

Gospel germinates and sprouts, that too is a mystery (v.27-28). Spiritual conviction in the heart of a sinner is a mystery.

- 3) Just as plant growth is gradual, so is conviction in the heart. Gradually, interest increases and conviction deepens.
- 4) The ultimate decision lies with man – repent or reject? Sinners must repent and turn to God to be saved (Acts 3:19) "*Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out ...*"
- 5) When they do, God will save their souls (Jn 1:12-13)

3rd Lesson

3. Expect Great Things From God

a. God's work like the mustard seed began small

- 1) This was true for the first church in Jerusalem. They began with 120 dedicated followers. They grew to 3000 after Peter's first sermon. They increased to 5000 shortly thereafter. They spread throughout the world.
- 2) It is also true for every new church. Though God's work may be slow at times, we must not forget that it is **GOD'S** work. (1 Corinthians 3:7) "*So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.*"

b. We should expect God's work to grow in time.

- 1) Just as the mustard plant grew into a large plant, so the first church grew and spread until it now churches cover the globe.
- 2) We must expect God to do great things for our little church too. (Gal 6:9) "*And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.*"

Conclusion: This morning we have looked at three lessons that define our work in God's kingdom. 1) We must not hide the Gospel. 2) We must do our part and let God do His. We must sow the Gospel seed. We must keep watering and cultivating it. When a person is ready to be saved, we must reap the harvest and lead them to Christ. 3) We must expect great things from God. Be praying that He will save souls!

Song: Rescue the Perishing – 432

Our Work in God's Kingdom

30 July 2017 AM – Mark 4:21-34 – Mr17 – Scott Childs

Introduction: The River Jordan supplies two large lakes. One, the Sea of Galilee, is full of fish and plant life. The other, the Dead Sea, has nothing living in it at all. It is stagnant and lifeless. Both lakes have the same source but only the Sea of Galilee has an outlet. In other words, it passes on what it has received, whereas the Dead Sea does not. That is the challenge of the parables in this passage, the message that Jesus has brought is not to be kept to ourselves but it is to be passed on to others. David Hewit, Mark, Free to Follow Jesus, p. 71

In this section, Jesus was answering the disciple's questions about the parables (see v.10-11). The kingdom he talks about here is the kingdom of salvation. Christ will reign as King in the hearts of all who will believe on Him.

Transition: After teaching the parable about fruitfulness, Jesus told three other parables that teach lessons that define our work in God's kingdom.

1st Lesson

1. We must not hide the Gospel (v.21-25)

a. Hiding the gospel is wrong (v.21-22)

- 1) The Gospel is like a candle and must not be placed under a bushel.
 - a) The NT *candle* was a lamp. The Bible speaks of various kinds of lamps. This one was probably a small clay dish with a pinched edge that held a wick dipped in olive oil.
 - b) A *bushel* was a pot or bucket used to store grain. This bushel was probably a clay pot holding about 9 liters.
 - c) To place a lamp under a pot would hide the light and probably put out the lamp.
- 2) The Gospel is like a lamp it must not be placed under a bed. Placing it under a bed would also hide the light and make it useless.
- 3) The Gospel, like a lamp, must be put on a lampstand

where it can lighten the hearts of unbelievers.

- 4) Jesus reminded his disciples that hidden things must be revealed and secret things must come out in the open (v.22). That is also true of the Gospel. **The Gospel had been hidden.** It had been a mystery. Now it is to be brought out into the open. Jesus said in (Matthew 5:16) "*Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*"

b. We must listen carefully so we can share (v.23-25)

- 1) Unbelievers do not hear the Bible with understanding because they lack the Spirit of God to help them. Christians are able to hear God's Word (v.23). Therefore, we MUST **hear** it. It is our duty.
- 2) We must **take heed** what we hear (v.24). That simply means that we must consider carefully what God is telling us in His Word so that we may digest it, learn it and share it with others. This verse can be a bit confusing if we do not carefully ponder it.
 - a) Jesus is talking about what we **hear** so that we can learn and tell others.
 - b) The **measure** is a scoop. To **mete** is to use the scoop to measure.
 - c) God knows the size of scoop you use to dip into His Word so that you may learn and share it with others. He will use that same size of scoop to measure out His blessing to you.
 - d) Those who consider carefully what God says are using a large scoop and God will use the same scoop to bless them, plus because they carefully consider what they hear, he will add extra to the scoop.
- 3) In verse 25, the one who **has** refers to the one who used a big scoop and gained much and shared much. God will give him more. The one who **has not** because he used a very little scoop, spending very little time in the Bible, he will lose the little blessing he already had. He will end up worse off than when he started. **Use it or lose it!**

- 4) The bottom line is that God does not want the Gospel hid. He will bless those who dig in, learn much, and witness faithfully. Those who do not will lose reward.

2nd Lesson

2. We must do our part and let God do His (v.26-29)

a. Like the farmer, we have three jobs to do

- 1) First, we must sow the seed (v.26)
 - a) There is nothing very glamorous about planting seeds. It simply takes time, care, and effort.
 - b) The same is true with witnessing. It takes time. We must be careful to plant the seed as wisely as we can. It takes work. (Mark 16:15) "*And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.*"
 - c) Planting the Gospel seed is not just for spiritual leaders. The Apostle Paul commended the believers at Thessalonica for their witnessing. (1 Thessalonians 1:8) "*For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing.*"
- 2) Then, we must wait patiently for God to work
 - a) During the waiting time, we can pray that the Gospel seed will take root.
 - b) We can also cultivate the soil and water it.
- 3) Last, we must harvest the grain
 - a) Harvest is a joyful time.
 - b) In this parable, harvesting the fruit of ripe grain pictures salvation (cf. Mr 4:20).
 - c) Matthew records God's heartbeat concerning the harvest. (Matthew 9:38) "*Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.*"

b. God's part is the mystery

- 1) Not every single detail of these parables have application to what Jesus taught. In the garden, germination and growth of a seed is a mystery and a miracle.
- 2) As God works in a sinner's heart, when the seed of the