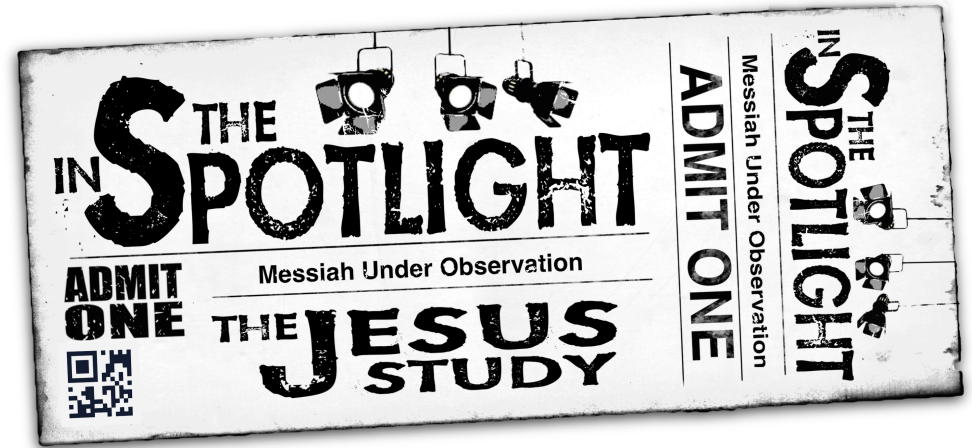


FURTHER STUDY:

- a. Matthew 13: 1-23
- b. Luke 8: 4-15
- c. "Beautiful Outlaw" by John Eldridge
- d. "The Jesus I Never Knew" Philip Yancy



LESSON 8

SEED SECRETS

Scriptures: Mark 4: 1-34

Focus Scripture: Mark 4:11-12, 23-24

*"He replied, "You are permitted to understand the mysteries about the Kingdom of God. But I am using these stories to conceal it from outsiders, so that the Scriptures might be fulfilled: 'They see what I do, but they don't perceive its meaning. They hear my words, but they don't understand. So turn and be *healed.'" (*Isaiah 6:10)*

"Anyone who is willing to hear should listen and understand! And be sure to pay attention to what you hear. For the measure you give, will be the measure you get."

Food for Thought: Food for Thought: Consider some of the common laws of nature that rule our world, i.e. the law of gravity. What other forces can you identify that rule our physical existence?

Vocabulary Definitions:

PARABLE: A parable is a succinct, didactic story, in prose or verse, that illustrates one or more instructive lessons or principles.

KINGDOM OF GOD: an alternate parallel universe where God is the all-sufficient Giver of Life and Love. Another realm which is ordered by the Force (power) of Love. A kingdom free from the law of gravity, the law of time and space, the law of death and taxes, Maslow's hierarchy of needs, and all of the forces of our physical world.

Brief Historical and/or Cultural Context:

Everything is growing! The religious leaders are growing more afraid Jesus. The crowds are growing in number. The disciples are growing in faith. The Kingdom of God is about to grow, too. Jesus changes his teaching to parables, a commonly used in Judaism. Parables have the dual purpose of hiding truth and revealing truth. The heart of the hearer is the key in understanding the truths in a parable. Jesus is also beginning to separate people into insiders or outsiders. Mark is trying to encourage his reader to continue to seek God's kingdom, as it will create a heart for knowing God. Mark chooses to use three parables in this chapter, and all three are about seeds being sown. (Not pearls before swine!) He is equating "bearing fruit in the kingdom" to "growing in numbers (and/or faith) in the kingdom." Mark's chapter on parables of growing in faith, and understanding, ends with a story of a storm on the sea, and Jesus' exasperated response, "Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?" ...and this scares the bejeezus out of them.

SETTING THE STAGE: Read Mark 4: 1-2, 10-12, 33; *(Luke 6:17-20 Jesus sees the crowds)

- What details are found in these verses?
- What details can be inferred?
- What is Jesus' reason for teaching publicly with parables, and explaining only to his followers?
- Who are the insiders and who are the outsiders?*

Read Isaiah 6:9-10; Matthew 13:16; John 12:40; Acts 28:27

- What is being said about perceiving and understanding vs. seeing and hearing?
- How might parables be likened to fishing? (*casting out the line...*)

READING THE SCRIPT: Read Mark 4: 2-9, 14-32

- These parables are each about seed being sown.
- What is the "word" being sown? (*hint: what is the Gospel?*)
- What makes you wonder in the first parable and its explanation?
- What is Jesus saying about the mystery of the kingdom in the proverb, (v 22) and what does he mean by "measure?"
- Where's the karma? (v 24-25)
- In the second and third parables, what two seed principles is he attributing to the kingdom of God.

Read Mark 4:35-41

- Close your eyes and let your imagination picture this scene.
- What emotions could you read into his response to the weather?
- What endears you to Jesus in this passage

WRITING THE REVIEW:

- Where do I fit in this passage? With whom do I most identify?
- How does one move from seeing and hearing, to perceiving and understanding?
- Do I have ears to hear what Jesus is saying?