

WEEK 10: MARK 4 - JESUS THE TEACHER

HIGH SCHOOL

GOAL

To develop a better understanding of Mark 4:1-41

LESSON

Materials Needed: Orthodox Study Bible

Extended Learning Opportunities:

The Explanation by Blessed Theophylact of the Holy Gospel According to St. Mark pages 36-42

The Gospel of Mark the Suffering Servant by Fr. Lawrence Farley pages 61-71

GOSPEL OF MARK - CHAPTER 4

Read verses 1-2 and then discuss:

What is a parable? A parable is a comparison which explains a meaning indirectly. Jesus often speaks in parables as a way of explaining a concept for everyone to understand, but the person listening has to be open to hearing the truth.

These parables are not always clear to us today because we live in a different time period, a different culture, and live in a different part of the world from the time of Jesus. There are many similarities between us and the people Jesus is teaching, but there are also some differences. Did they have grocery stores like we have today? Absolutely not. Jesus explains the Kingdom of Heaven to the people through these parables using concepts they were keenly familiar with in their day to day lives - such as gardens and farming.

Verses 3-12:

A sower is someone who plants or sows seeds into the ground. Today, we would call this person a gardener or farmer. If you've ever helped someone plant a garden or have noticed areas at a park that have bare spots versus lush grass and flowers growing, then you understand that seeds do better under certain conditions than others. In an area where people are continuously walking on the dirt, the ground gets compacted and it's hard for

anything to grow there. In an area that is full of rocks, the ground lacks the nutrients to support much of anything growing there long term. Seeds cannot just grow absolutely anywhere.

In this parable, we learn that Jesus is the sower and His Word (or teachings) are the seeds. Some people are more prepared to hear what He has to say and take it to heart than others.

“Thus, the Lord says, the coming of the Kingdom is like a sower of seed going out to sow. In those days, sowers would walk along narrow paths through the fields, throwing seed from a bag onto the wide earth. Inevitably, not all of the seed sown would fall into the fertile earth and germinate; some seed would be lost. This was the same with the coming Kingdom. Just as whether or not the seed germinated depended on the state of the hearer’s heart.” (Farley, pg 64)

Verses 13-20:

What does the parable of the sower mean? If we are consumed with having fun and have little faith that God is there to take care of us, then our hearts will not be prepared to hear Christ’s teachings and we will not take what we learn here in class or at church seriously. These lessons apply to our daily lives today and hold great importance to them!

Verses 21-23:

During this time period, Jewish families would have a ritual every evening of bringing out a lamp and placing it on the lamp stand in the main room - to give light to all in the home. They would then thank God for providing the light. We often take for granted having light in our homes in the evenings as we simply turn on the light switch whenever we want to see in the dark. As Christians today, we still have this evening ritual of thanking God for Christ who is the true Light of the World. We do this as we sing the ancient hymn, “Gladsome Light.”

The parable is explaining that Jesus came to illumine the world with his teachings. If we listen to Jesus’ words and then do nothing about what we’ve learned, then we are hiding the light shone to us under something. We did not let it illumine our lives and we remain in the dark despite being in the presence of Christ! What are you going to do with what you’ve learned in class today? How does it apply to you today?

Verses 24-25:

“That is, whatever degree of attention you give Me, by that same degree will you receive benefit.” (Blessed Theophylact, pgs 39-40)

Verses 26-29:

The farmer places seed into the ground, but cannot create the plants himself. God is the creator of life. We work with God by planting the seeds in order to have farms and gardens to feed people, but we do not create the wheat. When the time is right and the grain is ready, the farmer will harvest the cut wheat berries from the stalk. Likewise, there is nothing we can do that will bring the Second Coming of Christ. Our final Judgement will arrive when it's the proper time. We rise and sleep day after day and should always be striving to prepare ourselves for our Judgement.

Verses 30-34:

A gardener or farmer would know and understand that it's quite impressive to see how big of a plant will grow from a tiny, round mustard seed. It was long believed that the Messiah (the one who came to save them) would be a grand king with an impressive earthly kingdom. Instead, this one man, born in a humble cave, with a group of ordinary men as His followers (the disciples) were traveling and teaching in a relatively small area in terms of a kingdom or empire. From these teachings, the apostles went out and traveled even farther distances to teach about God. And Christianity kept spreading farther and farther around the world until it was impressively large. Today, even if someone doesn't practice or believe, they know about Christianity.

