

Responding to the Gospel

Proclamation Life Groups; Week of Sunday, December 9, 2018; Steve Thiel

Sermon Theme – Jesus is the one true King, and His coming Kingdom brings salvation and judgment, revelation and concealment. Therefore, be all the more certain to hear the word clearly, accept it whole-heartedly, and bear fruit abundantly for God’s glory.

I. Reality of Parable Preaching – Read Mark 4:1-9

- A. Chapter 4 is one of the few places in the gospel where Mark actually includes the content of Jesus’ teaching. What is the background of Mark 1-3 that prompts Jesus’ teaching in Mark 4?
- B. What are some general observations about the various soils?
- C. Verses 3 and 9 frame the content of the parable. How do these bookends help us understand how Jesus wants us to respond to the parable? How are you doing at listening and obeying?

II. Reason for Parable Preaching – Read Mark 4:10-12

- A. What does Jesus mean when He says, “the secret of the Kingdom of God” in verse 11? How does this language relate to the purpose of parables to reveal?
- B. How does the larger context of Isaiah 5-6 explain the purpose of parables to conceal?
- C. How does God conceal the Kingdom from the Pharisees and use their rejection of Jesus to lead to His saving plan of redemption? How are both explained in Acts 2:23-24?
- D. How should we respond to God’s gracious choice to reveal the Kingdom of God to us?

III. Response to Parable Preaching – Read Mark 4:13-20

- A. A hard heart is a frightening response to the gospel. Is Hebrews 3:7-13 a fearful thing for you? How can you maintain a sensitive disposition to the Word of God and Christ’s Kingdom?
- B. Though persecution will come on account of the word, how can these verses encourage you to evangelize unbelievers even when it’s difficult?
- C. Jesus is very clear that either seed or thorns will grow. How can you guard your life against “the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desire for other things?”
- D. Kingdom growth does not happen overnight. Instead, it’s a process. Where in your life would you like to bear more fruit? What are some helpful strategies to move forward in this area?