

IF YOU WANT TO LEARN MORE:

Scriptures (Parallel Gospel Accounts)

Matthew 13:1-23

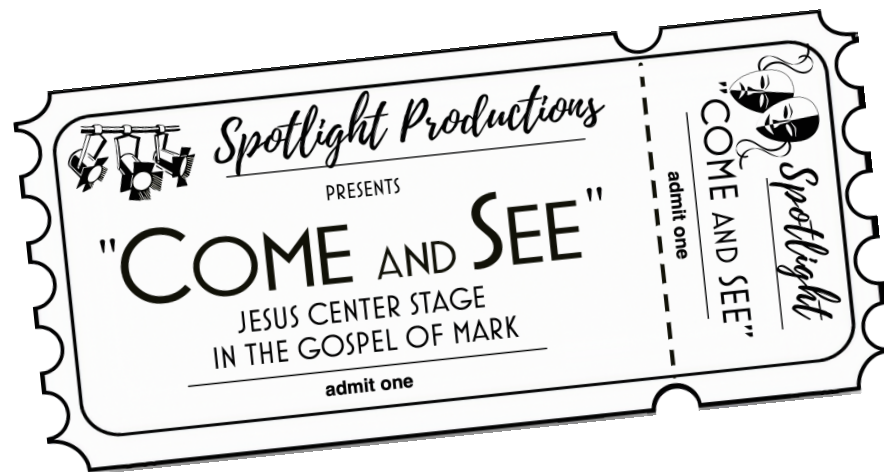
Luke 8:4-10

Next Week:

"Be Not Afraid"

Scriptures:

Mark 4:35-6:5



LESSON #4

"Ears to Hear" -or- "Hide & Seek"

[1] Green, Joel B., Scot McKnight, and I. Howard Marshall, eds. Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992. p. 591-592

[2] Robert Farrar Capon, The Parables of the Kingdom (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991), ebook location: 808

[3] *ibid.* location: 828

[4] *ibid.* location: 844

©2026, Julie Zdenek, "Come and See: Spotlight on Jesus in the Gospel of Mark," Luther Seminary Capstone Project

Scriptures:

Mark 4:1-41

Focus Scripture: Mark 4:12

*"they may indeed look but not perceive,
and may indeed hear but not understand; so that they
may not turn again and be forgiven."*

Some Review – PREPARATION: With our first three lessons we were made aware of preparations prior to Jesus' three-year ministry in Palestine.

1. Recall preparations of (a) the world order, (b) the Jewish people, and (c) Jesus (Mark 1:1-13).

Up until Mark's fourth chapter we have yet to hear Jesus teach. In chapters 1 - 3, Mark reveals Jesus' actions, not his words.

2. How might Jesus' actions reveal his intention to plunder the Devil's kingdom?
3. What do Jesus' actions teach us about God's Kingdom?

Vocabulary Definitions:

Parable: Parables are short narratives with layered meaning. They were the teaching method Jesus chose most frequently to explain the Kingdom of God and to show the character of God. [...] many parables convey more than one truth. Parables tend to be brief and symmetrical. They typically omit unnecessary descriptions and frequently leave motives unexplained and implied questions unanswered.[1] 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.

Brief Historical and/or Cultural Context:

Except for a few prehistoric and ancient Bible stories, for the most part God has been hidden in the world and in the scriptures. God's actions are revealed after they have occurred. Knowledge of God's activity in the world requires seeking, listening, and turning toward God.

Jeremiah 29 – "If you seek me with all your heart, I will let you find me."

Isaiah 6:9-10 – "Keep listening, but do not comprehend; keep looking but do not understand. Make the mind of this people dull, and stop their ears, and shut their eyes, so that they may not look with their eyes and listen with their ears and comprehend with their minds and turn and be healed." (descriptive, not prescriptive)

Jesus, in Matthew 7 – "Ask and it will be given, seek and you shall find, knock and the door will be opened for you."

Everything is growing! The religious leaders are growing more afraid Jesus. The crowds are growing in number. The "twelve" are growing in faith. The Kingdom of God is about to grow, too. Mark begins Jesus' teaching ministry with several parables. All four gospels AND the book of Acts recite or refer to the above Isaiah 6 passage as examples of how the hidden mysteries of God's Kingdom require active attention, and the inattention of most humans. The four parables in today's lesson will give Jesus' insight to the Kingdom of God and how it operates on earth (as it does in heaven).

SCENE I: Mark 4:1-20

THE STAGE:

1. YOU ARE THERE. Who is with you? What are you experiencing?

THE SCRIPT: Read also Mark 4:26-34

2. Let's let Jesus interpret the parables for us.
 - a. What is the seed? Where is it spread?
 - b. Does it do what it is designed to do? (*germinate & grow*)
 - c. Do these seed parables say anything about how the seed produces fruit?
 - d. What prevents the seed from producing fruit?
 - e. What impairs or propels the kingdom's fruits?

“ *The idea that the Good News of the kingdom is proclaimed in a hostile environment is written all over the New Testament. Whether we look at the demons who recognize Jesus or at the religious establishment that refuses to, it is quite plain that antagonism is every bit as much the soil of the Word as is acceptance.* [2]

Those on the good ground, he says, are those who simply hear the Word, accept it, and bear fruit: some thirty-, some sixty-, and some a hundredfold. It's not that they do anything, you see; rather, it's that they don't do things that get in the Word's way. It's the Word, and the Word alone, that does all the rest. [3]

The whole purpose of the coming of the Word into the world is to produce people in whom the power of the kingdom will bear fruit. [...] The biggest difference made by responses to the Word is the difference they make to us, for us, and in us. They [our responses] decide not whether the Word will achieve God's purposes but whether we will enjoy God's achievement-or find ourselves in opposition to it. [4]

”

THE SCRIPT: Read Mark 4:21-25

1. Note: In view of the seed parables, what do you glean from the proverbs of the lamp?
2. Note: Karma

THE REVIEWS:

9. What impresses you about Jesus' character in today's lesson?
10. What makes you wonder in these passages?

