

“Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith—to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.”

Romans 16:26-27

The mystery is the gospel - It's Jesus - who was only foreshadowed in the Old Testament but now fully revealed at the coming of the kingdom of God

Truth: The gospel of the Kingdom is being revealed and we are part of God's plan in bringing that revelation into the everyday lives of those he has put around us.

Don't HIDE your Light!

The Parable of the Measuring Scales:

If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear. And he said to them “Pay attention to what you hear: with the measure you use, it will be measured to you, and still more will be added to you. For to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken”

Mark 4:23-25

Jesus is emphasizing “*Don't let my words go in one ear and out the other*”

Jesus then, with the picture of the scales, essentially states “you get what you give” or “you get out what you put in”

The one who has (hears and responds), to him more will be given (revelation and understanding)

The one who doesn't have (doesn't respond in faith), from him more will be taken (he will gradually become more blind to the truth)

“Parables of the Kingdom”

April 6, 2025

Mark 4:21-25

Introduction

Why do you think Jesus so often taught through parables?

While there are several reasons *we think* He might have used parables, *Jesus himself* gives us the primary reason. **Why is HIS purpose for parables still so critically important for you and me today?**

Purpose of the Parables:

Then the disciples came and said to him “Why do you speak to them in parables?”

Matthew 13:10

Jesus gives an answer that might surprise you?!!

And he answered them “To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. For to the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. This is why I speak to them in parables, seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.

Matthew 13:11-13

A similar response is recorded in the gospel of Mark:

And when he was alone, those around him with the twelve asked him about the parables. And he said to them, “To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside everything is in parables, so that they may indeed see but not perceive, and may indeed hear but not understand, lest they should turn and be forgiven.”

And he said to them, “Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables?”

Mark 4:10-13

Parables as an act of Judgement?

Jesus often engages with people in the gospels **as if they have already made a decision about him.**

Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but he sent me. Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word.

John 8:42-43

Truth: Jesus chose to state the truths about the kingdom of God in parables, so that if the peoples hearts were right, they would understand them, but if their hearts were dull or hardened, the people heard but did not actually perceive what was being said.

In short, the parable was not necessarily meant to cause confusion, but to reveal the rebellious heart.

Did the use of Parables extend MERCY?

With many parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it. He did not speak to them without a parable, but privately to his own disciples he explained everything.

Mark 4:33-34

As much as they WERE an act of Judgement, parables were also an extension of mercy towards people.

Parables, and God's word in general, present us with a *fork in the road* moment. We are accountable for how we respond (think parable of the sower) and we can respond in one of two ways.

1. **We can respond in disobedience** (actively, or with ignoring, passively) and thereby our hearts become calloused leading to eventually hardness of the heart.
2. **We can respond obedience and faith** (even as small as a mustard seed).

The Parable of the Lamp:

And He said to them "Is a lamp brought in to be put under a basket, or under a bed, and not on a stand? For nothing is hidden except to be made manifest; nor is anything secret except to come to light. If anyone has ears let him hear".

Mark 4:21-22

It would be illogical and absurd to light a lamp and then conceal it under a basket or bed. You just don't do that! **The purpose of the lamp is to give light.**

What does the lamp represent?

In the context of Mark 4, the lamp is the gospel of the kingdom of God. We also know that God is himself LIGHT.

"God is light, and in him there is no darkness at all"

1 John 1:5

"In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness", has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ".

2 Corinthians 4:4-6

"You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven".

Matthew 5: 14-16

The Mystery - What is hidden?

And He was saying to them "To you has been given the mystery of the kingdom of God, but for those who are outside, everything comes in parables".

Mark 4:11