

## Mark 4

The picture of Jesus in a boat on the sea is a representation. The sea is a confluence of rivers; and. Each river serves as a national boundary; so it relates to the unique origins of differing people of all nations. The boat is a representation of the church. The land represents Israel.

**Read Mark 4:1-25:** Jesus taught in parables for several reasons.

1. One reason is that spiritual things are confusing to someone who has no spiritual connection. Common everyday things must be used as a bridge of understanding by comparison.

*Brothers and sisters, I could not address you as people who live by the Spirit but as people who are still worldly—mere infants in Christ. <sup>2</sup> I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. <sup>3</sup> You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere humans? <sup>4</sup> For when one says, “I follow Paul,” and another, “I follow Apollos,” are you not mere human beings? (1 Corinthians 3)*

*<sup>11</sup> Concerning him we have much to say, and it is difficult to explain, since you have become poor listeners. <sup>12</sup> For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the actual words of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. <sup>13</sup> For everyone who partakes only of milk is unacquainted with the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. <sup>14</sup> But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to distinguish between good and evil. (Hebrews 5)*

*<sup>12</sup> If I told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? (John 3:12)*

2. Another reason for the cloaked sayings is for our own protection. God does not want to make us any more accountable for things that we are not likely to act on, than is necessary. This is one reason that the bible seems like gibberish to the sinner.

*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; Fools despise wisdom and instruction. (Proverbs 1:7)*

*<sup>17</sup> If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know about the teaching, whether it is of God, or I am speaking from Myself.(John 7:17)*

*<sup>14</sup> You are My friends if you do what I command you. <sup>15</sup> No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, because all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you. (John 15)*

3. Another reason is to filter his messages in mixed crowds having both friends and enemies. He would not cast his pearls before swine.

*<sup>10</sup> And the disciples came up and said to Him, “Why do You speak to them in parables?” <sup>11</sup> And Jesus answered them, “To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted. <sup>12</sup> For whoever has, to him more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him. <sup>13</sup> Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. <sup>14</sup> And in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, <sup>1</sup>YOU SHALL KEEP ON LISTENING, BUT SHALL NOT UNDERSTAND; AND YOU SHALL KEEP ON LOOKING, BUT SHALL NOT PERCEIVE; <sup>15</sup> FOR THE HEART OF THIS PEOPLE HAS BECOME DULL, WITH THEIR EARS THEY SCARCELY HEAR, AND THEY HAVE CLOSED THEIR EYES, OTHERWISE THEY MIGHT SEE WITH THEIR EYES, HEAR WITH THEIR EARS, UNDERSTAND WITH THEIR HEART, AND RETURN, AND I WOULD HEAL THEM.’ <sup>16</sup> But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear. <sup>17</sup> For truly I say to you that many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it. (Matthew 13)*

The parable of the sower addresses the hearts of men. We are either receptive and accommodating and fertile, or we take a resistant and hard stance against God’s whispers to our soul and our mind. The rocky ground comparison explains why so many people were on the Jesus bandwagon and then they all deserted him. Were they saved or not? We cannot become unsaved once we are saved. It is eternal life, not circumstantial or performance-enhanced life. The actual issue may be that they were groupies or enthusiasts but never saved.

*They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be evident that they all are not of us. (1 John 2:19)*

The birds always represent demonic activity. Many people have wholesome thoughts, but they do not become spiritually transformed. Their notions to make changes and check out God become another procrastinated thing that never makes it off their bucket list.

I have seen many people who had personal issues repent and desire to return to a godly life, to only fall again. Many times it is due to drugs or other vices. The scriptures give us daily strength, not weekly strength. You cannot go strong all day and night and then go back to what you were doing before. We need to be in the word and prayer every day to get back on the yellow brick road. Equally problematic is the business of life that leaves no time for reflection or scriptural meditation.

If we are willing to let God's work take root inside of us it will produce the fruit of the Spirit. We do not have to white knuckle an effort for a good show. It just happens.

When we turn our back and ignore God's pricking of our conscience, we harden and dumb down...until we no longer hear his still small voice.

*Today, if you will hear His voice, <sup>8</sup> Do not harden your hearts as at Meribah, As on the day of Massah in the wilderness, <sup>9</sup> "When your fathers put Me to the test, They tested Me, though they had seen My work. <sup>10</sup> For forty years I was disgusted with that generation, And said they are a people who err in their heart, And they do not know My ways. <sup>11</sup> Therefore I swore in My anger, They certainly shall not enter My rest." (Psalm 95)*

God is revealing everything to those who want to see the ugly truth about ourselves and the beauty of Christ. It is not complimentary. That is why scripture is called a sword. It cuts you deep, and it hurts. But, that is how you cut out spiritual cancers. Either we are like moths and we just fly to the light to get healed. Otherwise, we are like cockroaches that run from the light.

We can moderate or ration our scripture time like a medicine; but that will yield a very limited impact. God throws us all a bone. How we deal with that little bit of light determines what comes next.

**Read Mark 4:26-34:** The word of God carries its own life-giving powers in it. We can't just talk *about* God. We need to *speak God's word*, the true seed. There are phases to spiritual growth. The idea is that our legacy on earth will become self-replicating spiritual life in Christ.

Additionally, the Kingdom of God has humble beginnings from the smallest places and non-descript circumstances. As it gains public popularity it becomes more corrupt as its positions and ideals become blurred by people with different but temporarily-allied intentions. For example, the moral right and MAGA are in lock step with Christianity, but there are many of these people who might just be financial conservatives and not spiritual conservatives. There may be honorable

Mormons, but that is not have a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. Look at ancient Judaism. They were formed to worship God, but they killed Christ.

**Read Mark 4:35-41:** Even Jesus faced spiritual resistance. That is part and parcel with life in this world. It is all about resistance training and creating needs to pray. Again, the boat is a picture of Jesus with his people representing the church. The sea represents the mixed cultures of this world driven by unseen spiritual forces and creating dangerous situations. Jesus is above nature and spiritual things.