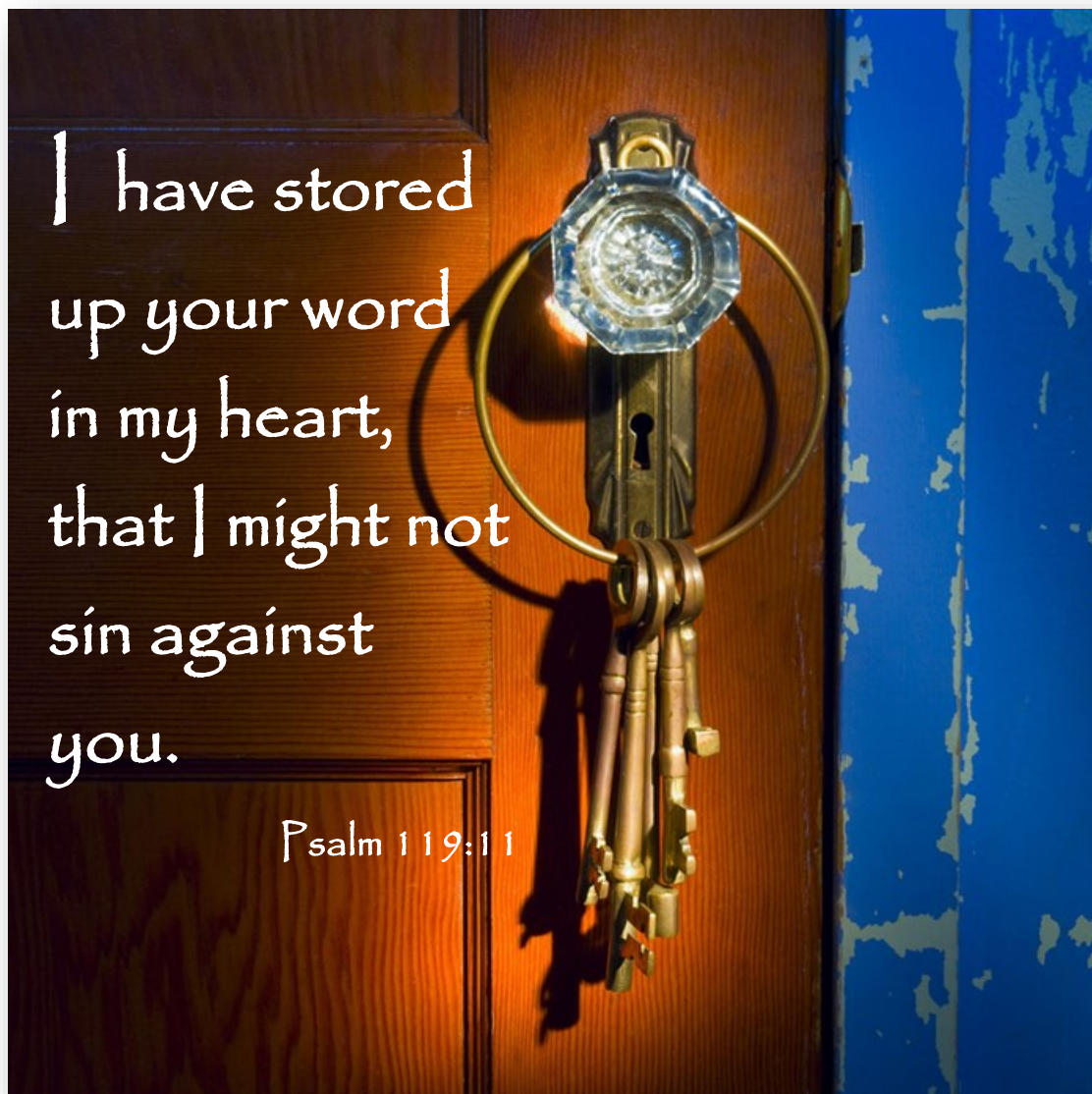
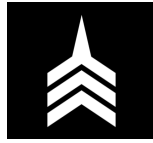


# UNLOCKING THE WORD



THE GOSPEL OF MARK STUDY GUIDE

Chapter 4



## CHAPTER 4

### WEEK 1

Chapter 4:1-20

Soil Survey

### WEEK 2

Ch 4:1-20

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## A MEANS OF STUDY

THE FOLLOWING IS A BRIEF STUDY OVERVIEW TO HELP YOU STUDY SCRIPTURE. ALTHOUGH NOT EXHAUSTIVE, IT IS MEANT TO GUIDE YOU INTO KNOWING GOD'S WORD MORE DEEPLY.

When the plain sense of scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense; therefore, take every word at its primary, usual, ordinary, literal meaning unless the facts of the immediate context studied in the light of the related passages pertaining to fundamental truths indicate otherwise. Dr. David L Cooper (1886-1965)

*The very first task of Bible study is to observe, not to interpret or apply.* The author's original intent is the main key to Bible interpretation. Just as God had a very specific reason for choosing each author, every author has purpose in what they write, seek this purpose. Example John 20:31 Try not to look at commentaries of a passage until you have taken the time to observe scripture on your own.

