

Handout 2: Gospel of Mark Notes REVISED (Talk 13)

Ryan Carroll, Reformation Fellowship, May 2, 2021

Summary:

Jesus' parables were stories that pointed to truths about the kingdom that would have run contrary to some of Jesus' contemporaries' beliefs/hopes. What do these parables mean?

Outline:

1. Review from last week:

- a. John the Baptist's *national* ministry to Israel, proclaiming the imminent return of Yahweh to his people, left those who heard him AND witnessed Jesus, without excuse.
 - i. Jesus' proclamation of the Kingdom having come "near" in his own presence AND supporting that claim through his ministry of healing, forgiveness, exorcism, calling sinners, and teaching, should have left little doubt FOR THOSE WITH EYES TO SEE. But for the rest... "they get everything in parables" (4:11)
- b. Jesus' choice to speak in parables WHILE citing Isaiah 6:9 as a part of the reason (see Mk. 4:9-13) he did so, indicated judgement would be on the way for those who didn't pay attention closely to what Jesus was saying and doing so as to ultimately embrace Him.
- c. The Parable of the Sower (4:3-9), on one level, worked to sound the warning about being careful of how one paid attention/listened to Jesus—the sower of the word. Not all soils (those who hear) will bear fruit.

2. Parables in General:

- a. See notes (from previous talk)
- b. Stories about timeless truths or contextually focused on the historical ministry of Jesus to Israel?
- c. Why veiled?
 - i. Potentially to keep shocking/angering message from getting Jesus killed prior to his appointed time?

1. Luke 4 is a direct speech that proved the need for a veiled message.
- ii. Once Jesus' had actually been resurrected (a seed sown?), the parables message is no longer veiled.
 1. Fits with 4:21-23 – “nothing is hidden except to be revealed, nor has anything been a secret but that it should come to light”

3. Overall structure of chapter 4:1-34

- a. Bookends:
 - i. Front End: Jesus teaching the crowds “many things in parables” (4:2)
 - ii. Back End: And with many such parables He was speaking the word to them as they were able to hear; He did not speak without a parable (4:34)
- b. Seed Parables Part A: (4:3-20)
 - i. Parable of the Sower AND The Sower explained (in private)
- c. Center/Pivot: (4:21-25)
 - i. “Nothing is hidden except to be revealed”
 - ii. “Be careful how you ‘measure’”
- d. Seed Parables Part B: (4:26-32)
 - i. Parable of the Farmer and the Seed
 - ii. Parable of the Mustard Seed

4. Given structure: Who is Jesus speaking to when? (the crowd vs. disciples)

5. Interpretation of Parables

- a. Parable of the Sower interpreted:
 - i. Lens of Jesus as Sower:
 1. These various responses (soils) were exactly what was happening in real time as people were seeing Jesus' deeds and listening to his kingdom message
 - a. See Mk. 1-3 for range of responses
 2. Good soil = Those who “hear and accept, end up bearing fruit”
 - a. Accepting the word means?
 - i. In the parabolic metaphor, acceptance = the seed taking deep root in the soil and

being allowed to germinate (something the other soils could not do)

- ii. In the real-time of Jesus' ministry, acceptance meant going/getting beyond the initial moment of "new" or exciting, or the miraculous moment, or the personal healing, that any single Jewish person experienced who witnessed Jesus first-hand OR had had after hearing about him through others, acceptance was leaning in beyond the personal gratification at having experienced Jesus and his physical benefits to actually probe the core of his message, this was the *beginning* of acceptance.
 - 1. John 6—Lord, to whom shall we go?
 - a. Not knowing fully at all what the future held or who this man really was, but recognizing in Him the truth that he was from God.
 - 2. The suffering Messiah
- iii. What about us? Moving beyond our initial experience with the reality of God's love and grace in the person of Jesus and weathering the difficult truths of life with hope in the future:
 - a. About myself
 - b. About safety and security
 - c. Suffering and death

b. Bearing fruit means what?

- ii. Lens of God as Sower?:
 - 1. How does this picture/parable also reflect the story of Israel?
 - 2. Is this parable related to Isaiah 6:9-13?
- iii. Is The Sower a "kingdom" parable?