

HE WHO HAS EARS TO HEAR, LET HIM HEAR!

Mark 4:21-35 Rev. Brian W. Secor
Broadway Christian Church March 1, 2015

I want to start at the end of the text today, not beginning.

I. JESUS CAME TO TEACH. 4:33-34

A. He came to teach us the ways of & the way to _____.

1. Jesus came down from heaven to show us the ways of & the way to heaven. Jesus' natural sphere, his home, is not earth. By _____ he condescended to come down to us, to become incarnate, not for his sake but for ours.
2. We want to have heaven's perspective on all things. There is only one who is the way, the truth & the life & that is Jesus Christ. He is the only reliable & certain authority for knowing both the ways of & the way to heaven.
3. Because we are dull of hearing, slow to remember & quick to be fascinated with the newest fad, he had to develop a means by which we would hold on to what he said, take it to heart & treasure his teaching. He used a form we call _____. *Reformed Study Bible*: "Although the term parable can have a broad range of meanings, Jesus' parables are his distinctive teaching through brief comparisons or narratives. They usually have one central point or idea. Most of Jesus' parables are clear, but they also contain a depth of meaning that only one with a right relationship to Jesus can comprehend. It is only to the disciples that Jesus gives the interpretation. ... The ungodly miss this deeper meaning because their lack of a proper relationship with God has darkened their thoughts and hearts."

B. His teaching method:

1. _____. Stories are clear.
2. _____. Jesus talks about relevant issues
3. _____. Jesus' parables oriented towards getting people to take spiritual action & increase spiritual understanding.
 - a. He said, quoting Is. 6:9-10, some, even most people, would "ever be seeing but never perceiving, ever hearing but never understanding, otherwise they might turn & be forgiven."
 - b. People who are spiritually opposed to Christ are most likely to do with his truth that which will harm the soul. The spiritually dead cannot really _____ Jesus' parables & their depth of meaning even though they might get the story line.
 - c. For the _____, Jesus' parables have a depth of meaning that far exceeds the surface story. Here are heavenly truths in earthly form, truths that lift our minds from the hum-drum of daily life to God's throne. Here we see the Gospel in human experience, spiritual truths that sharpen our minds, encourage our spirit, strengthen our soul. We begin to see with the eyes of God all things in relation to him. We have ears to hear & with delight & gladness we hear God & discern Truth.

C. Jesus taught so that people would _____.

1. In 4th chapter, as is Mark's custom, he groups things together. Four parables that deal with the nature of the Kingdom of God.
2. Sower & the Soils---What makes a difference when it comes to the impact of the Gospel upon a life is the nature of the heart or the soils — hard, fickle, distracted & receptive. Each soil or heart will respond to the seed of the Gospel based upon its present _____.
3. Can the soils be changed? _____ they can. We believe in the power of God to change hearts & minds of people through his grace & his truth.
4. We have come into this house in order to hear the Word of God so that we might be changed. By grace, we will be _____.

II. THREE PARABLES OF THE KINGDOM

1. These parables are representative of what why, and how Jesus taught. Number of parables in Gospels: Matthew 40. Luke 42. John 2. Mark 14. 9 of 14 occur in 1st four chapters of Mark.

A. The Lamp on a Stand—_____ Is Made Manifest

1. We use light to reveal stuff. So it is with the Gospel of God & the teachings of _____. They are meant to reveal Truth.
 - a. Our relativistic, post-modern culture says there is no such thing as absolute truth. Truth is a relative, slippery thing.
 - b. Not so says Jesus. _____ is meant to be seen, understood & used to make things plain & clear, to be the standard by which we evaluate all things. By Truth, we discern right from wrong, error from fact, good from bad.
 - c. This truth is manifest. Heaven's ways & the way to heaven are not meant to be _____ under a bushel or under a bed. Are spread abroad, open to all so that all might come to repentance & flee the wrath to come.
2. How you respond to the _____ determines how much truth you will receive.
 - a. You cannot fight against truth & expect to have more truth given to you. You cannot blot out the light you have & expect more light to shine in your life. He who does not have loses even what he has.
 - b. Accepting even a little truth opens you up to greater truth. The law of spiritual sight says when you begin to see, you begin to really see.