Consider that all of scripture is a love letter to us, and that God is not trying to hide what he has revealed in his written word. If able, buy a Bible with no helps or references and mark it up with your own notes. Above all, do not rely on one commentator or teacher. Most of us have not spent the time that these gifted individuals have invested in study, but that does not make them infallible.

The reason for a disciplined approach to Bible study is that if you know how you are studying, you can look back and see how you came to the conclusions that you did. A method allows you to evaluate (or reevaluate) your interpretation.

**Basic Steps** (not exhaustive)

**OBSERVATION:** Look for words or phrases that are repeated often. Attempt to break down passages according to the main ideas. (Remember English 101!) Make notes and charts of your observations. Resist the temptation to jump to interpretation or application before you have completed the observation phase. This is a fun stage in Bible study that will make you appreciate how God inspired the authors. See if you can determine the thought process the author is using, see the flow and transitions from one thought to the next. Look at key connective words like but, and, or, therefore, now, then.

**Who...** List the people mentioned? Look into what has happened to this person and if they are mentioned elsewhere.

**What...** has happened to cause the writer to write? What events have happened and how are they related to what is being written.? What cultural events and customs are in the passage that need to be understood that may be different from ours? God works with all cultures, throughout time. People are people after all, yet we do not all view things in the same way. Seek to understand how the intended readers would understand what the writer was saying to them.

**Why...** does the author use a word quite often? If he uses a word that is different, but similar to often repeated words, ask yourself why he does this. Why does he address certain people and not others?

## A MEANS OF STUDY CONTINUED

**When...** is the text thought to have been written? When the author is writing, what was happening around the area?

**Where...** look at locations, and the historical information about these locations.

**How...** did things happen? How did the people in the Bible arrive where they are? How did God move in their lives to shape their life?

Word Studies. Many scholars have spent a lot of time doing this work, and they are valuable. These are of much help in understanding what the author is saying.

**INTERPRETATION:** There is only one interpretation, but many applications. God inspired the authors to write exactly what he intended, so therefore there can be only one interpretation. You have heard it said that there are so many interpretations, but this is not true. What they mean is that there are many ways to apply the scripture to life. This does not mean that you or I have arrived at that interpretation, but just as His Word will not return unto him void, it also has an intended purpose.

**APPLICATION:** First see the application the original readers would have probably applied to their lives. In that context apply similar application based on our current lives. Remember we should not try to fit the Bible into our culture, but rather fit our culture, our lives into what our God is saying to us thru His Word.

### **RESOURCES:**

#### ***Books on Bible Study***

Independent Bible Study. By Irving L. Jensen ISBN-13: 978-0802439819

Methodical Bible Study by Robert A. Traina ISBN-10: 9780310246022

Hermeneutics: Principles and Processes of Biblical Interpretation

#### ***Phone Apps***

Bible Dictionary - an easy app to use, not too exhaustive like Strong's.

Bible Gateway

Bible Hub - Different Bibles, commentaries, sermons, Interlinear

Bible Map - search a passage for locations, and it shows you where it is on a map

Bible Study - from Grace Community they have it in Chinese as well

BLB - Blue Letter Bible

Logos Bible - (Faithlife) Very handy, has courses you can take, and a store as well.

Text comparison, audio, bible word study, and much more.

Moody Radio - Listen live to broadcasts.

Scofield Study Bible - has quizzes, reading plan, quotes etc.

Strong's Concordance

John MacArthur Study Bible - This is free, but they have resources you can buy.

Tecarta Bible - a ton of different Versions...however you must pay for them

THE GOSPEL OF MARK  
JESUS CHRIST SERVANT AND KING  
A STUDY OF MARK 4  
STUDY ONE

SOIL SURVEY

MARK 4:1-20

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ARE YOU LISTENING? ARE YOU PAYING ATTENTION? THIS FIRST PARABLE IS THE KEY TO ALL THE OTHERS. THIS PARABLE HAS TO DO WITH HEART CONDITION OF EACH HEARER, YOUR HEART.

—PASTOR DALE

When Mark writes he frequently states that “Jesus taught,” but then gives very little content of Jesus’ teaching. When he does it is in short pithy statements. The two exceptions are chapters four and thirteen. **Mark chapter four is all about insights into the kingdom of God in the teaching style of parables.**

**The word “parable” appears forty-eight times in the Synoptic Gospels and twice in Hebrews and means that which is placed beside, presumably for the purpose of comparison.** The parables of Jesus relate to the Hebrew word *mashal* from the Old Testament which has a variety of meanings: *comparison, proverb, allegory, riddle, fable, oracle, ethical maxim, wisdom saying, byword, taunt, type, mystery, aphorism, simile or metaphor, similitude*, etc. Therefore, you should not expect all of the parables of Jesus to represent the same oral or literary form. The thought, terms and ideas must be kept inside each parable.

Additionally, referring occasionally to a proverb (Mark 3:23–26; Luke 4:23; 6:39 [cf. Matt 15:14–15]), a metaphor (Mark 7:14–17; Luke 5:36–38 [cf. Mark 2:21–22; Matt 9:16–17]), and a similitude (Matt 13:33; Mark 4:26–29 [cf. v. 34]; 4:30–32; 13:28–29 [“lesson,” NIV]; Luke 15:3–7, 8–10), **the predominant use is to refer to a story from nature or human life to illustrate spiritual truth.**

Jesus, once again, was teaching from a boat due to the large crowds that have gathered. His teaching in parables was designed to sift wheat from chaff of those listening. Most teachers would have been enthralled with large crowds for the sake of a large crowd and what it does to the ego, but not Jesus. He knew the human heart (John 2:25) and He was more focused on teaching the truth about the kingdom, of spiritual intelligence, not about bringing in large crowds.

