

May 13, 2018 – Elmont Baptist Church

Message Series: The Gospel of Mark

Week 17: “...Hear the Word and Accept it and Bear Fruit...”

Text: Mark 4:1-20

We have launched into unpacking and understanding the Book of Mark. Mark’s audience is Romans believers, and as theologian Danny Akin says, “he is telling them that Jesus is the Messiah King and suffering servant who actively ministers on our behalf and gives his life as a ransom for many.”

Today we come to one of two of sections of extended teaching that Mark records in his writing. Jesus is going to tell a story, a parable. A parable uses everyday objects, activities, or circumstance to teach a spiritual truth.

Sower – Jesus, and anyone who shares the gospel, announces the Kingdom of God.

Types of soil – 3 unbelievers. 1 true believers

Jesus Teaches that True Believers...

✓ **Hear the Word**

- **Some hear with their ears**
- **But not with their heart**

Hearing vs listening. Jesus says at the very beginning of this story, “Listen!” and then at the end “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

We see a group of people whose mind is closed and the word is shared and although they hear the words, those words never get into the heart. These people could even be in churches.

✓ **Accept It**

- **Persevere in loving others well** – Rocky soil
- **Passionate in loving Jesus most** - Thorns

Loving others – those who think we can keep our faith private, will most likely never face tribulation or persecution because of the gospel. But those that understand that Jesus calls us to deny ourselves and love and serve others to share the gospel, then trouble arises. This is the story of believers throughout history and even today that endure persecution even unto death for the gospel. Those who only receive it with joy, may not understand their sin and need for a Savior. While there is joy when we trust Jesus, there is also brokenness and sorrow for sin. Most of us have not faced persecution on account of the word. Where we are tempted to prove unfruitful is in the case of the thorny soil.

Loving Jesus – This is the primary scheme or attack of the enemy against believers in the U.S. – distraction with cares, deceit, and desires. He tells us that if you love Jesus most, you will miss out on something better,

and our flesh likes that argument. All the enemy has to do is get the ball rolling, then we will take over from there. We need to preach to ourselves, not listen to ourselves.

✓ **Bear Fruit**

- **Not measured by quantity**
- **But rather by quality**

Disciples make disciples. These aren’t levels of faithfulness, like beginner, intermediate, and expert, but more about capacity. There are some whose influence and impact are just bigger than others, but they are not more faithful with how God has made them and gifted them. There is a need for each of us to be secure in who we are in Christ and how we are gifted and enabled. Still working hard by grace to grow and develop, but understanding and being ok with the reality that we are not all going to bear fruit in the same way to or the same level.

Bottom line:

The message of Jesus isn’t just one we hear and mentally agree with. It’s one that changes us at every deep level. The proof that we have accepted the gospel is when our chief desire is to love Jesus more than anything else and even endure persecution in the call to make disciples.

Thinking it Through...

- ✓ **Have you truly heard the gospel at a heart level and been changed by it’s power?**
- ✓ **What “cares of the world” tend to tempt you away from loving Jesus most?**
- ✓ **If you are to bear fruit “thirtyfold” and your neighbor is to bear a “hundredfold”, are you content with God’s design and plan?**

Storying Mark 4:1-20

We get into one of the two longest sections of expanded teaching that Mark's records (the other in chapter 13). For that reason, we can conclude that this carries special importance for the writer.

- **Questions**

- **Observation:** (emphasize that these are rather obvious answers)
 - Where is Jesus?
 - What is Jesus doing?
 - Who is there in the first 9 verses?
 - Who is there from 10-20?
- **Interpretation:**
 - Who is the sower?
 - Give an example of hearing but not listening?
 - What are the outcomes of each type of soil?
- **Application:** Use the "Thinking it Through" questions as needed
 - What are real life examples of each type of soil?
 - When is a time in your walk with Christ that you have seen fruit being produced?
 - What part do we play in being good soil for God's Word?
What can we do to grow in holiness and to produce fruit by making disciples?*

*Taken directly or paraphrased from *Christ-Centered Exposition* by Daniel Akin