



M A R K

The Gift of God





Are You Listening?

Mark 4:1-34

Review



- Three responses to His ministry in 3:20-35
 - Family didn't get it
 - Scribes rejected it
 - Disciples accepted and acted on it
- Context: Chapter 4 comes after Chapter 3

Mark 4:1-34



- Introduction (4:1-2)
 - Parable (*Soils*) to the crowd (3-9)
 - [Explanation to His followers (10-25)]
 - Parable (*Growing*) to the crowd (26-29)
 - Parable (*Mustard Seed*) to crowd (30-32)
- Closing (33-34)

Mark 4:1-34



1. Hearing Parables (1-9)
2. Explaining Parables (10-20)
3. Using Parables (21-25)
4. Trying Parables (26-34)

Hearing Parables



- He began teaching in parables
 - Shift in His ministry style (Matt. 13:10)
 - In response to unbelief (Mark 3:20-30)
 - An act of both judgment and mercy
 - The truth is now concealed
 - They are not rejecting blatant truth

Hearing Parables



- He began teaching in parables
 - Drew a line between *the crowd* and true followers (10)
 - ...between *the Nation* and individuals (Mark 3:35; cf. Matt. 3:9; Rom. 9:6-13)



Explaining Parables

- *Parable of the Soils* is self-authenticating
- “He who has ears to hear...”
 - Mark 4:9; 8:18; Matt. 13:43; Luke 14:35; Rev. 2:7, 11, 17; 3:6, 13, 22; 13:9
 - Places great responsibility on the hearer!
 - *Choices have consequences*

The Soils



- *Defiant* soil - hardened toward God
 - Suppression, rejection, rebellion
 - Satan persuades or dissuades
 - No root or shoot



The Soils

- *Dejected* soil – soft on the surface
 - Shallow topsoil on flat rock
 - Immediate emotional response without *counting the cost*
 - Immediate falling away with affliction
 - Small shoot, no root

The Soils



- *Distracted* soil - good but crowded
 - Worries, riches, wrong desires
 - Cf. James 4:1-11
 - May be saved, but no mind renewal
 - Earthly priorities; walking in the flesh
- Root but no fruit

The Soils



- *Developed* soil - open and ready
 - They hear and *accept* the word
 - *To embrace with assent and obedience*
 - Mark 3:35; Luke 8:21; 11:28
 - Good root and fruit!

Explaining Parables



- Did Jesus want people to NOT understand?
 - “so that” – *purpose or consequence?*
 - Isa. 6:8-13 – judicial judgment for lack of hearing (cf. John 12:40; Acts 28:26)
 - They do not want to turn from their sin
 - Contrast Rom. 1:18-32 & Heb. 11:6

Explaining Parables



- To you has been given the mystery of the kingdom of God
 - *You* = those who respond in faith
 - *You* will understand and act on it
 - *You* will produce fruit
 - *You* have some responsibilities, though...

Using Parables



- Lamp under a basket? (21)
 - *You* have been given the truth
 - Don't cover it up! Don't keep it to yourself!
 - Put it on a lampstand - let it shine out!

Using Parables



- Take care what you listen to (24)
 - NIV: “Consider carefully what you hear”
 - Appeal for spiritual perception
 - Dig, meditate, *wrestle* (cf. Prov. 1:1-7)
- You get out of it what you put into it
 - Profit is proportional to diligence (24b)

“Yeah, But...”



- “I don’t have time!”
 - Maybe you need to pull some weeds (19)
- “I don’t have training”
 - Can you read? Can you think?
 - Use what you have (25)
 - We would love to help!

Using Parables



- Whoever has, to him more shall be given
 - Faithful with little -> given more (Matt. 25:21, 23, 28, 29; Luke 16:10-12; 19:26)
- Whoever does not have...
- Exercise -> strength, but apathy -> atrophy

Trying Parables



- *Parable of the Growing Seed*

- Your job is to spread the good news

- The word will do the work

- You don't have to understand how

- Be ready to harvest (cf. Gal. 6:9)

Trying Parables



- *Parable of the Mustard Seed*

- You may think your work is insignificant

- But the small seed grows (*on its own*) and will produce a great tree

- God's kingdom will be amazing!

Summary



- Recap of 3:20-35
 - His family didn't *get* His message
 - Scribes rejected His message
- So Jesus encouraged true disciples to be ready to accept and act on it (4:1-34)
 - It will take work, but it will produce

So What?



- Sometimes God gives us what we want
 - Act of blessing (Matt. 7:7-11) or act of judgment (2 Tim. 4:3-4; Rom. 1:18-32)
 - So be careful of what you want!
 - Depth? Or shallowness? (16-17)
 - God? Or other things? (18-19)

So What?



- Are you open and ready to receive what God has to say to you?
 - Considering ALL that God says, not just your favorite parts?
 - Are you searching, studying, wrestling?
 - Doing? Applying? (James 1:21-25)