There is a progression to spiritual intelligence and insight (Mark 4:25) since understanding the meaning of a parable will lead to more insight. The opposite is also true, as the failure to understand will lead the hearer into a deeper fog and mystification. **We either hear or we don’t** and the proof of hearing is the illumination from the Holy Spirit who alone opens our spiritual eyes that are blinded by our sin nature to the truth of God. **This parable gives insight to how people respond to the Gospel and why.**

### **PREPARATION IN PRAYER**

Stop and pause before you begin by asking the Holy Spirit to reveal the truths of God's Word to you, and to quiet your mind to be focused on Him.

Heavenly Father, Let me hear the words you've spoken from your word. I want to hear what you have to say to me. You have given me life and breath, you sustain me by your mighty power. You alone are worthy of all my worship, attention and devotion. Let the noise of life fade away as seek I you. Give me ears to hear and a heart to obey. Amen.

### **KEYS TO NOTICE**

1. Hearing involves more than the ears but is an act of the will, therefore real hearing involves being obedient, taking action.
2. The clear teaching of what the kingdom of God is like, how people respond to it and why.
3. Disciples are to examine their own lives then conform to the standard found in the parables.
4. The kingdom of God is a secret or mystery that must be revealed by God to man.

### **OBSERVATIONS:**

Take your time and thoughtfully read Mark 4:1-20, Matthew 13:1-15 and Luke 8:4-10. Record your observations below, the characters, places mentioned, attitudes or emotions and questions you have.

SOIL SURVEY  
MARK 4:1-20

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Give a description of what each parable element represents.

Parable Elements	Element Description
Seed	
Sower	
Path	
Rocky Ground	
Thorns	
Good Soil	

Jesus had been teaching plainly for roughly 18 months about the kingdom. This is the first time Jesus begins to teach in parables, why? (4:10-12 & Isaiah 6:9-10)

Does Jesus really not want them to be forgiven? (2 Peter 3:9) Then what is Jesus really declaring to those who clearly heard him teach about the kingdom but rejected him? (Mark 3:22-26, Matthew 25:31-46)

SOIL SURVEY  
MARK 4: 1-20

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Who is on the outside of the kingdom and therefore faces judgement? (1 Corinthians 5:12-13, Colossians 4:5, 1 Thessalonians 4:12, 1 Timothy 3:7)

Unless you have a hearing deficit we all have ears to hear. What type of hearing is Jesus referring to in vs 9?

What are the three threats to the seed that is sown? Vs 13, 17, 19

In what ways does Satan come so that the gospel is just outright rejected? In what areas of culture do you see this?

What is the expectation of those who think being in the kingdom should be free of trouble?

What is it about the cares of the world, deceitfulness of riches, and desires for things that compete with the kingdom of God?



SOIL SURVEY  
MARK 4:1-20

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When the gospel is heard but not understood does that mean they are not responsible?  
(Romans 1:18-25)

In vs 14-20 Jesus is talking about four different types of people as he describes different soils. But could you also see that these soils could represent different seasons of your life? Or areas where you have not conformed to the Word to have the mind of Christ? For example, how willing are you to accept God's word in an area of life such as money, marriage, family, roles of men and women, forgiveness, submission, church authority, government authority, and so on. Take time to write down those areas that you struggle with conforming to the word of God. What is it about those that make it difficult to conform?

Write any other questions or observation you have.

SOIL SURVEY

MARK 4: 1-20

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**INTERPRETATIONS:**

Only good soil produces the desired fruit. What do you believe it takes to prepare the heart to receive the word of God?

Christian growth is a process involving time and spiritual nurture. Where do you see yourself in that process? What are you doing to grow your spiritual life to maturity? What do you understand the means of growth are?

Christians sow the seeds of the gospel, but God is responsible for the growth. How should this allow the Christian to live this out? (Philippians 3:12-14) How should this allow us to live knowing are responsibility is on God for growth?

**APPLICATION: GOD'S WILL TODAY**

**Obedience is the point.** The act of hearing is intricately connected with action, or bearing much fruit. Mark portrays Jesus humbly submitting to the will of God. Because Jesus is our Lord, Savior and teacher, we out of reverence owe him the same.

Because God is responsible for growth how can you be bold in your testimony and witness for Christ and His gospel?

How can you examine your root system and have a discerning eye upon yourself first so that you produce the fruit God desires in your life?

How can you begin to or continue to cultivate a time of listening to God and feeding yourself through His word and prayer?

What soil best describes your own spiritual condition? Why is that? What do you think needs to change?

