

22S43 Mark 4:21-41 (Part 9)

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 4:21-41 (Part 9) The parables of the seed, mustard seed, a lamp. Then he calms the sea.

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 4:21-41 (NAS) *²¹And He was saying to them, "A lamp is not brought to be put under a basket, or under a bed, is it? Is it not brought to be put on the lampstand? ²²For nothing is hidden, except to be revealed; nor has anything been secret, but that it would come to light. ²³If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear."* *²⁴And He was saying to them, "Take care what you listen to. By your standard of measure it will be measured to you; and more will be given you besides. ²⁵For whoever has, to him more will be given; and whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him."* *²⁶And He was saying, "The kingdom of God is like a man who casts seed upon the soil; ²⁷and he goes to bed at night and gets up daily, and the seed sprouts and grows—how, he himself does not know. ²⁸The soil produces crops by itself; first the stalk, then the head, then the mature grain in the head. ²⁹Now when the crop permits, he immediately puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come."* *³⁰And He was saying, "How shall we picture the kingdom of God, or by what parable shall we present it? ³¹It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the soil, though it is the smallest of all the seeds that are upon the soil, ³²yet when it is sown, it grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants, and forms large branches, with the result that THE BIRDS OF THE SKY can NEST UNDER its shade."* *³³And with many such parables He was speaking the word to them, so far as they were able to understand it; ³⁴and He did not speak to them without a parable; but He was explaining everything privately to His own disciples. ³⁵On that day, when evening came, He said to them, "Let's go over to the other side."³⁶After dismissing the crowd, they took Him along with them in the boat, just as He was; and other boats were with Him. ³⁷And a fierce gale of wind developed, and the waves were breaking over the boat so much that the boat was already filling with water. ³⁸And yet Jesus Himself was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke Him and said to Him, "Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?" ³⁹And He got up and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Hush, be still." And the wind died*

down and it became perfectly calm. ⁴⁰And He said to them, “Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?” ⁴¹They became very much afraid and said to one another, “Who, then, is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?”

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. First the parable of the lamp in Mark 4:21-23 (NAS) *²¹And He was saying to them, “A lamp is not brought to be put under a basket, or under a bed, is it? Is it not brought to be put on the lampstand? ²²For nothing is hidden, except to be revealed; nor has anything been secret, but that it would come to light. ²³If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.”*

I really love how Jesus used practical things to demonstrate his points. For those of you that don’t know, this lamp was probably an olive oil burning lamp like a kerosene lamps we use sometimes today. Remember no electric light in the first century. Lights or lamps are used so we can see in the dark. So, the lamp is useless if its’ under a bed or basket. In fact no one would do this. They put a lamp up high to give light to a big area. Lights reveal what was hidden in the dark. The truth of God is like this, it reveals truth. We can’t hide from God, God see everything. The Gospel of Jesus reveals to us how much we need Jesus in our lives.

Then parable of measure, Mark 4:24-25 (NAS) *²⁴And He was saying to them, “Take care what you listen to. By your standard of measure it will be measured to you; and more will be given you besides. ²⁵For whoever has, to him more will be given; and whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him.”* This is a parable I rarely hear anyone talk about. But this is a powerful message. Jesus begins with “take care to listen”. Some translations say, “consider carefully” or “pay attention”. So, I suggest we do what Jesus told us to do, pay attention. However we judge others, we will be judged by the same standard or measure. You can see this concept developed even more in the parallel story in Matthew 7:2. Pay attention.

Then the parable of the seed, Mark 4:26-29 (NAS) *²⁶And He was saying, “The kingdom of God is like a man who casts seed upon the soil; ²⁷and he goes to bed at night and gets up daily, and the seed sprouts and grows—how, he himself does not know. ²⁸The soil produces crops by itself; first the stalk, then the head, then the mature grain in the head. ²⁹Now when the crop permits, he immediately puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come.”* This is one of many parables that Jesus begins with “the kingdom of God is like”. This was the focus of Jesus’ earthly ministry. Telling us about the kingdom of God. Pay close attention to the metaphors. They are about growth, the growth of the Christian church. The seed is the word of God. The kingdom of God is here and now, while growth is still possible.

Next the parable of the mustard seed in Mark 4:30-32 (NAS) .” ³⁰And He was saying, “How shall we picture the kingdom of God, or by what parable shall we present it? ³¹It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the soil, though it is the smallest of all the seeds that are upon the soil, ³²yet when it is sown, it grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants, and forms large branches, with the result that THE BIRDS OF THE SKY can NEST UNDER its shade.”

Again Jesus begins with the kingdom of God, this is how you should picture it. The tiniest of seeds which grows into a large tree and gives shelter to many. Does it sound like the Christian church. Starting in tiny Bethlehem and Jesus, and growing to touch the whole world. The kingdom of God is right here and right now.

Then Jesus explains why parables, Mark 4:33-34 (NAS) ³³And with many such parables He was speaking the word to them, so far as they were able to understand it; ³⁴and He did not speak to them without a parable; but He was explaining everything privately to His own disciples.

In the other gospels, more detail is given about this. Jesus says He does not want to override our free will. If Jesus taught without parables, then everyone would have to accept that Jesus is God, but many don't want that in their hearts. So, Jesus teaches in parables so only those who truly want to understand, will understand. But He explains these things in detail to the disciples.

Next is a remarkable story. Let's read Mark 4:35-41 (NAS) ³⁵On that day, when evening came, He said to them, “Let's go over to the other side.” ³⁶After dismissing the crowd, they took Him along with them in the boat, just as He was; and other boats were with Him. ³⁷And a fierce gale of wind developed, and the waves were breaking over the boat so much that the boat was already filling with water. ³⁸And yet Jesus Himself was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke Him and said to Him, “Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?” ³⁹And He got up and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, “Hush, be still.” And the wind died down and it became perfectly calm. ⁴⁰And He said to them, “Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?” ⁴¹They became very much afraid and said to one another, “Who, then, is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?”

We are going to find out in Chapter 5, that they crossed the Sea of Galilee from Capernaum to Gerasenes. But, on the way Jesus choose an opportunity to reconfirm to the disciples who He really is. You know Jesus knew what was going to happen. I wonder if He had a smile when the disciples finally woke Him up. But don't forget this is a fierce storm and Jesus just says, “be still”. I can only imagine the calm and quiet. Can you imagine the eyes of the disciples? Astonished, afraid. Do you think they had a healthy fear of the Lord at that moment.?

Let's review.

- 1) Parables? Why parables? It does not make sense to us. We say, why would Jesus not want everyone to accept him and understand his teachings. Well,

Jesus does want everyone to understand and accept who He is. But, there is always a but... God wants us to want to know Jesus, God does not want to overwhelm us into submission. He wants willing disciples, not obligated service.

- 2) Lamp, measures, seeds? The kingdom of God is like a seed or a mustard seed. The word of God is a light to the world, how we judge others is the standard we will be judged by. These are amazing life principles. Jesus is teaching us the best way to live and why it's the best way to live. Life in the kingdom of God.
- 3) Calm the Sea? I love this story. The disciples are scared they are about to die in a storm. They have seen what Jesus can do, but they still don't understand who Jesus is. Then Jesus shows He is the ruler of everything. With a word, He stops the storm instantly.

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 showing us He has the authority over everything. He wants us to be part of the kingdom of God. Part of the growth. We are called to share and make new disciples. The word of God is powerful, just like a bright light in a dark room. We are to be that light to the world. Put God first in everything you do and live satisfying life God wants for you. 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.