

Oct 21st 2007: Series in Mark: Parables to Ponder: 4:1-34

I wonder what your pantry is like??

You guys would love Mark !!!! **If he had a pantry** it would have been.....nicely ordered

Reason I say....Because there is such a structure about the way he writes

There is nothing in.....that is out of place

He doesn't follow a strict time frame..(not a diary)

Instead he groups his subjects.....in order to better present his strong belief....that Jesus is

So this section(4:1-34).....This pantry shelf.....contains parables

..and altho you will find heaps of pithy sayings.....**The only other parable...12→** of the tenants

A Parable.....An earthly story with a heavenly meaning.

When He told.....Jesus was in fact saying:

Here is something you do know about(a sower)....**My kingdom is like that in this partic way**

The problem with Jesus' parables was.....that when He spoke to the crowd.....He didn't make The spiritual meaning clear.....**He left them to work it out.....**OR to come and ask

In his parable section.....Mark tells us why Jesus did this

In verses 10-12 we read

When Jesus was alone, the Twelve and the others around Him asked Him about the parables. He told them, “The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables so that, ‘they may be ever seeing but never perceiving, and ever hearing but never understanding; otherwise they might turn and be forgiven!’”

Now at first....sound rather harsh.....As though Jesus didn't want....

But when we realise.....**Jesus is** quoting from Isaiah 6:9-10.....we can tell from the context there Just what Jesus was saying

The context of Isaiah.....was that the hearts of the people were already set against God's message **God** was letting the faithful prophet know.....**That the** majority.....were faithless

They would listen.....simply because he was a prophet.....**BUT** with no intention of changing.....
Final phrase can be translated:-***Because the last thing they want is to turn and have their sins forgiven***

(talking to teenagers.....However, there may be one.....who despite not really wanting to change.....is somehow moved.....And they pursue you later...)

**With Isaiah.....altho the majority rejected.....There was a small group who came to Him
With Jesus it was the same:**

Everything He did was available to everyone...as far as healings....casting out....miracles....teaching
But in a sense.....says Mark....the parables were somewhat of a test
If you really want to know about my kingdom.....Then really use your ears to listen
And come to meand I will tell you the meaning behind the story

**And Praise God they came to Jesus.....Not just the Twelve....but those around Him
And once again we see division..... →there's the Crowd
And then there are those.....who drawn by the Grace.....
come alongside Jesus to learn.....the deep truths(mystery...secrets).. of the kingdom**

And it is the secret of the kingdom....that Jesus brought into being.....that we discover in these 4

(SLIDE SHOWING FOUR PARABLES)

These four.....all have the same major theme.....→ The kingdom of God

- **The first speaks.....diff responses to the Message**
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- **The second.....many suggest is about Jesus...the lamp.....both shows.....and is.....
Way into the kingdom: (It begins.....*The Lamp does not come to be placed under*)**
- **The third.....that God brings about the growth of His Kingdom.....**
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- **The fourth.....the kingdom seems so small.....yet its steady....
and immense growth.....unstoppable**

Note.....that Each.....operates in a very long time span

It takes time for a seed to grow andTime for a lamp....Time for a harvest...Time for a mustard

In our present age....Time and kingdom growth go together

So it was from the moment Jesus began to minister

**His coming as the Messiah.....was not as the instant Deliverer....that so many expected.
Indeed at first.....He avoided the spot light....Avoided the adulation....the fame**

He always was...The Light of the World....but at first He deliberately hid Himself...as it were....under

**But though hidden at this time.....Though He kept the demons quite.....Forbade the healed to
His disciples needed to know....that which is hidden will be disclosed....The concealed**

**The time would come....First on the Cross....Then at the resurrection.....Afterwards thro preaching
When the Light of.....Would be put on the lampstand for**

And the Ultimate time for that.....WHEN Christ returns

Every part of that timeframe

**From the exact time of the crucifixion...resurrection.....to the centuries during which the Gospel
And finally to the Day of His appearing.....is in the hands of God**

It's the time of Kingdom growth on earth,,,,,,before the harvest at the end of this age

And we who are part of the kingdom now.....We are like the farmer....labouring

**And we have a responsibility to scatter the seed.....To share the message of the Kingdom
But Praise God.....It is God who brings growth**

**We are not responsible for the growth of the kingdom.....God is...and we can rely on Him
His programme is well on the way.....He knows the Day.....harvest will be ready**

- **But we are responsible for doing our part**
- Look at v24-25.....
You don't expect as much ploughing.....man with a plough.....tractor

If you are a Xtian....then God's expectation on you....is in accordance to what you have been given

Knowledge
Time
Money
Freedom

But then there's the disciple who responds

**But everything I do is so small.....I have faithfully ministered.....Yet I see so little
And the Lord reminds His listeners.....that from the tiniest of seeds...a large bush that gives shelter**

And God's Kingdom is still growing.....And He is faithful.....

And His church will grow.....and the gates of hell will not prevail against it

So those 3 parables.....Are for the encouragement....of those who have become part of Who have received the message of the kingdom.....and responded to it

- **A respond that is spoken about in the first parable.....**The parable of the sower
We know it so well

But let me remind you that it speaks of 2 main things

- **Division and Fruit bearing**

The Sower is the Lord.....

He sows His seed widely.....for He desires that none should perish

But amongst the first two groups.....there is no lasting result

The hardened heart refuses to hardly contemplate the Gospel message

The more open soul....ponders it for a while.....but makes no lasting commitment

In both cases the end result is the same....The seed dies....and the opportunity ...with it

- **In the crowd that followed Jesus that day....**There were many who fell into those two categories
And there are many around us today.....**Who we minister tooo**...believing thatcan change

But in the second two groups there is a response.....The seed does grow

And this is the section that most concerns us.....**FOR** if we are Xtians.....then we are in one of these

Consider v18-19

It does not say that the plant dies....but that all the other things of life.....make it unfruitful

Luke 8:14-15 puts it like this.....

*The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear,
but as they go on their way they are choked by life's worries,
riches and pleasures, and they do not mature.*

It is not bad things that stop them growing.....

Just that they allow this life to have first place.....**How sad** this must make Jesus

The contrasting group bear fruit for their Lord and by His power at work in them

Some 30.....60.....some 100.....**But** the differing amounts are not import

For its God who brings growth.....

The important thing is that being what God wants...in His Kingdom....And He is blessing with fruit

Luke 8:15 says : *But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by perseverance produce a crop.*

For me this is the constant challenge.....

To strive always to be in the group that has a heart for Jesus like

To not just hear His word each day....But to seek to retain it....

And by perseverance produce fruit that lasts.....be it in me.....Or by God's grace in others

Conscious.....That He is not as concerned...size of the harvest....But the heart of the worker