**CLOSING PRAYER:**

Write down your prayer of change below:

THE GOSPEL OF MARK  
JESUS CHRIST SERVANT AND KING  
A STUDY OF MARK 4  
STUDY TWO

SOIL CHARACTERISTICS OF PATHS AND ROCKS

MARK 4: 1-20

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**JESUS PARABLES WERE MEANT TO DO TWO TASKS. EITHER TO REVEAL A SPIRITUAL TRUTH FOR THE BELIEVER OR CONCEAL THAT TRUTH FOR THE UNBELIEVER. ONE IS THE WORK OF GRACE THE OTHER JUDGEMENT.**

**—PASTOR DALE**

Jesus description of soils is something an agrarian culture would have instinctively known and understood. The connection Jesus is making is that the human heart is like a type of soil. The danger is that it's possible to think that if I am or know someone who is one of the less favorable soils there is nothing to do. In other words, it's not possible for a change in soils or a change of the heart. What must be remembered is who you are in the parable, or where you are. Another danger is to have the attitude of "wasting seed"... only casting it where it will grow.

As a Christian, you presumably are in good soil and therefore bearing fruit, but we must finish the growth process. Once the fruit is harvested it can then be used to re-seed for the next season. Another words, **as a Christian you become a "sower of seeds" for future growth or harvest.** This process continues from generation to generation until Christ's return. We as Christian's become gardeners but it is God who allows for or causes growth.

How many times or seasons do you cast the seed of the word in someone's life before it bears fruit? The answer dear Christian is every season God is giving you until He calls you home. Until then we sow the seed of the gospel. God is the one who changes the heart making it "good soil".

The next two studies are focused on the characteristics of the soil. We can understand what a path is, but what are the characteristics of that in the life of a person? So we'll take a look at each soil and look for ways to engage with each. And also stave off the danger and battle in our own heart to not write them off as it were or to try not to "waste" seed where we think we know it won't grow. **We dare not be so presumptuous but stay focused with the task given and sow seeds liberally in love.**

### **PREPARATION IN PRAYER**

Stop and pause before you begin by asking the Holy Spirit to reveal the truths of God's Word to you, and to quiet your mind to be focused on Him.

Heavenly Father, Let me hear the words you've spoken from your word. I want to hear what you have to say to me. You have given me life and breath, you sustain me by your mighty power. You alone are worthy of all my worship, attention and devotion. Let the noise of life fade away as seek I you. Give me ears to hear and a heart to obey. Amen.

### **KEYS TO NOTICE**

1. **All about the kingdom of God.** Jesus, from the very beginning made it clear that he was ushering in a completely different kind of kingdom. This kingdom is the rule of God on the heart by faith in Jesus Christ. That means, in part, there is no geographical location to it. There is no pomp and circumstance associated with the king but this kingdom came softly, quietly, missed by all but a select few. This kingdom was about serving in humility, not being served through power.

### **OBSERVATIONS:**

Take your time and thoughtfully read Mark 4:1-20, Matthew 13:1-15 and Luke 8:4-10. Record any additional observations below that the Spirit has given you that you may have missed from last weeks study.

PATHS AND ROCKS  
MARK 4: 1-20

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**THE PATH:** There were typically no fences or walls around a field in ancient times but a field border would be a path for travel from place to place, town to town. These paths would have been about three feet wide and used by everyone. Today, in our rural community those "path's" are laid out every mile.

The path is uncultivated, dry dirt but hard as pavement, baked by the sun. When Jesus makes the connection that this is someone's heart, he is describing a real person. Who are those in our culture that represent the heart of "the path?" Those that are totally closed to hearing the word or wanting anything to do with God?

Look at Genesis 4:3-7 for attitudes of a person with a heart like a path.  
The word of the Lord clearly came to Cain because they were bringing offerings to Him.

What is Cain's overall attitude or emotion vs 5?

Who was Cain really angry with and why?

Since Cain was angry with God but has no way to actively harm Him, who becomes the target of his anger? Why? (1 John 3:12, Jude 11)

What is Cain unwilling to do to be accepted?

PATHS AND ROCKS

MARK 4: 1-20

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What is the one key according to Proverbs 28:14 that will soften a hard heart?

What does it mean to fear God?

The results of a hard heart are calamity. In Jesus parable what is the calamity that comes to those who's heart is like a path?

What characteristics or attitudes would you attribute to one who has the heart like the path?

PATHS AND ROCKS  
MARK 4:1-20

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**THE ROCKS:** When referring to rocky soil Jesus is not talking about a field full of rocks. No farmer leaves those in the field, he removes them. This reference is to that of bedrock which is just far enough below the plow that it goes undetected... that is until you try to plant on top of it. The seed sown in shallow soil will grow quickly, but it only grows so far before it is stunted because it's roots hit the bedrock. Whatever water and nutrients are there get used up quickly so when the heat of the day comes the roots are too shallow to sustain the plant.

Vs 17. How would you describe a person who has no root? What insight does the following Scripture give? (Isaiah 57:20, James 1:6)

Do you think that a person of rocky soil either wants or believes following Christ should be easy? Without tribulation or persecution? Why or why not? How is that possible to think this knowing what John 15:20, Acts 14:22 says?

Read Acts 15:36-41. Do you think Paul thought of Mark as someone who could not endure and yet he wrote one of the gospels?

Vs. 17. What must be anticipated as a follower of Christ? How far and to what end should you be prepared to go?

The rocky soil represents the lack of endurance, perseverance or fortitude. What does this demonstrate or prove that is missing or certainly lacking in a persons life?



