the Kingdom of God; the Kingdom of God being the larger and all-encompassing term. Florida is in the United States, for example, but Florida is not the entire United States. So, if you're in Florida you're also in the United States – both are true....

***27 And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how.***

***28 For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.***

***29 But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.***

~ The growth of seed into a plant and the flowering and fruiting thereof are a mystery to mankind today. Great oaks grow from tiny acorns; but after all our years of scientific progress, not much more can be added to that

statement. Calling an incomprehensible process "osmosis" does NOTHING to explain the mechanics and compositional formation that occur and appear in the growth of vegetation and flowering beings, even as we claim our understanding and knowledge has increased overall! All we really know is that when spring has sprung and trees are budding and flowers are blooming, the azaleas and orange blossoms are unbelievably magnificent to see and smell while farmers plant new crops. No one really seems to know what is happening but they're all reacting to and participating in it - looking forward to the harvest. More than tremendous power is released as nitrates compose into green, leafy vegetative garments. If God released all that power at one time it would make an atom bomb sound like a Chinese roman candle. The Word of God grows in our hearts and lives if we allow it to - and one cannot stop all of these good things from growing; but one can go into their house and shut the door and never experience any of it....

***30 And he said, Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it?***

***31 It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth:***

***32 But when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches; so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it.***

~ We discussed the non-nutritious condiment that is mustard at length in our examination of the Gospel of Matthew. A mustard seed growing into a tree is not natural at all! A mustard plant is very small; and Jesus is talking about Christendom growing outwardly into a huge organization in this parable: big churches with large programs geared towards human sensationalism, human consumption, human energy and human emotion - because it is humanism being taught there - certainly neither taught nor led by the Holy Spirit in any way, shape or form. The birds in the branches of this freak-of-nature "tree," that would have to be steroid induced, are not good, friends. This is all the product of Satan....

**33 And with many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to hear it.**

**34 But without a parable spake he not unto them: and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples.**

**35 And the same day, when the even was come, he saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side.**

**36 And when they had sent away the multitude, they took him even as he was in the ship. And there were also with him other little ships.**

**37 And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full.**

**38 And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish?**

**39 And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.**

**40 And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?**

**41 And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?**

~ Well, Jesus is tired from teaching, and He needs some rest as we end this leg of our Spiritual Safari. I don't think Jesus minds sleeping in the storm; but the apostles are freaking out, as it were, so He calmed the sea for their sakes. The thing that made them fear is the way Jesus calmed the storm. Jesus simply gave the command and the whole world leveled out. This miracle was so startling that it frightened the apostles to a deeply troubled state, you may be absolutely sure. Jesus is right there with us in the storms of life that we might come to Him and know Him better! Chart and compass both come from Christ Jesus Himself along the coasts and through the deserts of our so-called **Spiritual Safari** ~



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