

EQUIPPING DISCIPLES FOR KINGDOM GROWTH
Mark Series: Let the Gospel Tell the Gospel

THE PARABLE OF THE SEED:
LEADERS WHO LISTEN TO THE WORD

*The parables' secret sustains our preaching and living
according to the gospel of Christ's kingdom.*

Covenant Presbyterian Church

MARK 4:1-20

4 November A.D. 2012

Introduction:

Note again Mark's sandwich/quesadilla technique (as in Mar 3):

Mark 4:1-9 not healing now but teaching the large crowd in parables: *a sower went out to sow*

Mark 4:10-12 a foundational interpretative key: *insiders have kingdom insight*

Mark 4:13-20 the word is preached to blinded, to shallow, to distracted & to good soil who'll bear much fruit.

On the importance of listening and hearing

Listen: Mark 4:1, 24

Hear: Mark 4:9 *2, 12, 15, 16, 20, 23 *2, 33

How the twelve & the other disciples hear.

How the leaders' & crowds hear.

How the twelve & the other disciples respond to the leaders' & crowds hearing or not hearing.

ONE: The historical context is the need for the new Israel's leaders (the twelve) and the new family to truly listen and hear the word of the kingdom of God's Son.

A new **Israel** (the 12)

The old is being "set aside" in judgment (see Romans 9-11) and these 12 will foundationally gather the church for the Promised Land to come. *Have you been gathered in?*

A new **family of the Spirit** (adopted "recklessly" from various groupings—and soon nations)

Made up of those who hear the word and do it. *Have you been adopted in?*

A new, **greater-than-Isaiah Prophet** (Jesus the Anointed Son of God and man, the ultimate Sabbath rest of God's new creation) who as the Living Word will do his work (Isaiah 40:8; 55:10-11). *Are you finding your rest in Christ, God's King for you?*

Jesus veils in parable that he is the fulfillment of Torah—both judge and sweet redeemer of Israel and King of the nations.

The disciples (the twelve, the others & today) must understand how AND WHY such a king can be rejected.

TWO: The problem Jesus' disciples face (and we now in a different way) is the problem Isaiah faced:

Judgment/discipline often precede and prepare for justice/restoration.

A/ Note the application to the twelve and others around him.

Mark 4:11-12 & Isaiah 6:9-10: look at the context in Isaiah and how Jesus is applying it:

Isa 5:1-7 God's vineyard Israel traded justice for bloodshed, righteousness for cries of distress.

Isa 63:10 Israel rebelled and grieved God's Spirit and he became their enemy.

Isaiah 6:9-13 *Go and tell this people: Keep on listening but do not perceive...*

Jesus' ministry parallels and fulfills Isaiah's: he preaches judgment yet provides deliverance.

The Father has heard the cries of his people/creation: but his coming in his Son is both ***warning & blessing***, both ***judgment & grace***.

He has to train the twelve and those around him: Mark 7:18; 8:17-21; they will be slow to understand his rejection and his promise of long-term fruit. Israel will be "set aside" but a great household will be gathered through suffering and faithfulness.

B/ Note the application to missions, to reaching the unreached...

C/ Note the application to peoples among whom the gospel has been much received in the past but where now many – even in the churches – have grown cold.

THREE: At the parable's heart is the arrival and preaching of a powerful, fruitful Word even as many live and die with blind, shallow, distracted, hard hearts.

A/ Be aware the choices you make form your character towards God or are hardening your heart

B/ The foundational choice is hear and see God's Christ

C/ Four responses to Jesus: 1/ blinded hearts, 2/ shallow hearts, 3/ distracted hearts, 4/ hearing hearts

1 Corinthians 2:5 (NAS) so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.

Conclusion:

We proclaim a fruitful word, the good news of God's King and his offer of eternal peace and participation in his royal family and his royal service.

Romans 5:8 (NAS) 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

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