

## Quarter Three: The Book of Mark

Jill Morikone

### Lesson 4—Parables

#### Thursday: Parables of Growing Seed

July 25, 2024

- **Last Week:** “Controversies”
  - Stories of controversy – Jesus teaching vs the religious leaders
  - Sandwich story
- **This Week:** “Parables”
  - The 5 Parables of Mark 4 (fewest parables of the synoptic gospels)

**Memory Text:** “Then He said to them, ‘Take heed what you hear. With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given. For whoever has, to him more will be given; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him.’” (Mark 4:24, 25, NKJV)

The week in brief:

- 1. **Sunday:** The Parable of the Sower (SQ)
  - Mark 4:1 – 9 – same Seed; different soils – stories of the different way we respond to God; cost of discipleship & reward of following God
- 2. **Monday:** Jesus’ Interpretation (Daniel)
  - Mark 4:13 – 20 – interpretation of the parable of the sower
- 3. **Tuesday:** The Reason for the Parables (John L)
  - Mark 4:10 – 12 – we all have a choice to make – accept God or reject Him
- 4. **Wednesday:** Lamp & Measuring Basket (James)
  - Mark 4:21 – 25 – sharing the light of the gospel; being open to accepting that light
- 5. **Thursday:** Parables of Growing Seed (Jill)
  - Mark 4:26 – 32 – growth & maturation of the plant by divine power, not human; growth of the mustard seed

## Parables of Growing Seed

Mark 4:26 - 32

- 2 parables:
  - Parable of the Growing Seed – Mark 4:26 – 29
    - Not in any other gospel (doesn’t parallel Luke or Matthew)
  - Parable of the Mustard Seed – Mark 4:30 – 32
  - 7 takeaways from the seed
- **Parable of the Growing Seed** (Mark 4:26 – 29)
  - Mark 4:26 - 28 – “And He said, ‘The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground, (27) and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how. (28) For the earth yields crops **by itself**: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head.”
    - By itself = Gk, comes from the word “automatic”



- **Parable of the Mustard Seed (Mark 4:30 – 32)**
  - Mark 4:30, 31 – “Then He said, ‘To what shall we liken the kingdom of God? Or with what parable shall we picture it? (31) It is like a mustard seed which, when it is sown on the ground, is smaller than all the seeds on earth;”
    - Mustard seeds are 1 – 2 mm in diameter
    - Probably a black mustard – 700 seeds in one gram
      - Not smallest seeds in the world, but smallest of the seeds planted
    - “small as a grain of mustard seed” was a proverbial expression among the Jews for something exceedingly minute
    - Kingdom of God is like mustard seed
    - **Takeaway #5: Small beginnings are God ordained**
      - Despise not the day of small beginnings
        - John the Baptist (preaching the kingdom of God)
          - Clothed with garment of camel’s hair; leathern girdle
        - Jesus Christ – dusty, itinerant Preacher
        - 12 disciples – at the Cross, all forsook Him
        - Pentecost – 120 disciples in upper room
      - Individually
        - Hardly recognize the growth of grace, at first
  - Mark 4:32 – but when it is sown, it grows up and becomes greater than all herbs, and shoots out large branches, so that the birds of the air may nest under its shade.”
    - **Takeaway #6: End results are God given**
      - Black Mustard seed grows to – 8 feet tall
        - In Israel, found mustard tree on the bank of the Jordan more than 12 ft high
      - The growth is disproportionately large, compared to its beginning
        - Growth is expansive enough to bring in non-Jews to be part of this movement
        - Gospel exceeds traditions of the Jews & philosophy of the Gentiles
      - End results are God given – we can never take glory for ourselves
        - In our lives or in the church
    - **Takeaway #7: the Gospel (Jesus) shelters & protects us**
      - Illusion to Nebuchadnezzar – in Daniel 4 – grew and world found shade & food under that tree
      - Ps 91:1, 2 – “He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. (2) I will say of the Lord, He is My refuge and fortress...”
- 7 takeaways of growth from the parables of Growing Seed
  - #1: Growth is not forced / #2: Growth requires sowing
  - #3: Growth is not on me / #4: Growing process is not forever
  - #5: Small beginnings are God ordained
  - #6: End results are God given

- #7: The gospel shelters & protects us