



A just weight
and balance

are the
LORD'S:

Thus saith the Lord...

- Today we look at the section in which Mark describes how and why Jesus began to use the parabolic method of teaching.
 - A parable is a little story which illustrates a truth.

- Today we want to examine the matter of the dimming of the light which was made necessary by his popularity.
 - That is what a parable is -- a slight dimming of the light.
 - It is hiding the truth somewhat, as we will see when we go into this more fully.
- Mark introduces the theme to us in chapter 4:

- **Again he began to teach beside the sea.**
- **And a very large crowd gathered about him,**
- **so that he got into a boat and sat in it on the sea;**
- **and the whole crowd was beside the sea on the land.**
- **And he taught them many things in parables,**
(Mark 4:1-2 RSV)

- We need to remember why this crowd had come.
- They were looking for healing.
 - They had brought the sick in great numbers to Jesus, and they pressed him to heal them.
 - He did heal many, but he was not interested, primarily, in healing bodies.

- He had a greater mission in mind
-- to teach and preach
the Word to them
 - To heal the hurt of the heart and the spirit.
- The crowd was making this very difficult because of their focus upon the physical.
 - This is still happening today, so the account is right up-to-date.

- Our Lord had prepared an emergency exit.
 - Mark tells us this is what actually happened.
- The crowd pressed him so much that he had to get into the boat.

- They defeated their own purpose by pressing him so on this matter of healing.
- So Jesus got into the boat, withdrew from the crowd, and began to teach them.

- But he taught in a way he never had before; he began to tell them stories -- parables.
- This is the first occasion Jesus ever made use of a parable.
 - It was the parable of the sower.

- The disciples were impressed by this story and by the way Jesus told it, and they asked him about it later.

- **This parable of the sower** is linked in this section **with two other stories of seeds.**
- There is the seed growing secretly, in **Verses 26** and on,
- Followed immediately by the story of **the mustard seed.**
- We will reserve them for **later.**¹¹

- I want to focus on what **immediately follows** this telling of the story of the sower, because the disciples were curious as to **why Jesus used parables.**

- Mark gives us the explanation from the lips of Jesus himself.
- Why did he turn to the use of parables, and never turn back from it, from this time on?
- The explanatory begins in Verse 10:

- **And when he was alone, those who were about him with the twelve asked him concerning the parables.**
 - **And he said to them,**
"To you has been given
the secret of the kingdom of God,
 - **but for those outside**
everything is in parables;
 - **so that they may indeed see but not perceive,**
 - **and may indeed hear but not understand;**
 - **lest they should turn again, and be forgiven."**
(Mark 4:10-12 RSV))

- What did Jesus mean?
- Did he actually mean that he spoke in parables in order to hide the truth
 - So that people could not understand it and thereby be forgiven?
- This is what it sounds like.

- In our lesson for today
Jesus gives
compelling reasons
why he taught
in parables.

- This first one gives us a very illuminating reason.
- The Lord himself points out that there are two kinds of hearers, and that this is why he speaks in parables:

- "To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God."
(Mark 4:11)

- One class of hearers is the disciples of Jesus --

- Those who follow him,
who are obedient to him,
who listen to him
and accept his authority
as Lord and teacher.

- The word he actually uses is "mystery"
 - They are not vague and difficult to understand, the word does not mean that.
 - But they are secret from the majority of people.

- Paul, in his first letter to the Corinthians, says of the apostles,
- **"This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God,"**
(1 Corinthians 4:1 RSV).

- What are these mysteries?
 - They are inside information on life which only believers, only disciples, are given to understand.
 - Truths which the natural man cannot discover by himself.
 - They are like the jigsaw puzzle of life.

- Here is the world and all humanity, working away
- Trying to explain what we are,
- Why we are here,
 - And how it all works.

- **The nuclear physicist** comes along and puts in a piece of the puzzle.
- **Then the geologist,**
 - Then the **psychiatrist**
 - Then the **philosophers.**
 - Working away at putting together this amazing jigsaw puzzle of life, **trying to understand it.**

- But Jesus declares here that there are certain missing pieces which only God can put in.

- These he calls "the mysteries of God."

- Paul describes them as "deep things of God," (1 Corinthians 2:10 KJV).

- He says the **natural man cannot understand** them, for they are revealed only by the Spirit of God:
 - **"For what person knows a man's thoughts except the spirit of the man which is in him?**
 - **So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God,"**
(1 Corinthians 2:11 RSV).

- **The great and enlightening secrets**

which help you to grasp fully what is going on in your life.

- Practical truths **hidden from us** and revealed only **by God's word.**

- That is why we need to understand the Bible, because it holds the key to the problems which are at work in our lives.

- There is a second class of hearers
 - They are described as **"those outside"**
(Mark 4:11)
 - **Who are these?**
 - Everyone who is **not a disciple.**
 - **Those not open**
to understanding and obeying
the Lordship of Christ.
 - And so the truth **is hidden from them.**
 - To them the parables **will be simple stories without much meaning.**

- Jesus then said this amazing thing:
- "...everything is in parables; so that they may indeed see but not perceive,
 - and may indeed hear but not understand;
- lest they should turn again, and be forgiven."
 - This is the part which troubles many.

- We will be helped greatly if we understand two things about this account:
 - One is that it is highly condensed.
 - We need the parallel passages in Matthew and Luke.

- In Matthew
Jesus quotes from Isaiah:

- **"With them indeed is fulfilled
the prophecy of Isaiah
which says:**

- **'You shall indeed hear
but never understand,**
- **and you shall indeed see
but never perceive."**
(Matthew 13:14 RSV)

- Isaiah goes on to explain why this is happening.

