

J O H N

: servant king :

the gospel of mark

◆ week 3: jesus the teacher - mark 4:1-20

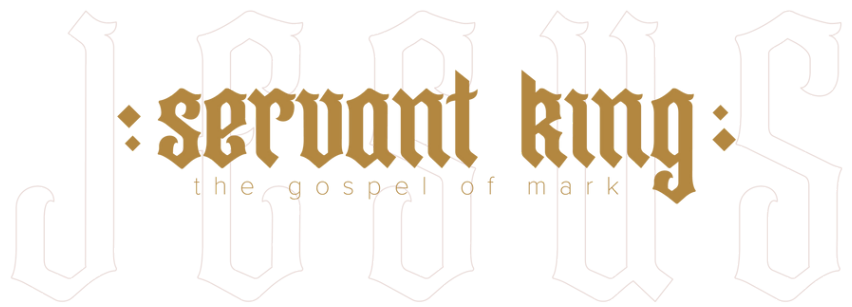
1 Again Jesus began to teach by the lake. The crowd that gathered around him was so large that he got into a boat and sat in it out on the lake, while all the people were along the shore at the water's edge. 2 He taught them many things by parables, and in his teaching said: 3 "Listen! A farmer went out to sow his seed. 4 As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. 5 Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. 6 But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. 7 Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants, so that they did not bear grain. 8 Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up, grew and produced a crop, some multiplying thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times."

9 Then Jesus said, "Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear."

10 When he was alone, the Twelve and the others around him asked him about the parables. 11 He told them, "The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables 12 so that,

"they may be ever seeing but never perceiving,
and ever hearing but never understanding;
otherwise they might turn and be forgiven!"

13 Then Jesus said to them, "Don't you understand this parable? How then will you understand any parable? 14 The farmer sows the word. 15 Some people are like seed along the path, where the word is sown. As soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them. 16 Others, like seed sown on rocky places, hear the word and at once receive it with joy. 17 But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. 18 Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; 19 but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful. 20 Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop—some thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times what was sown."



✦ personal study sheet

DIRECTIONS: Use the questions below to spend time in Scripture, dig deeper into the weekly sermon message, and to worship and pray. Each day, begin with prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to help you learn and apply what you read. Then, read **Mark 4:1-20** and answer the day's questions.

◆ DAY 1: FOCUS ON PEOPLE AND THEIR NATURAL, FALLEN CONDITION.

- Change, growth, and spiritual fruit happen when we hear God's Word with the right kind of heart. In the parable, the four kinds of soil represent four kinds of hearts: a hard heart, a shallow heart, a divided heart, and a receptive heart.

a. In the past, what has been something that has kept your heart from being the good soil?

b. The third soil was plagued with weeds of worry, the deceit of wealth, and wanting things. In your opinion, how does each of these things keep us from accepting God's word and producing a crop? Are any of these weeds in your life? If so, what do they look like?

c. Which soil best represents you today? Why?

- **Read verse 9: Then Jesus said, "Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear."**

According to the passage, how are we to respond to the word to be fruitful? How does hearing differ from just listening? What distractions in your life prevent you from truly listening to the Holy Spirit and the Word of God? How might you remove them in order to hear more clearly?

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◆ DAY 2: FOCUS ON JESUS THE TEACHER AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD

- Jesus taught far more than facts and head knowledge. His teaching in this parable emphasizes that attaining and living in the Kingdom of God requires a deep heart knowledge of the Gospel. What does that mean to you? _____

- **Read verses 10-12.** Why does Jesus speak in parables? To whom is Jesus willing to reveal the “secret of the kingdom of God”? Why is He intentionally secretive with the crowds?

◆ DAY 3: APPLICATION

Read and compare **Mark 4:20** and **1 Peter 3:15**

1 Peter 3:15

15 “But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.”

- 1 Peter 3:15 provides the criteria for sharing the Gospel to non-believers. How does Mark 4:20 reinforce these criteria? How does a heart knowledge require far more than facts to produce an abundant crop for the Kingdom of God? _____

- Good teachers know that practice makes perfect and that proper review and reinforcement leads long-term learning and change. Similarly, Pastor Dave shared a recent study which showed how consistent engagement (4 times a week) with Scripture produces a dramatic increase in change. How might you be more consistent in various practices of spiritual development? Consider ways you can record and assess your progress. _____

DAY 4: WORSHIP AND PRAYER

Use **Psalm 51:10** in a time of worship and prayer. As you pray, examine the condition of your heart and seek God’s help in cultivating a heart that is receptive to His Word, in order to bear fruit and bring Him glory.