

22S42 Mark 4:1-20 (Part 8)

Hello everyone. Thank you for joining me today @ the PUNLA Coffee Table. I hope everyone is doing well. Today we are continuing our study of the gospel according to Mark with Mark 4:1-20 (Part 8) The parable of the Sower & Soils.

Before we start, we need to understand a little about this amazing book in the bible. Most historians believe Mark was the first written account of Jesus' life, ministry, death and resurrection. The identity of Mark is not known for sure, but most believe this is John Mark. John Mark is spoken of by Luke in Acts as the cousin of Barnabas, John Mark is mentioned in many other books on the New Testament. Many believe he spent time traveling with Peter, so it is thought that much of Mark's gospel is actually from the perspective of Peter. We also believe that John Mark knew Jesus. There are accounts that Jesus stayed at Mark's mother's home, there are also some unique story details in Mark that are not in either Matthew's or Luke's accounts. We will try to highlight some of these as we go through the stories in Mark.

I'm reading from the New American Standard version (NAS) today. But of course, you can use whatever translation you choose.

Let's read Mark 4:1-20 (NAS) *¹Again He began to teach by the sea. And such a very large crowd gathered to Him that He got into a boat on the sea and sat down; and the whole crowd was by the sea on the land. ²And He was teaching them many things in parables, and was saying to them in His teaching, ³"Listen to this! Behold, the sower went out to sow; ⁴as he was sowing, some seed fell beside the road, and the birds came and ate it up. ⁵Other seed fell on the rocky ground where it did not have much soil; and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of soil. ⁶And when the sun had risen, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away. ⁷Other seed fell among the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked it, and it yielded no crop. ⁸Other seeds fell into the good soil, and as they grew up and increased, they yielded a crop and produced thirty, sixty, and a hundred times as much." ⁹And He was saying, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear." ¹⁰As soon as He was alone, His followers, along with the twelve disciples, began asking Him about the parables. ¹¹And He was saying to them, "To you has been given the mystery of the kingdom of God, but for those who are outside, everything comes in parables, ¹²so that WHILE SEEING THEY MAY SEE, AND NOT PERCEIVE, AND WHILE HEARING, THEY MAY HEAR, AND NOT UNDERSTAND, OTHERWISE THEY MIGHT RETURN AND IT WOULD BE FORGIVEN THEM." ¹³And He said to them, "Do you not understand this parable? How will you understand all the parables? ¹⁴The sower sows the word. ¹⁵These are the ones who are beside the road where the word is sown; and when they hear, immediately Satan comes and takes away the word which has been sown in them. ¹⁶And in a similar way these are the ones sown with seed on the rocky places, who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy; ¹⁷and yet they have no firm root in themselves, but are only temporary; then, when affliction or persecution occurs because of the word, immediately they fall away. ¹⁸And others are the ones sown with seed among the thorns; these are the ones who have heard the word, ¹⁹but the worries of the world, and the deceitfulness of wealth, and the desires for other things enter and choke the word,*

and it becomes unfruitful. ²⁰And those are the ones sown with seed on the good soil; and they hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirty, sixty, and a hundred times as much.”

Let's pray. Dear heavenly father, guide our discussion today such that your message is clear to each of us. As we read your words from Mark, help us see what Mark wants his readers to understand and why. I pray that you help me stay out of the way so your hope and peace can be shared with us. I pray this in your name Lord Jesus. Amen.

Now, let's take a closer look at these verses, Mark 4:1-2 (NAS) *¹Again He began to teach by the sea. And such a very large crowd gathered to Him that He got into a boat on the sea and sat down; and the whole crowd was by the sea on the land. ²And He was teaching them many things in parables, and was saying to them in His teaching,*

The crowds have gotten so big, now Jesus is teaching from a boat. If you are not familiar with the sea of Galilee, the beach in many areas is rocky and there are cliffs near the seashore. So, here are probably at thousand or more people crowded along the seashore with cliffs behind them. Jesus is in a boat just offshore. This is perfect natural amphitheater. God is truly in control of everything. Perfect place, now the perfect message.

