

FURTHER PARABLES

--MARK 4:21-34--

INTRODUCTION:

When we were last in Mark a couple of weeks ago, we looked at Jesus' explanation of the parable of the four soils. Jesus' contrast of the bad soils and the good soil was to emphasize the importance of being a fruitful hearer. Jesus uses three more parables that push home the theme of fruitful hearers. As we look at the additional parables in this passage it must be understood that these are not parables that are distinct and disconnected from the parable of the four soils, but that they are interrelated illustrations to drive home the truth of listening carefully to what is said and being a fruit bearing believer. These parables were spoken to the crowds, but clearly, they were intended for Jesus' disciples and that wider group of followers who were being trained to proclaim the truth to others. We will see from Jesus teaching that fruitful hearers proclaim the gospel obediently, labor with hope for the future, wait while depending fully on the Lord, and live the Christian life confidently.

I. PARABLE OF THE LAMP (Mark 4:21-23)

- a. As we learned in the parable of the four soils, the _____ soil represented those who heard the gospel, receive it and then because they have received it, they produce abundant fruit. (Galatians 5:22-23; Colossians 1:10)
- b. In this particular parable the fruit that Jesus was referring to was the fruit of being a faithful _____ to those God puts in our path.
- c. Jesus used a simple parable to make this point, this parable used an _____ that everyone possessed and used daily.
- d. The point that Jesus is making is clear, those who have received the good news of salvation are not to conceal it, rather they are to let it _____ for others to see.
- e. When Jesus first began His ministry in Galilee, He had gone throughout Galilee plainly _____ the gospel.

- f. The disciples now knew that not all would believe and accept the word, no matter the response the _____ were commissioned to faithfully proclaim the gospel.

II. PAY ATTENTION (Mark 4:24-25)

- a. Jesus continuing to emphasize the importance of being attentive _____ went on in verse 24. "*And He was saying to them, 'Take care what you listen to.'*" (Mark 4:24a, NASB95)
- b. Jesus' point is that those who faithfully proclaim the gospel with all diligence can also expect to be _____ eternally by God for their efforts.
- c. How eager are you to _____ your heavenly Lord? (Matthew 13:12)
- d. Jesus does not stop there but goes onto talk about false disciples, in contrast to true disciples these false disciples are characterized by _____. (Luke 8:18)

III. PARABLE OF THE SEED (Mark 4:26-29)

- a. Jesus' second parable spoken to the crowds but heard by the fruitful hearers in which He taught that true disciples wait dependently on _____, who alone can bring results.
- b. Jesus' parable again was taken from farming to illustrate this point that only God can _____ life.
- c. In this parable the _____ represents the one proclaiming the gospel.
- d. Jesus in telling this parable make His point clear: in the same way that a farmer is not the power behind the regeneration of the seeds he has sown, so also the evangelist is not the _____ behind the regeneration of souls with whom he has shared the gospel.
- e. Even though the farmer did not cause the growth of the grain, Jesus teaches that he still rejoices in the _____.

IV. PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED (Mark 4:30-32)

- a. Jesus third parable in our passages give another characteristic of a fruitful hearer, a fruitful hearer is one who proclaims the gospel with _____.
- b. Again, Jesus used a farming illustration for this parable of the _____ seed.
- c. The disciples would have understood Jesus' point, though the kingdom of heaven was at that moment _____, like a mustard seed, it would grow to encompass the globe for generation after generation.
- d. This parable also anticipated the reality that the kingdom of God would _____ the whole world. (Daniel 4:10-12; Ezekiel 31:3-6)
- e. Jesus' point was even though the beginning seemed small, even in the face of severe persecution, the disciples could proclaim the _____ with confidence.

V. MARK'S CONCLUSION (Mark 4:33-34)

- a. Mark concludes this section of chapter four with a _____ summary statement.
- b. The unbelief of the crowds was _____ by Jesus as He obscured the truth and taught them what they thought were unexplainable riddles.
- c. But the disciples and the wider circle of Jesus' followers consisted of those who were fruitful _____ who accepted the gospel.

CONCLUSION:

Mark's gospel is really about what Jesus did, more than what He taught. This is one of the few places in Mark where we get a peek at Jesus' teaching. From this passage we have learned of four characteristics of a fruitful hearer, first, they witness obediently; second, they work expectantly, knowing God's promise of blessing. Third, they wait in total dependence on God, knowing it is God that brings the seed to life and regenerates a person transforming their life through Holy Spirit. Finally, they walk confidently knowing that God's redemptive plan will not fail. Are you a fruitful hearer?