PATHS AND ROCKS

MARK 4: 1-20

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**INTERPRETATIONS:**

Satan is an active enemy removing the word of God that can save. What ways do you see this happen in life?

There is a cost in following Christ. Emotional, superficial response to the gospel, not counting or understanding the cost leads to false converts.

Conforming your mind to the word of God not the world. Read Romans 12:1-3. When faith is tested as a result from one's association with God's word you will think differently and in contrast to the world. In what areas do you see those lines in your own life and as a society?

PATHS AND ROCKS

MARK 4: 1-20

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**APPLICATION: GOD'S WILL TODAY**

How can you be better prepared to endure the hardship that may come in following the word of God in your life?

How can you avoid what is being described in Matthew 24:12?

How will you continue to liberally cast the seed of the gospel where you live, work, and play without prejudging the soil?

**CLOSING PRAYER:**

Ask the Lord for opportunities for gospel conversations and a heart to sow the gospel seeds liberally in your life. Write down a name of someone you know and begin praying that their heart would be receptive to that conversation.

THE GOSPEL OF MARK  
JESUS CHRIST SERVANT AND KING  
A STUDY OF MARK 4  
STUDY THREE

SOIL CHARACTERISTICS OF THORNS AND GOOD SOIL

MARK 4:1-20

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“IF EVER THERE WERE A CHARACTERISTIC THAT DESCRIBES OUR CURRENT CULTURE IT IS THAT OF THORNS. ANXIOUS ABOUT LIFE, A HUNGER FOR MORE MONEY, AND AN INSATIABLE DESIRE FOR MORE STUFF TO NUMB THE PAIN.”

—PASTOR DALE

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**PREPARATION IN PRAYER**

Stop and pause before you begin by asking the Holy Spirit to reveal the truths of God’s Word to you, and to quiet your mind to be focused on Him.

Heavenly Father, Let me hear the words you’ve spoken from your word. I want to hear what you have to say to me. You have given me life and breath, you sustain me by your mighty power. You alone are worthy of all my worship, attention and devotion. Let the noise of life fade away as seek I you. Give me ears to hear and a heart to obey. Amen.

**KEYS TO NOTICE**

1. *This parable explains that it is God’s plan to allow individuals to actualize their disposition upon hearing the Word.* Resistance to Jesus is described not in the usual terms of a military action, but a scattering seeds whereby each soil shows their true colors. This is how God’s kingdom advances. God sends out the word, and rejection of it brings judgement. However, we must also recognize the good soil cannot boast in it’s response, see Romans 3:12, but God’s salvation is a gift given, see Ephesians 2:8.

**OBSERVATIONS:**

Take your time and thoughtfully read Mark 4:1-20, Matthew 13:1-15 and Luke 8:4-10. Record any further observations that you've discovered below that the Spirit has given you from that you may have missed from last weeks study.

THORNS AND GOOD SOIL  
MARK 4: 1-20

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**THE THORNS:** Bull Thistles are one of the most sneaky types of weeds, especially when located in your yard. They can be hard to see unlike a rose bush that draws you in with its beauty, but you are also aware of what lingers on the stems. Bull thistles lay quiet and unassuming in the grass until you plant your bare foot on one as you run across the yard.

You wonder if Jesus' audience would have gone back to God's pronouncement of the curse on Adam, Genesis 3:17-18. Thorns are natural to the soil since the fall and they seemingly grow without any effort as if they just happen naturally. That of course describes sinful man and the nature of who he is. But it also describes God's justice in the fact that He never goes beyond justice to seek revenge. He is a God of great patience and longsuffering making His grace exotic.

What are the nature of weeds a.k.a. thorns? How does our sin within us claim a hold on us not willing to give up its place without a fight?

What are the three varieties of thorns Jesus describes verse 19? Use Scripture to help underscore each description.

- A. The care of the world. Ex. Matthew 6:21.
- B.
- C.

Do you think this is an exhaustive list? Why or why not?

THORNS AND GOOD SOIL  
MARK 4: 1-20

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What is it about these that choke out the seed (Word) that is sown?

How can you identify when this is happening in your own life?

*How convicted are you of sin?* You know the lengths at which many go to eradicate weeds and thorns in a yard or garden. Before chemicals, a deep plowing of the soil, sometimes fire was used. Consider the severe conviction of sin the same lengths God will go to eradicate sin in your life. How have you seen the deep sense of sin and the directness of the word of God to rid you of sin in your life?

What do thorns do to stunt and finally choke out the desired plants? How does verse 19 description steal the nourishment needed for the seed to grow? Here are a few Scriptures to consider: Matthew 6:24; Numbers 33:55; Joshua 23:13; 2 Samuel 23:6-7; Proverbs 22:5; Ezekiel 2:6

*"I would put it to you, my dear hearer, have you been fruitful? Have you been fruitful with your wealth? Have you been fruitful with our talent? Have you been fruitful with your time? What are you doing for Jesus now? Salvation is not by doings, you are saved by grace; but if you are so saved, prove it by your devoted lives. Consecrate yourself anew this day wholly to your Master's service. You are not your own, but bought with a price; and if you would not be like these thorn-choked seeds, live while you live, will all-consuming zeal."*

- Charles H. Spurgeon -

THORNS AND GOOD SOIL  
MARK 4: 1-20

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**THE SOIL:** Soil is the foundation to anything that grows, therefore soil preparation is paramount to producing a good crop. Good soil will produce year after year if proper attention is paid to it. Replenishing soil is vital to production; nutrients that get used up must be put back. Good soil is pliable, tillable, willing to receive the necessary application of plow, clearing of rocks and weeds, adding additional nutrients and amendments to what is lacking so that it can support the plant and receive a harvest. There are a variety of good soils that will produce a crop sown into them. Jesus points this out in this parable that all soil is not the same, not even the good soil. For each produces but they produce at different rates, but all are good.

