

Mark 4: 1-20

I. Overview of v. 1-9

- A. Notice: this is a very optimistic sower: he scatters seed everywhere . Jesus preaches his message to all
- B. Notice: there are 6 kinds of soils: 3 unfruitful soils and 3 fruitful soils
- C. Notice: the key is listening ("he who has ears to hear, let him hear")

II. Overview of v. 10-12

A. Two audiences

- 1. The disciples: "devoted followers" who have organized their lives around Jesus
v. 11: "the secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you"

- 2. The crowds: "curious consumers" who are bandwagon followers of Jesus
v. 11: "to them everything is said in parables"

Parables reveal the truth for those willing to lean in and truly seek to understand and obey, but for those who are hard of heart, the truth is obscured (just like in Isaiah 6)

B. Which group are you a part of?

- 1. Are we among the curious consumers who follow Jesus only when it's convenient, or are we among the devoted followers who have built their lives around him?
- 2. If Jesus were removed from your life, what would happen/change?

III. Overview of v. 13-20

A. Three soils that bear no fruit (v. 15-19)

- 1. soil #1: Hard hearts in whom Satan immediately snatches the word away
- 2. soil #2: Persecution leads them to fall away

Oftentimes, the persecution comes from those closest to them (family)

- 3. soil #3: Choked out by riches and worry

- a. Riches are deceitful: they make promises they can't keep

They promise permanence, happiness, and freedom but can't deliver

- b. Riches can be enemies to true discipleship (Mk 10: Rich Young Ruler)

- c. The world is telling us we need all this stuff. We want more right now. But the desire for more feeds on itself and creates more worries and concerns

- d. Mt 6:19-21: our vested interest in wealth threatens to choke out the Word

How is your interest in wealth and your worry choking out God's Word?

Are we overcome with worry?

Are we trusting the world's deceitful promises?

Is our hunger for more driving us to buy things we can't pay for or shouldn't be spending our money on?

- e. How do we clear out the thorns

- 1) Are we living within our means?

- 2) What are we allowing to influence us? (advertisements, etc)

- 3) Are we seeking godly counsel?

B. Three good soils

- 1. The key is not just to hear the Word but to let it sink in so that we live the Word. Not just intellectual knowledge of the Word but active living out of the Word. (see Mk 3:33-35)

2. God wants to grow his kingdom by planting his good Word in you and having it produce good fruit

IV. How do we internalize the Word?

Find out what works for you: read a little bit each day, or sit with one passage for a week, or take 2 hours at a time once a week, etc

Discussion Questions

1. Opening questions: What struck you most about the sermon/the passage? What surprised you? What confused you? What did you disagree with?
2. Explain in your own words why Jesus spoke in parables (see v. 10-12 and explain how the Isaiah 6 quote fits in your understanding).
3. As you look at the various soils described in Mark 4, which soil do you relate with the most? Why?
4. Discuss the question asked on Sunday regarding whether we are “curious consumers” or “committed followers” of Christ: If Jesus were removed from your life, would anything significant happen? Would anything radically change?