

# **Mark 4**

## **Mark 4.1-9**

**V1** – “Again” refers back to *Mark 3.7* – he was teaching them again

- Why was he teaching them again?** Because the Pharisees kept distorting his teaching, and the people needed to learn more
- What was the size of the crowd?** No room on shore for Jesus
- What did he do?** Sat down in a small boat

**V2** – **What would be the method of his teaching on this occasion?** Parables

**V3** – Notice the introduction to the parables: Listen to this (urgency, typical of Mark)

- Parable = “alongside” story, a story from everyday life, could be true (but no proper names were ever used in parables)
- This is why the account of the rich man and Lazarus is not a parable, but a true story (with three proper names)
- We all like stories; they keep us interested in the lesson
- At the Crystal Lake Public Library, there are professional story tellers for library patrons

**V4** – **Where did the seed first fall?** Beside the road

- What happened to it?** Birds came and ate it up

**V5** – **Where did the seed fall next?** Rocky ground

- What happened to it?** Very thin soil; it sprang up immediately

**V6** – **What happened after that?** The sun came out, and the seed died because it had no roots

**V7** - **What happened to the next seed?** Fell among thorns

- What did the thorns do?** Choked it out
- Everyone who has done gardening knows about vines that try to choke out the other plants
- In the South, there is the kudzu vine that takes over everything

**V8** – **What about the final seed?** Fell on good ground

- Produced 30, 60, 100 fold (a great increase)
- Notice in this parable: the sun, rain fell on all the seed
- In other words, it was not the fault of the sower, and it was not God’s fault that three-quarters of the seed did not produce anything
- The listeners to the gospel message have the obligation to accept the message or to reject it

**V9** – **Meaning?** Jesus said to pay attention to this story

## **Mark 4.10-12**

**V10** – Notice the apostles, as opposed to the disciples

**V11** – **What had been given to these disciples and apostles?** The ability to understand the teachings

better

**-But what about those outside the kingdom?** Parables were for them

**V 12** – This is from *Isaiah 6.9-10* – Isaiah was being sarcastic

-The Jews could hear the word of God, but it did not “register” in their minds; their minds were closed to the truth

-Same here: even when he told stories, many times they still did not understand

## **Mark 4-13-20**

**V 13** – **Message of Jesus?** This is an easy parable; much more difficult ones are coming

**V 14** – **What does the sower represent?** The one who is spreading the word of God

**-Was anything wrong with the seed?** No, it was the word of God

**V 15** – **What did the seed sown beside the road represent?** People who hear the word of God, but Satan takes it away from them immediately – they have hardened hearts against the word of God

**V 16** – **What did the seed sown on rocky ground represent?** People who hear the word with great joy

**V 17** – **But what happened to them?** There is no foundation for their faith, so when persecution comes, they fall away

**V 18** – **What did the seed sown among thorns represent?** They heard the word

**V 19** – **But what happened to them?** Worries of the world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desire for other things all took their toll, so they fell away also

**-What are the worries of the world?** Pollution, politics, price of gas, the threat of war, global warming

-On man from California was recently interviewed on a radio program – he said that he always rented his house in California, because of: earthquakes, sink holes, mud slides, droughts, forest fires, so why buy a house?

-He needed to worry less and trust in God more

**-How are riches deceitful?** We think we will be happy if we just get something, but obtaining that object does not bring long-term happiness

**-What about the desire for other things?** Dangerous – **Read 1 Timothy 6.6-10, 17-19**

**V 20** – The seed sown on the good ground will bear much fruit

## **Mark 4.21-25**

**V 21** – Notice that Jesus was talking about things that were found in a typical house in Palestine

**-Why would people not put a lamp under a bushel basket?** That is not the purpose of a lamp

**-Why would someone not put a lamp under a bed?** That also is not purpose of a lamp, and it was also dangerous

**-Where would a person put a new lamp?** On a lampstand

**-Message?** Jesus had a definite purpose for coming into the world: to spread the word of God

**V 22** – **What had been hidden?** Gospel of Christ in the Old Testament, but now it was time for it to be revealed

**V 23** – **What did Jesus remind his disciples to do?** “Hear” his message, think about it, and comprehend it

**V 24** – **What should we be careful about?** What we listen to

-Think of the lyrics of songs, TV “comedies,” radio music, CDs, rap – if the words are immoral, it will have an effect on us

**V 25** – **What would happen to the person who “has”?** More will be given

-Message: God will bless the one who can comprehend these words of Jesus

## **Mark 4.26-29**

**V 26** – Another parable: Parable of the Seed (it goes along with ideas of 1<sup>st</sup> parable)

**-What did the man do?** Cast the seed on the ground

**V 27** – **Then what did he do?** Went on with his daily life

**-Why didn't he stand there and watch for the seed to come up?** That would not have helped any

**-Could he explain how the seed begins to grow?** No

-No-one knows how the preaching of the gospel changes people, but it know that it does change people – we have all witnessed that change

-The writer of these notes preached a sermon several years on the evils of smoking. We had a lifelong smoker in the congregation, but that member gave it up that day and has never smoked again

-So we know that the gospel can change people

**V 28** – **What does the seed do?** Makes leaves, heads of grain, mature heads

**V 29** – **What is the job of the farmer?** Harvest the crop when it is ready

**-Lessons from this parable?** Patience is needed to bring about a harvest

-The parable taught the fact that the kingdom of God will come about at the proper time (nothing will be able to stop it)

-The emphasis is on God and his word, not on our ability

-Sometimes we blame ourselves for a lack of growth in the local congregation, but we have to give the word of God time to mature in the hearts of people

## **Mark 4.30-32**

**V 30** – Jesus was again going to tell another parable about the kingdom of God

**V 31** – **What did he compare it to at this time?** A mustard seed

- What is so unusual about the mustard seed?** Very small, but makes a huge tree
- Check any encyclopedia or search engine for photographs of the mustard plant

### **Mark 4.33-34**

**V 33** – He spoke many other parables

**V 34** – **What did he do for his own disciples?** Explained everything to them privately

### **Mark 4.35-41**

**V 35** – **What did Jesus suggest that they do?** Go to the other side of the sea

- What sea was this?** Galilee – 13 miles long, 8 miles wide, 680 feet below sea level
- Use a search engine for photographs of the Sea of Galilee

**V 36** - **Who went with Jesus across the sea?** People in other boats

**V 37** -So characteristic of Mark

- What happened as they were crossing the sea?** A storm arose
- This was more of the nature of a hurricane today
- See the painting “Storm on the Sea of Galilee” by Rembrandt (use a search engine – there are many good photographs of that painting on the Internet)

**V 38** – **What was Jesus doing at this time?** Asleep at the back of the boat

- This is the only time that the Bible speaks of Jesus ever sleeping
- What was the reaction of the disciples?** They rudely awoke Jesus and were a little upset with him
- Their question?** Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?
- Of course, that was the whole purpose of Jesus coming to the earth
- They still did not have a very good grasp of things at this point

**V 39** – **What did Jesus do?** Told the storm to be still

**V 40** – **What was the reaction of Jesus to the apostles?** They had little faith, because they could not stop a storm

**V 41** - **What was their reaction to the miracle?** Afraid of Jesus, because of his great power

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