When thinking of spiritual growth and flourishing, what is the structure of the good soil that makes it good for producing?

What three characteristics are in verse 20 that define what good soil is made up of?

Soil Production: Today 50 bushel of wheat per acre would be good but multiply that by 30, 60, 100. Now if you heard that kind of production number what would you be thinking? What does this say about the nature of who is behind such an abundance?

Read 1 Corinthians 3:5-9. What emphasis does Paul place on the sower/gardener? What two actions does God take to accomplish growth in vs 5, 6? What perspective does this give you knowing God has assigned you a certain amount of people to share the gospel with?

Read Matthew 25:17-28. Each servant was assigned a portion. What were the results?

**INTERPRETATIONS:**

When you come to Christ for salvation you move from loving self, to loving God, you have to let go of the world. What "worries of the world", are the current distractions of our age we live in? Where in your mind then is the battle being waged in your life but also in the life of the church?

A holy life, one in submission to the Word of God, is the chief sign of grace. We are all sinful. We all fail. However, what will still happen in the life of every true believer? Vs 8.

The results of God's kingdom are supernatural. What is the foregone conclusion of every believers life? See Ephesians 2:10.



THORNS AND GOOD SOIL  
MARK 4:1-20

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**APPLICATION: GOD'S WILL TODAY**

Those lost deep in the thorns of life are like Lot's wife, Genesis 19:26. What can you do to avoid a superficial connection to Jesus?

Knowing that your heavenly Father is going to make you fruitful to build his Kingdom, how does this knowledge help you?

When you know that some in the kingdom are going to be more or less fruitful by design than you, what attitude should this give you and why?

How can you avoid the comparison game with other believers? Where in the life of our acts of service should our focus be placed? See Matthew 12

**CLOSING PRAYER:**

Lord, let me be ever mindful that you are working in me to bear much fruit. Help me keep my eyes on you and to always and encourage others along the way as you bring them into my life. Give me the strength to carry out the work you have prepared for me to do during each season of my life. Humble me at all times so that I can be confident in pleasing you. Amen.

THE GOSPEL OF MARK  
JESUS CHRIST SERVANT AND KING  
A STUDY OF MARK 4  
STUDY FOUR

YOU HEAR, BUT ARE YOU LISTENING?

MARK 4:21-34

“IF ALL I HAD TO DO WHEN GROWING UP WAS TO HEAR WITH MY EARS, I’D BE THE WISEST, SMARTEST, MOST HONORABLE, AND MOST LOVABLE OF ALL MY SIBLINGS AND A BLESSING TO MY PARENTS. I DON’T THINK THAT’S HOW THEY REMEMBER ME GROWING UP.”

—PASTOR DALE

**PREPARATION IN PRAYER**

Stop and pause before you begin by asking the Holy Spirit to reveal the truths of God’s Word to you, and to quiet your mind to be focused on Him.

Heavenly Father, Let me hear the words you’ve spoken from your word. I want to hear what you have to say to me. You have given me life and breath, you sustain me by your mighty power. You alone are worthy of all my worship, attention and devotion. Let the noise of life fade away as I seek you. Give me ears to hear and a heart to obey. Amen.

**KEYS TO NOTICE**

1. *The distinguishing mark of true believers in Christ is that they hear, believe, and obey the Word of truth.* Jesus is the good Shepherd and His sheep hear His voice, John 10. Jesus has changed His ministry tactic from the clear public teaching of the kingdom of God, substantiated with undeniable power of miracles to that of the hidden meanings of parables about the kingdom. Those who hear are redeemed, those who don’t stand in judgement.

YOU HEAR, BUT ARE YOU LISTENING?  
MARK 4:21-34

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**OBSERVATIONS:**

Take your time and thoughtfully read Mark 4:21-34, Luke 8:16, Matthew 13 which are parallel passages.

Look at vs 21, 24. Who is the “them” being referred to? See vs 10.

Written in Greek, Mark uses a definite article before the word “lamp”, so it reads “the lamp”. Who then is “the lamp”?

Read John 8:12, 9:5 and Matthew 5:14. What is the correlation with Mark 4:22.

The key verses of this section is vs. 24-25. What does it mean to hear?

A “measure” can be positive or negative. What is the measure being used in Mark 3:26? How does this effect ones “hearing”?

What was the measure being used by the religious leaders?

**OBSERVATIONS CONT.:**

The Old Testament law the religious leaders were using was meant to point to Jesus who was the fulfillment of the law. What was it that they thought the law would do for them that they didn't think Jesus could do?

Mark 4:24-25 can be outlined with four characteristics of true hearing. Obedience, Wisdom, Expectancy, Humility.

