



Day 5: January 5

There are 4 different records of the ministry of Jesus called the 'gospels' Sometimes 2 or 3 of the accounts overlap, often they do not. Whereas Luke is the most like a modern history, the gospel of Mark is the simplest.

Mark as a young man was a follower of Jesus for at least the latter part of Jesus' ministry. It is thought that Mark was there with the disciples on the night when Jesus was betrayed, and refers to himself as the young man who ran away naked (Mark 14:52). Mark is quite candid as to his own (and the apostle's) failures, especially those where they didn't understand Jesus' ideas.

This reading is one instance where they fail to understand Jesus' parable. This is one of Jesus' famous parables. A parable is a simple story used to illustrate a more abstract moral point. Parables are designed to make us think rather than give simple answers. Mark's record of the day ends with Jesus performing a powerful miracle that for Mark was evidence that Jesus was no ordinary human.

Mark 4

(1) And he began again to teach by the sea side¹: and there was gathered unto him a great multitude, so that he entered into a ship, and sat in the sea; and the whole multitude was by the sea on the land.

(2) And he taught them many things by parables, and said unto them in his doctrine,

(3) Listen; Behold, there went out a sower to sow:

(4) And it came to pass, as he sowed², some fell by the way side, and the birds of the air came and devoured it up.

(5) And some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth; and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth:

(6) But when the sun was up, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away.

(7) And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit.

(8) And other fell on good ground, and did yield fruit that sprang up and increased; and brought forth, some thirty, and some sixty, and some an hundred.

(9) And he said unto them, He that has ears to hear, let him hear³.

(10) And when he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve asked of him the parable.

(11) And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery⁴ of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables:

(12) That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand⁵; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them.

(13) And he said unto them, Know ye not this parable? and how then will ye know all parables?

(14) The sower sows the word.

(15) And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, an adversary⁶ comes immediately, and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts.

- (16) And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness;
- (17) And have no root in themselves, and so are temporary: afterward, when affliction or persecution arises for the word's sake, immediately they are offended.
- (18) And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word,
- (19) And the cares⁷ of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.
- (20) And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred.
- (21) And he said unto them, Is a lamp brought to be put under a bushel, or under a bed? and not to be set on a lampstand?
- (22) For there is nothing hid, which shall not be manifested; neither was any thing kept secret, but that it should come abroad.
- (23) If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.
- (24) And he said unto them, Take heed what ye hear: with what measure you give, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear shall more be given.
- (25) For he that has, to him shall be given: and he that has not, from him shall be taken even that which he has.
- (26) And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground;
- (27) And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knows not how.
- (28) For the earth brings forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.
- (29) But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest is come.
- (30) And he said, To what shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it?
- (31) It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, is smaller than all the seeds that be in the earth:
- (32) But when it is sown, it grows up, and becomes greater than all herbs, and shoots out great branches; so that the birds of the air may lodge under the shadow of it.
- (33) And with many similar parables spoke he the word unto them, as they were able to hear it.
- (34) But without a parable spoke he not unto them: and when they were alone, he explained⁸ all things to his disciples.
- (35) And the same day, when the evening was come, he said unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side.
- (36) And when they had sent away the multitude, they took him even as he was in the ship⁹. And there were also with him other little boats.
- (37) And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full.
- (38) And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow¹⁰: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master¹¹, care thou not that we perish?

(39) And he arose, and rebuked¹² the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.

(40) And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?

(41) And they feared greatly, and said one to another, Who truly¹³ is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?

(King James Version updated with reference to the Greek texts, including minority texts)

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- 1 The sea of Galilee. In modern Israel it is known as Kinneret. It is a freshwater lake of 166m²
 - 2 Sowing of crops was done by hand.
 - 3 This is a keynote phrase of Jesus (Y'shua)
 - 4 The Greek word from which we get mystery means "to shut the mouth", it means a secret shared by a group.
 - 5 He is quoting an Old Testament Hebrew prophet called Isaiah (6:9)
 - 6 The Greek text uses a Hebrew word *satan* meaning adversary or active opposition
 - 7 The Greek has the idea of distraction, or concerns.
 - 8 As in solving a puzzle.
 - 9 Later in the account we see that Christ was asleep
 - 10 Marks often shows that Jesus was on occasion weary during his ministry. He had been teaching all day, and was so tired he slept on even as the storm arose.
 - 11 Teacher. They were not calling him Rabbi.
 - 12 Censured, or told off.
 - 13 The commentators suspect this is a Hebraism in Greek. It indicates they were seeking to 'draw out' the truth or make conclusions from the events. In context, this discussion confirms that at this point in the ministry people were still discussing the identity of Jesus, and questioning whether he was Messiah or not.