Verses 35-41:

There are times when God allows us to wrestle with fear, anxiety, and the unknown so that we have the opportunity to choose to seek Him. The opportunity to pray to Him, to ask for help, to have faith. Jesus is asleep on the boat during the storm which provides the opportunity for the disciples to have faith in God to protect them, but they didn't. They were afraid they were going to die because water was filling the boat. They are upset with Jesus for sleeping instead of protecting them. Do we sometimes feel like God may be sleeping (silent, not paying attention) while we're in need? They woke Jesus and asked Him to help them. He immediately calmed the storm by simply saying, “Peace, be still!” - the disciples were amazed at this miracle! They were admonished for not having faith but also taught that God is capable of handling anything in their lives. God will not force us to do anything, we just need to invite Him into our lives and He will help us.

REVIEW:

- What is a parable?
 - Why does Jesus use parables?
 - What does it mean to have faith in God? How does it apply to our lives?
-

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MIDDLE SCHOOL

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REVIEW:

- What is a parable?
 - Why does Jesus use parables?
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3RD - 4TH GRADE

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Read the Parable of the Sower - Verses 1-9; then discuss:

A sower is someone who plants or sows seeds into the ground. Today, we would call this person a gardener or farmer. If you've ever helped someone plant a garden or have noticed, then you understand that seeds do better under certain conditions than others. In an area where people are continuously walking on the dirt, the ground gets compacted and it's hard for anything to grow there. In an area that is full of rocks, the ground lacks the

nutrients to support much of anything growing there long term. Seeds cannot just grow absolutely anywhere.

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Read the Lamp Under a Basket:

During this time period, Jewish families would bring out a lamp every evening and place it on a small table in the main room - to provide light to everyone in the home. They would then thank God for providing them this light. We often take for granted having light in our homes in the evenings because we know we can just turn on the light switch and it will immediately brighten the room whenever we want to see in the dark. As Christians today, we still have this evening ritual of thanking God for Christ who is the true Light of the World. We do this as we sing the ancient hymn, "Gladsome Light." <https://youtu.be/Sb7QbmWUBvI>

Read the Parable of the Mustard Seed - Verses 30-34:

A large mustard plant grows from a tiny, round seed. Many of you think of mustard as a yellow sauce you put on hamburgers or hot dogs. Typically, that sauce is made using ground up mustard seeds. In this story we are not talking about that sauce at all, just the seed and the plant that grows from it. Jesus is explaining to the people that big things are possible through small beginnings. Jesus came and started to teach the people around Him. Jesus' followers then traveled all over Europe, Asia, and Africa to continue Jesus' teachings. Christianity spread quickly and Christians can now be found all over the world!

REVIEW:

- What is a parable?
- Why does Jesus use parables?
- Tell me in your own words about the Parable of the Sower.
- We sing, "Gladsome Light" at vespers in the evening. Is it a new hymn or an old one?
- Tell me in your own words about the Parable of the Mustard Seed.

WEEK 10: MARK 4 - JESUS THE TEACHER

1ST - 2ND GRADE

GOAL

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GOSPEL OF MARK - CHAPTER 4

What is a parable:

A parable is a story that helps us to understand God.

Read the Parable of the Sower: Mark 1-9

- Ask students to retell the parable to you
- Use pictures to help illustrate the point of the story or
- Use a small scale model to help explain the story

Read the Parable of the Mustard Seed: Mark 30-21

- Ask students to retell the parable to you
- Show students a mustard seed (you can find them with the spices at the grocery store)
- Plant a mustard seed in a flower pot to take home. Ask students to bring it back in a few weeks to see how much it's grown!

REVIEW:

- What is a parable?
- Tell me in your own words about the Parable of the Sower.
- Tell me in your own words about the Parable of the Mustard Seed.

WEEK 10: MARK 4 - JESUS THE TEACHER

PRE-K - KINDERGARTEN

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REVIEW:

- What is a parable?
- Tell me in your own words about the Parable of the Sower.
- Tell me in your own words about the Parable of the Mustard Seed.

THE PARABLE



OF THE SOWER



OR THE PARABLE OF THE FOUR TYPES OF SOIL

Illustrated by Russ McMullin



<https://www.flickr.com/photos/frted/10545698264>



<https://hcaoc.org/index.php/resources/sunday-articles/238-planting-the-seeds-for-the-kingdom-of-god>