1. What is the command Jesus gives? What is the believers response to His command?
  - A.
  - B.
2. Jesus uses a proverb to describe how we are to hear. Read Proverbs 1:5, 20:23 and Matthew 7:1-5. What is the desired characteristic(s) to measure properly?
3. vs 24-25, Jesus gives a promise. What is being added? James 1:5. What is the believers attitude as they wait patiently for what is being added but not received?
4. Read Proverbs 3:34, James 4:6. What is the attitude of those who oppose the truth?

**INTERPRETATIONS:**

Be a good spiritual listener. What, if anything, prevents you from being a good listener?

There is a time when the light of God is hidden due to unbelief. This is a form of judgement when someone is pasted believing. What is the believers response and attitude toward those who reject Jesus Christ?

Knowing and understanding the Word of God unlocks the truth. The gift of revelation of God is Truth, but with this knowledge also comes conflict with those who deny it. In what ways do you see this in culture?

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**APPLICATION: GOD'S WILL TODAY**

Jesus is the lamp that is brought into the room of your life. How are you letting Him shine or how are you keeping Him hidden?

We take care of what we eat, drink, where we travel and how. In other words, we discriminate. How discriminating are you in knowing and obeying the truth of God's word? What safe guards have you put in place to guard against false thoughts and ideas of that are contrary to the Word of God?

The only human act in sharing the gospel is to sow seeds, wait, and rest. The seed, aka the Good News, is the power of God unto salvation, Romans 1:16. Evaluate your life in light of a Sower. How often to you share your faith? Who have you been sowing the gospel into? What would it take to sow more?

**CLOSING PRAYER:**

Lord, let me be ever mindful that you are working in me to bear much fruit. Grant me the confidence to speak into the culture where I live, work and play with the a Biblical worldview. Give me the words to speak the truth of the gospel with love at all times. Let me rest in those moments knowing I've done as you have asked. I thank you in advance for the harvest you will bring. Amen.

THE GOSPEL OF MARK  
JESUS CHRIST SERVANT AND KING  
A STUDY OF MARK 4  
STUDY FIVE

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

MARK 4:21-34

“THE KINGDOM OF GOD, THE CHURCH, BEGAN WITH A SMALL BAND OF FOLLOWERS BUT HAS GROWN TO FILL THE WORLD JUST LIKE JESUS SAID IT WOULD.”

—PASTOR DALE

**PREPARATION IN PRAYER**

Stop and pause before you begin by asking the Holy Spirit to reveal the truths of God’s Word to you, and to quiet your mind to be focused on Him.

Heavenly Father, Let me hear the words you’ve spoken from your word. I want to hear what you have to say to me. You have given me life and breath, you sustain me by your mighty power. You alone are worthy of all my worship, attention and devotion. Let the noise of life fade away as I seek you. Give me ears to hear and a heart to obey. Amen.

**KEYS TO NOTICE**

1. ***The Gospel of Jesus is The Light.*** Jesus makes this declaration in John 8:12. Light permeates and penetrates darkness, it can’t help itself.
2. ***Believers in Christ sow then rest.*** The only human act in relation to the gospel is sowing and resting. This is the calling of every believer in Christ but God is the one who causes growth. 1 Corinthians 3:6-7
3. ***The Kingdom of God can’t be stopped.*** No longer a seed, the Kingdom is full grown.

**OBSERVATIONS:**

Verse 21-25

Lamps produce light. What is the spiritual light of the gospel meant to reveal? John 3:20, Ephesians 5:13

Why do we typically desire to hide things in our lives?

What is the divine purpose of God doing to the secretive purposes of men? See Matthew 10:26, Luke 12:2, 1 Corinthians 4:5, Romans 2:16.

The mystery of the Gospel was just that until Jesus' arrival. What was it? See Ephesians 3:3-6

What does true hearing produce? Romans 10:17.

What does faith in Jesus Christ give you? Do you deserve it?

What measure or standard is Jesus using that we should also use as followers?  
Matthew 18:32



**OBSERVATIONS:**

**Verse 26-29**

There are at least three actions the man is doing, what are they?

What is God doing? vs 28

The soil or ground represents the hearts or the natural human heart. What is the soil unable to do? Or what is it waiting for?

**Verse 30-34**

Like most ventures, how do they usually begin?

The preaching of the kingdom and the church age began some 2000 years ago and has grown to fill the garden, or all the earth. What kind of confidence does this give you, or should it give you, knowing the church cannot be stopped? Matthew 16:18

**INTERPRETATIONS:**

**The Light of Christ produces holiness for all to see.** The transformation of your life from darkness to light is manifest in your submission to the work of the Holy Spirit in you. The strength of your testimony, the light others see in you, is what is brought out so that others may see and you can give God glory for what He is done in you.

First, how bright is the light of your witness for God? Second, how do you go about sharing the light of Christ in you?

**Rest in God's plan for evangelism.** You are responsible for sowing and harvesting. God is responsible for the growth. There is no pressure on the believer for results; only in doing the work assigned by God. How does this knowledge allow you to rest in what God is doing?

**The Kingdom of God cannot be stopped.** Jesus began His ministry with twelve men in the farthest reaches of the Roman Empire. A small, humble beginning that would one day fill the earth. How does this give you confidence in your own life? Or does it? Why or why not?

What other interpretations do you see?