The parable of the Sower, Mark 4:3-8 (NAS) *³“Listen to this! Behold, the sower went out to sow; ⁴as he was sowing, some seed fell beside the road, and the birds came and ate it up. ⁵Other seed fell on the rocky ground where it did not have much soil; and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of soil. ⁶And when the sun had risen, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away. ⁷Other seed fell among the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked it, and it yielded no crop. ⁸Other seeds fell into the good soil, and as they grew up and increased, they yielded a crop and produced thirty, sixty, and a hundred times as much.”* I really love this parable, but I don't really have to say anything because Jesus is going to explain it in just a couple versus.

But first, let's read on, Mark 4:9-12 (NAS) *⁹And He was saying, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.” ¹⁰As soon as He was alone, His followers, along with the twelve disciples, began asking Him about the parables. ¹¹And He was saying to them, “To you has been given the mystery of the kingdom of God, but for those who are outside, everything comes in parables, ¹²so that WHILE SEEING THEY MAY SEE, AND NOT PERCEIVE, AND WHILE HEARING, THEY MAY HEAR, AND NOT UNDERSTAND, OTHERWISE THEY MIGHT RETURN AND IT WOULD BE FORGIVEN THEM.”* Before we get to the explanation, Jesus says if you want to hear then hear. Or His words he who has ears to hear, let him hear. Jesus also explains why He is teaching in parables. This is a quote from Isaiah 6, it worth looking it up. Verses 6-9.

Next the explanation in Jesus' own words in Mark 4:13-20 (NAS) *¹³And He said to them, “Do you not understand this parable? How will you understand all the parables? ¹⁴The*

sower sows the word. ¹⁵These are the ones who are beside the road where the word is sown; and when they hear, immediately Satan comes and takes away the word which has been sown in them. ¹⁶And in a similar way these are the ones sown with seed on the rocky places, who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy; ¹⁷and yet they have no firm root in themselves, but are only temporary; then, when affliction or persecution occurs because of the word, immediately they fall away. ¹⁸And others are the ones sown with seed among the thorns; these are the ones who have heard the word, ¹⁹but the worries of the world, and the deceitfulness of wealth, and the desires for other things enter and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. ²⁰And those are the ones sown with seed on the good soil; and they hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirty, sixty, and a hundred times as much.”

I'm so thankful to Jesus for giving us a very clear understanding of this amazing parable. Four kinds of people. Those that don't believe, satan takes it away from them, and three groups that believe. One receives with joy, believes and then the problems of this world take that joy away because they don't have a root in themselves. Just like most new believers. Another group believes but then the worries of this world and wealth deceive them and they are unfruitful. And the last group grows in their faith and is fruitful.

Let's review.

- 1) the Seed? The seed is the word of God. When we spread God's word, many hear but how they receive it is very different.
- 2) Soils? The different soils are different ways people received God's word. Some dismiss it and satan takes it away, others all receive the good news and believe. Sadly some fall away from faith when they are faced with troubles in this life. Others are not fruitful because they are deceived by the things of this world, riches, desires. But one group grows in their relationship with Jesus. They serve others and they are very fruitful for the kingdom of God.

Let's Pray. Heavenly Father thank you for Bible. Help us to read and meditate on your words so we can hear the message you have for us. Help us to remember who you are Lord. You are our king, king of kings. You are our Lord, Lord over everyone. We can trust you, Lord. Help us to ask you for wisdom when we don't understand. I pray this in your Name Lord Jesus. Amen

Let me leave you with this, Jesus is telling a truth we better hear clearly. Many hear and many believe but not all that hear and believe become fruitful. You have to be a true follower of Jesus to be fruitful. If we don't follow Jesus and do the things Jesus wants us to do, then we miss the satisfying life God wants for us. A life of service to others in the name of Jesus.

Thank you for joining me for our study of the gospel of Mark. Please email me comments or feedback. And if you liked the message, please share the link with your friends. Until next time @ the PUNLA Coffee Table. God bless.