



October 10, 2012

Mark 4:1-20 (NASB)

The Parable of the Sower

¹ He began to teach again by the sea. And such a very large crowd gathered to Him that He got into a boat in the sea and sat down; and the whole crowd was by the sea on the land. ² And He was teaching them many things in parables, and was saying to them in His teaching, ³ “Listen to this! Behold, the sower went out to sow; ⁴ as he was sowing, some seed fell beside the road, and the birds came and ate it up. ⁵ “Other seed fell on the rocky ground where it did not have much soil; and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of soil. ⁶ “And after the sun had risen, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away. ⁷ “Other seed fell among the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked it, and it yielded no crop. ⁸ “Other seeds fell into the good soil, and as they grew up and increased, they yielded a crop and produced thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold.” ⁹ And He was saying, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

A Word to His Followers

¹⁰ As soon as He was alone, His followers, along with the twelve, began asking Him about the parables. ¹¹ And He was saying to them, “To you has been given the mystery of the kingdom of God, but those who are outside get everything in parables, ¹² so that WHILE SEEING, THEY MAY SEE AND NOT PERCEIVE, AND WHILE HEARING, THEY MAY HEAR AND NOT UNDERSTAND, OTHERWISE THEY MIGHT RETURN AND BE FORGIVEN.”

The Parable Explained

¹³ And He said to them, “Do you not understand this parable? How will you understand all the parables? ¹⁴ “The sower sows the word. ¹⁵ “These are the ones who are beside the road where the word is sown; and when they hear, immediately Satan comes and takes away the word which has been sown in them. ¹⁶ “In a similar way these are the ones on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy; ¹⁷ and they have no firm root in themselves, but are only temporary; then, when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately they fall away. ¹⁸ “And others are the ones on whom seed was sown among the thorns; these are the ones who have heard the word, ¹⁹ but the worries of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. ²⁰ “And those are the ones on whom seed was sown on the good soil; and they hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold.”

Additional Notes and Doodles

Reflection Questions

Mark 4:1-20

1. This passage marks the first parable in the Gospel of Mark. Many more will follow. What are some of your favorite parables that Jesus told? Why are they special to you? In what ways have you found them applicable to your life?

2. Jesus began the parable with the words, "Listen to this!" In what ways have you experienced Jesus calling out to you to listen to His words? What has your response been like?

3. After telling the parable, Jesus said, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear." This was Jesus' call to the crowd to be discerning in their listening and to comprehend His message. In what ways do you discern the words of scripture? What are some ways you can better comprehend what the scriptures teach?

4. In verse 11 Jesus essentially tells His disciples that they will get the inside scoop on His teaching, while others will have to figure it out. What does Jesus' tactic of teaching the multitudes in parables reveal about His desire for people to understand Him? His message?

5. Starting in verse 13, Jesus explained the parable. Four different soil types (people types) are presented. Reflect on some people you've known who embody these soil types. In what ways have you engaged with them regarding spiritual matters?

6. Jesus redefined His family as being those who do His will. How have you experienced this type of family? In what ways is this family invisible? Visible?

7. In what ways can you personally identify with the soil types? Reflect on how you've been one or more of these in your own life? Have there been "seasons" when you've been one type over another?

8. Identify one spiritual principle from this passage, and make a decision how you will apply it to your life. What's the first step?