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE KINGDOM  
MARK 4:21-34

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**APPLICATION: GOD'S WILL TODAY**

What can you do, where can you serve to allow the light of Christ shine brighter in your life where you live, work, and play?

Make a list of those you would like to have gospel conversations with and begin praying for God to do His work in their lives.

The mustard seed equates to faith. (see Matthew 17:20) Do you see the parallel of how your faith in Christ has grown in relation to those you've introduce to Jesus? When you come to the end of your life how big do you hope your "faith tree" has grown to?

What can you do to be better prepared for sowing opportunities? How will you make this a larger part of your life?

What other applications do you see from this study that can be applied to your life?

**CLOSING PRAYER:**

Lord, grant me the words to speak the good news of Jesus Christ, speaking them with love, confidence and courage. Give me a heart for the lost, the compassion and patience I need to sow into their lives. Allow me to be used by you in this heavenly endeavor and see the joy of the fruit of a harvest. Amen.

THE GOSPEL OF MARK  
JESUS CHRIST SERVANT AND KING  
A STUDY OF MARK 4  
STUDY SIX

JESUS CALMS TWO STORMS

MARK 4:35-39

“JESUS HAS THE POWER OVER THE PHYSICAL WORLD WITH THE SUSPENSION OF WEATHER AND OVER THE SPIRITUAL WORLD TO BRING FAITH. BOTH SPEAK TO HIS DEITY, BOTH BRING PEACE TO THE WORLD AND TO THE INDIVIDUAL.”

—PASTOR DALE

**PREPARATION IN PRAYER**

Stop and pause before you begin by asking the Holy Spirit to reveal the truths of God’s Word to you, and to quiet your mind to be focused on Him.

Heavenly Father, Let me hear the words you’ve spoken from your word. I want to hear what you have to say to me. You have given me life and breath, you sustain me by your mighty power. You alone are worthy of all my worship, attention and devotion. Let the noise of life fade away as I seek you. Give me ears to hear and a heart to obey. Amen.

**KEYS TO NOTICE**

1. *The storms of this life are a test of faith.* A test is not for the teacher, but for the student, building confidence and showing whether faith is genuine or not. James 1:1-16
2. *Jesus Christ the Son of God, is God.* The power to suspend weather speaks to Christ’s deity and harkens back to the very creation of the world.
3. *Fear is the opposite of Faith.* Fear and faith are diametrically opposed and cannot co-exist. Jesus was resting, the disciples were in a panic.

JESUS CALMS TWO STORMS  
MARK 4:35-41

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**OBSERVATIONS:**

Jesus has been teaching all day. When you've worked hard in the day, what is your bodies natural desire?

Jesus is truly God and truly man. Why is this necessary and how does this doctrine reveal itself in our text? See Hebrews 4:15.

Do you think Jesus knew the storm was coming as they got in the boat? Why or why not?

Why do you think experienced fisherman were so rattled by this storm? Surely they had weathered storms like this before.

After all the time Jesus spent with the disciples and all they had been taught and seen, why the questions in vs.38?

Does Jesus care? How do you know?

JESUS CALMS TWO STORMS  
MARK 4:35-41

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**OBSERVATIONS:**

What is implied about Jesus that He has the power to calm the storm?

Do you think the disciples truly understood who Jesus was at this point based on their two questions in vs 38, 41?

What were they afraid of happening to them?

What is behind Jesus' question, "Why are you so afraid?"

What other observations do you see?

JESUS CALMS TWO STORMS  
MARK 4:35-41

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**INTERPRETATIONS:**

**Jesus is God, the Son of God.** Jesus once again displays His power over all creation, not only in the physical but also the spiritual. What impact does this have or should this have on the life of every believer?

**Jesus rested practicing what He preached.** Jesus rested. This is not the first time we see this in scripture. What does God do in creation? Why? What is the point of His rest after teaching about the kingdom?

**Faith in Jesus drives out fear.** Without faith in Christ the only thing you are left with is fear. When there is fear in the life of a Christian, who aren't you trusting in and why?

**Faith will be tested.** God's will is to test your faith so you can see it's genuineness, the test is not for Him my friend! This is how James says we can "count it all joy", *not in going through something hard or unwanted in life but in what those tests of faith will do to mature you.* How has your faith been tested?

**Jesus cares.** Like any good parent, tests or discipline will come. The motive of Christ's testing comes from the purity of His eternal love and care for you. How have you responded to faith testing?

JESUS CALMS TWO STORMS

MARK 4:35-41

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**APPLICATION: GOD'S WILL TODAY**

The disciples underestimated who Jesus was. Do you? If so, how?

Jesus has the power to handle the storms in our lives. Who or what have you or do you typically turn to in a storm? Explain.

Read Luke 12:4-7, 11-12, 22-26, 29-31. Being Jesus' friends, vs 4, how are you to walk in faith? And how can you make sure you do?

Fear was just as much an issue then as it is now. Jesus command us not to fear. How do you apply this command to your life and the life of other believers?

**CLOSING PRAYER:**

Lord, grant me the words to speak the good news of Jesus Christ, speaking them with love, confidence and courage. Give me a heart for the lost, the compassion and patience I need. Allow me to be used by you in this heavenly endeavor and see the joy of the fruit of a harvest. Amen.







BELONG. GROW. REACH.