

## **Mark Chapter Four (Part Ones) – Teaching Notes**

**Introduction:** A key idea in Mark is that Jesus is the servant of God. Today, we hope to discuss Jesus' parables.

### **Body:**

**Read Mark 4:1-20**

**E. His Parables. 1. The Sower.** Jesus shares a parable with a great crowd of people. He talks about how a farmer sowed seed on a path, rocky soil, thorny soil, and good soil. There were various responses. He explained the parable to His disciples and others. One's understanding of parables was a measure of one's spirituality.

Questions/Applications –

**What should believers do, in light of how we should behave as if teaching is as important to us as it is to Jesus?**

- Notice in vs. 1 that teaching was so important to Jesus. He went out of His way to help the people of God understand how to live by the Word of God. He used creative ways to help people understand like a boat for acoustical and logistical concerns as well as parables to which people could relate. He was aware that many different types of people would be listening to Him, but He sought to make sure that His target audience understood, thus we see extra time with His disciples. First, let's behave as if teaching is important to us, the body and bride of Christ. This should include training and enhancing teachers, offering a variety of need meeting courses for those who want to learn, and giving teaching programmatic priority. Second, let's seek effective ways of helping people understand. As Jesus used boats and parables, let's be willing to use modern technology (e.g., white boards, internet resources, etc.) and illustrations that help people understand. Third, let's find a mixture of the shot gun and rifle approach. The shot gun scatters buck shot everywhere. The rifle hits a chosen target. We scatter, because we don't know who will believe. We focus, because we know that those who are faithful in few things are eligible to be ruler over many. *Let's work on making the ministry of teaching as important to us as it was to Jesus.*

**What should believers do, in light of the importance of fighting off satanic ignorance?**

- Notice in vss. 4, 15 that the reason that some people don't understand is because of the devil's work. In other words, there is what I call satanic ignorance. A person is ignorant because the devil keeps them from understanding that which is relatively understandable. Sometimes the devil can keep the person out of the teaching session. Sometimes he can distract us in the teaching session. And sometimes he can simply keep us from comprehending what we should be able to comprehend. *Let's fight off satanic ignorance.* We can move in this direction, by making sure we are saved, giving ourselves to prayerfully studying and understanding God's word (not just sitting in class, take notes and strive to obey, pray), and surrounding ourselves with positive, instead of negative influences (you may have to move your seat).

**What should believers do, in light of the importance of fighting off rocky and thorny hearing?**

- Notice in vss. 5-7, 16-19 that some seeds fall on rocky or thorny soil. With rocky soil, the plant makes an impressive start, but it fades because of a lack of roots and informed commitment. With thorny soil, the plant struggles to produce anything, because the thorns and worries of this world kept it from doing much with the word that the person understands. They are hearers but not doers. *Let's fight off the temptation of being rocky or thorny hearers.* First, we should make sure that we do what we do based on the Word of God and our love of God, instead of because we like the leader, like the people, or expect satisfying results. Leaders, people, and results can be very disappointing, but God is a constant. We need to keep a balance of zeal and knowledge (e.g., Membership Orientation before right to vote, Bible study for those who minister in song, requirements for those

who carry our preaching credentials, requirements for those who seek to manage and teach in this church). Our churches suffer from putting those with rocky hearing in positions of influence. Second, we should keep all that happens to us in perspective. When we obey God, God will work things out for our good, somehow and some day. When we put God on the back burner and try to handle the problems of our lives, in our own ways, we are often out matched by our problems, and we run the risk of angering a God who can make bad situations worst. Thorns get worst, when we put God on the back burner. So then, no matter what happens in our lives, the best thing we can do is to keep striving to live by God's word.

### **What should believers do, in light of how we should work on being good hearers?**

- Notice in vs. 8, 20 that the good ground is noted for producing fruit. This person hears and obeys God's word consistently. Notice that the disciples asked questions when they did not understand. *We should strive to be good hearers.* We can work on being good hearers by making sure we are saved, by prayerfully studying and striving to obey God's word, and by asking questions of the right person (i.e., ask someone who knows like the teacher, not someone who doesn't know like your buddy who doesn't even come to the study), when we don't understand.

### **Read Mark 4:21-25**

**2. The Lamp.** Jesus talks about a lamp being designed for a stand, not to be put under a bed. He also talks about how those who have will be given more. And those who don't have will have even their little portion taken away.

Questions/Applications –

### **What should believers do, in light of how we should live as if the light of public knowledge is shining on us right now?**

- Notice in vs. 22 that what is hidden will be brought to light. On one side, if a person is lying it will come to light. If a person has a wicked agenda, it will come to light. But thank God, on the other side, if a person is really a God sent, it will come to light. If a person has more good than bad in him or her, it will come to light. *Let's live as if the light of public knowledge is shining on us all of the time.* God already knows us. And when the time is right, God will show us to the people whom we are trying to impress.

### **What should believers do, in light of the importance of gaining more of that which God has placed in our trust?**

- Notice in vs. 25 that those who have will be given more. Those who don't have or have very little will have even their little portion taken away. It would reason that we strive to have more. This is true with our faith, our wealth, and I am sure other areas of our lives. We develop more faith by giving ourselves to more prayerful study and obedience. When we don't hear and strive to obey God's word, God has a way of moving the messengers and teachers to those who will. We develop more wealth by making more income, spending less of our resources, and investing more in profitable ventures. *Let's work on striving to have more of what God has placed in our trust.*

**Conclusion:** Let's work on being servants of God. God has much for those who obey His will.