B. The Growing Seed—_____ of Spiritual Growth v26-29

1. We really don't know _____ growth happens in crops or people; we only know that it does.
2. Spiritual growth doesn't happen overnight. Predictable growth process.
 - a. First is seed _____ time when God's truth begins

- to take root.
- b. Second is the _____ phrase. The person is redeemed or begins to seek after God.
 - c. Third is the _____ phase. Real fruit of the Spirit begins to show itself, sometimes only a little but as time passes more & more the person becomes Christ-like in thought, word & deed
 - d. Fourth is the _____ phase. Not only does life reflect Christ & point others to him, there is spiritual depth & discernment in the person. The harvest of righteousness is evident as the person increasingly reflects the ways of & way to heaven.
3. In the Kingdom, while growth will happen we do not control it nor direct it. God does and we trust him for growth.
- a. We see the _____ of spiritual growth.
 - b. We do not _____ spiritual growth happen in ourselves or the church.
4. We trust _____ to grow his church & to enable us as individuals to grow in Christ.
- a. We tend to be very _____ as people. Projects that take years, a lifetime, these frustrate us.
 - b. But like waiting for sweet corn to tassel & then ripen, so in our lives we live in _____ trust that God will build his church & make us in Christ what we want to be — his holy, righteous, faithful people.
 - c. We can become _____ as we wait. That is why faith in God & his promises are so vital. We have come to Jesus the author & perfecter of our faith.
 - d. Thanks be to God, as sure as we put a seed in ground, when we receive the Gospel into our hearts, it will _____ a crop of righteousness that will result in our ever-lasting & glorious transformation as the people of God. We are not what we shall be but what we shall be, we shall indeed be in Christ as God so wills.
 - e. Thanks be to God as sure as we put seed in the ground, his _____ will not be without effect and impact. We will see people brought to Christ, redeemed, set free from sin & death, liberated, made whole & holy. Christ's Gospel is not changed. It is not powerless but is the power of God to draw people to Jesus. That's why we preach it—in season, out of season; when it is convenient, when it is not; when people will listen & when they won't. This church need not look _____ to see the power of God at work; we shall see it ourselves in the land of the living, in our day because our God is an active, powerful God, committed to the perseverance of the saints & the growth of his Church, not maybe but in fact. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

C. Mustard Seed—Kingdom Shall Be _____ v. 30-32

- 1. In the day Jesus spoke this parable, he had 11 men he could

- count on to be faithful to the kingdom & its ideals. What were 11 men compared to the millions who did not believe, compared to thousands in Judea who stood against Jesus? It looked pretty hopeless.
- 2. So Jesus uses the black mustard seed to show how the _____ will grow & prosper. Black mustard is a spice that's been cultivated for millennium. Not larger than 1 mm, used in Indian cuisine, especially in curry. Planted in good soil, will grow up to 8 ft. tall. How big is 1 mm? Pencil eraser=5mm. Crayon tip=2mm. Pencil tip=1mm
 - 3. Even as a mustard seed produces amazing life & a plant all out of proportion to its beginning, so the Kingdom of God will grow to provide life & shelter for the nations of the world. More people than you can ever imagine will find shelter in its branches.
 - 4. Two important truths for us to grasp:
 - a. In God's sight, _____ does not determine significance. This is why we should never speak of ourselves as attending a "little" church. What's the point of that? Little is much when God is in it & big is nothing when God is not involved.
 - b. We don't need _____ to make the kingdom grow. It is going to grow for God has so willed it & his will shall be done on earth as it is in heaven or we are praying often in vain for a false hope. Church growth is as easy & as hard as talking to one person about state of their soul & sharing with them that Jesus saves. Do we _____ our church to grow? Yes we do but only in God's way & at God's time. _____ our church grow? I believe it will for it has already. One planted, another watered but God has given the increase & he isn't about to stop bringing people into the Kingdom & his church unless we get in his way. Our passion is to see Kingdom growth by means of people being converted to Christ so that they live in heavenly ways & find the way to heaven.

Jesus came to teach us the ways of & the way to heaven.

- 1. _____ has been made manifest so we let our light shine.
- 2. While spiritual growth is a _____, we know it will happen in our lives & in the lives of others.
- 3. We may see only small beginnings, but the Kingdom & the Church will flourish & _____ for God wills it.



**He who has ears to hear,
let him hear!**

Mustard Seed Plant