

Life Application Notes: Jesus Talks 2 – Mark 4:1-20

“Other seeds fell on good ground”

Introduction

Jesus himself says in this passage that understanding this parable is the key to understanding all parables – and there are a lot of them in Mark!

Read Mark 4:1-20

“He taught them many things in parables”

- Why do you think Jesus taught so often using parables?

Digging In

It is important to remember to be careful that we don't try and read too deeply into scripture looking for some new meaning that hasn't been discovered yet. This passage shows us brilliantly both the story and the explanation and is so relevant to us today.

- Why do you think that Jesus only explained it plainly to the 12 disciples?

Jesus wants us to keep searching, to keep looking deeper. Much like a stained glass window which only shows its true beauty when you walk through the door and see it from the inside! We are to intentionally pursue a deeper understanding of scripture. From the parable Jesus is pointing us to an intended outcome - that we are to be like seed sown on good soil so that we would produce a crop. **But what does this mean?**

“Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop”

If there are any gardeners among you they probably already know the difference that good soil makes!

- What does fruitfulness practically look like? (Can think about the fruit of the spirit - Galatians 5)

There are three ways that are described here which can prevent a fruitful crop:

1.) On the path - “As soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them.”

Just like the hardened dirt of the path, sometimes the seed (the word of God) just doesn't sink in and you may struggle to connect with it.

- o How can we cultivate (lots of metaphors to farming!) our hearts to receive the word more openly? To be more open to hearing God speak through his word or his spirit?

2.) On rocky ground - “But since they have no root, they last only a short time.”

Read John 15:1-8

Jesus tells us that our fruitfulness is directly related to our reliance and trust in him. Rooted in him.

- o In what ways can we become more rooted in Jesus? (Daily priorities, life groups, prayer, church)

3.) Among thorns – “...but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful.”

In our busy and hectic day-to-day lives other things can easily get in the way of our faith growing and in the way of our fruitfulness.

Sometimes it is circumstances - the tough times are those in which God can grow us the most – when we really need to trust him. Other times it's the stuff in our heart which ties us up – either guilt, or bitterness, or unforgiveness – if this is you then be honest with God – he wants to free us from these things.

Think for yourself - which of these situations do you relate to the most?

- How can we become more and more fruitful?
- How can we help and encourage one another in this?

“This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples” (John 15:8)

When we obey Jesus's instructions to hear, accept the word, and produce a crop – we are glorifying God – this is part of our worship!

Rounding Off

Remember that Jesus is the light of the world and the living water – both essential for growth!

Spend some time quietly individually reflecting on how your heart is today, particularly as we think about the three situations above.

PRAY TOGETHER

Spend some time praying together as a response to this study. If you wish, split into pairs or groups, and pray together – be as honest as you feel comfortable to be – remember that God is in the business of transformation and he loves us and wants us to grow and flourish!