- Mark leaves this out, quotes only the conclusion.

- **"For this people's heart has grown dull,**

- **and their ears are heavy of hearing,**

- **and their eyes they have closed..."**

(Matthew 13:15 RSV)

- Who closed their eyes?

Not God.

- The people closed them.
 - And why did they close their eyes?
 - **"lest they should perceive with their eyes,**
 - **and hear with their ears,**
 - **and understand with their heart,**
 - **and turn for me to heal them."**
- (Matthew 13:15 RSV)**

- The people did not want to be healed spiritually.
 - That is the point.
- What did the people want?
 - They wanted physical healing,
and that is
all they wanted.

- They wanted Jesus to cure their diseases and get rid of all their afflictions so that they could go on just as they were before.

- No change in my life's journey.
- Just heal my body and let me go on my way.
- Jesus, knowing this, tells them:

- **"You are fulfilling the very words of Isaiah the prophet, in that you are not willing to listen to what I have to say.**
 - You want me **to heal only the body."**

- People do not want the spirit to be changed, the real problem to be solved.

- So, to capture their attention,

Jesus said,

- **I'll tell you the truth in parables.**

- If you won't listen to this teaching,
 - Then I'll give it to you in a different way.
 - So Mark is saying
 - Parables are designed for the uninterested,
 - For those who have turned their minds off.
 - This is his first explanation in that there are two classes of hearers.

- Immediately there follows the explanation of the parable of the sower and the soils.

- Let's skip to

- **Mark 4:21**

- And notice the **second reason**

- Jesus gives for his use of parables:

- And he said to them,
- "Is a lamp brought in to be put under a bushel, or under a bed, and not on a stand?
 - For there is nothing hid, except to be made manifest;
 - nor is anything secret, except to come to light.
- If any man has ears to hear, let him hear."
 - (Mark 4:21-25 RSV)

- **And he said to them,**
 - **"Take heed what you hear;**
 - **the measure you give will be the**
measure you get,
and still more
will be given to you.
 - **For to him who has**
will more be given;
 - **and from him who has not, even**
what he has will be taken away."
- (Mark 4:21-25 RSV)**

- There are three principles for understanding how parables work:

- The first is given in Verses 21-22:

- "Is a lamp brought in to be put under a bushel, or under a bed, and not on a stand?"

- Of course not!

- Notice that Jesus is still talking about

why he speaks in parables.

- He says,
"For there is nothing hid"
(a parable is a way of hiding truth),
- Jesus says:
hiding makes truth more visible.
- That is what we call
a paradox.
- If you hide the truth slightly,
it makes it even easier to see.

- In Proverbs
you find this
great teaching:
- **It is the glory of God to**
conceal a thing,
but the glory of kings is
to search it out."
(Proverbs 25:2 RSV)

- God loves to conceal truth.
And we like it, too.
 - We are all intrigued by mystery, by things cryptic and hidden.
 - God appeals to this in human nature and hides truth from us.
 - But it is only to make it more visible.

- How much truth has God hidden away in the world of nature?
- Through the centuries men have gradually begun to understand something about it.
 - God hid it in order that men might find it.

- He did the same thing with Jesus himself.

The Gospel of John tells us that

"The Word became flesh and dwelt among us"

(John 1:14 RSV)

- God

hidden in man.

- Exodus 33:20

**for there shall no man
see me, and live**

- But the glory of God
was hidden

in a man,
in Jesus.

• John says,
"we have beheld
his glory,
glory as of the only
begotten of the Father,
full of
grace and truth,"
(John 1:14).

- Grace and truth
 - The two things which glorify God.
- But we could never have seen this glory if it had not been hidden in the life of Jesus.

- Understanding this principle,
Jesus knew that men
would grasp the truth
more readily
if he hid it in a parable.
- And we know this, too.

- That is why Jesus resorted to parables.
- Because men's hearts had turned away and needed to be recaptured, brought to attention.
- The first principle, then, is: hiding makes truth more visible.

- In Verse 24 Jesus reveals a **2nd Principle.**
- "And he said to them,
'Take heed what you hear;
- the measure you give
- will be the measure you get,
 - **and still more will be given to you."**
- What does he mean by that?

- He means that in searching for truth, you will discover far more than you expected to find.
- That is a principle on which to act.

- If you do not want to search the Word of God, and seek the truth, and think about it
- It will not mean a thing to you.
 - Your Bible will be as dull and uninteresting as any book could possibly be.

- But if you are willing to look,
 - If you want to search,
 - To ask, and pray, and seek,
 - Then you will find
what you are looking for.
 - In searching,
you will find
more than you
expected to find.

- The third principle is:
 - "For to him who has will more be given; and from him who has not, even what he has will be taken away."
(Mark 4:24-25)
 - "But that's not fair?".
 - It may not be,
but that is the way life is.

- That is a **basic rule of life.**
- If you do not use what you have, **you lose it.**
- It is true on **all levels.**

- If you do not use **your brain to reason** and to think things through, you lose the ability.
- If you do not **seize an opportunity** you lose it.
- **"From him who has not, even what he has will be taken away."**

- That is a **principle of life.**
- That is why Jesus **spoke in parables**
- If you do not search,
you find that
you have lost even the truth
you once thought you had.

- May we open our eyes that we may see "truth".
- May we understand what we read.
- May we search to understanding, what we do not understand.
 - May we not treat His truth with indifference.

- **With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it; (Mark 4:33-34 RSV)**

**The doors of the church
are open.**

**The Spirit and the Bride
Say
“Come”.**

Revelation 22:17



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