

Week 3: Parables and Miracles

Overview: Mark 4-5 moves between parable and miracle. Jesus teaches the crowds in stories, explains the kingdom privately to the disciples, and then demonstrates that kingdom in dramatic fashion – stilling a storm, casting out a legion of demons, healing a bleeding woman, raising a dead girl. We will focus primarily on the parable of the sower and then shows that the kingdom Jesus describe in the kingdom he enacts.

Passages covered this week: Mark 4-5

Key Scripture: Mark 4:1-20

CONTENT

Key Takeaway: The parable of the sower isn't about farming. It's about what kind of heart you bring to Jesus – and whether what he plants in you takes root.

Key Points

- Why parables? (Mark 4:10-12)
 - Parables reveal and conceal at the same time – only those genuinely seeking will press in
 - The disciples ask what it means. That's the right response.
- The parable of the sower (Mark 4:1-9, 14-20) – primary focus
 - Four soils, four responses to the Word of God
 - *Path*: the word is taken before it lands. No engagement. Satan is named as the thief (4:15)
 - *Rocky ground*: immediate joy, no root. Falls away the moment it costs something.
 - *Thorns*: hears the word, but worry and desire for wealth choke it out
 - *Good soil*: hears, accepts, and produces – thirty, sixty, a hundred times. The multiplication is worth noting.
 - The rocky ground and the thorny ground both “received” the word. Reception isn't enough.
- Lamp, growing seed, mustard seed (Mark 4:21-34) – referenced
 - What is received is meant to be shared – hidden light defeats the purpose
 - The kingdom grows quietly, inevitably, beyond human management. Like a mustard seed.
- The storm stilled, the demon cast out, the woman healed, Jairus's daughter raised (Mark 4:35-5:43)
 - Jesus has authority over nature, the demonic, chronic illness, and death itself – every category of human helplessness

- Legion casts into pigs: the most dramatic exorcism in the Gospels. The region asks Jesus to leave – his presence is too disruptive.
- The bleeding woman and Jairus hold together: the woman who touched him in desperation, the father who fell at his feet. Both are rewarded with faith.
- Talitha kum – the Aramaic preserved: the intimacy of Jesus raising a child

Gospel Application: The seed in the parable is the Word (4:14) – and Jesus is the Word made flesh (John 1:14). He doesn't just teach the kingdom, he enacts it. Every miracle in Mark 4-5 is the good soil of the parable made visible: the kingdom of God breaking into a broken world and producing life where there was only death.

Key Question: Which soil best describes your heart right now – and what is choking or stealing what God is trying to grow in you?

APPLICATION

Activity Suggestions

- Soil audit: have students journal honestly – which soil am I? What are the thorns in my life specifically?
- Parable map: draw all four soils and have students label them with real-life equivalents. What does “rocky ground” look like for a 10th grader today?

Community Group Questions

- Which of the four soils do you most identify with right now? What makes you say that?
- What are the “thorns” in your life – the worries or desires that keep crowding out what God is doing?
- Jesus stills the storm and the disciples are terrified. Why do you think they were more afraid after the miracle than during the storm?
- What would it look like for your life to produce fruit – what does that actually mean for you specifically?