

Mark 4:21-34 – Encouragements in Kingdom Building

TSK, GreekLexicon, INT, Handfuls, JFB, Clarke, Poole, Robertson, Trapp, Geneva, Rienecker, Barnes, Henry, Gill, Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: You have been called into and given citizenship in the greatest kingdom the world has ever known and will ever know. But being in this kingdom has its responsibilities: Worship and working. Now worship goes without saying but what work do you have to do? You have to preach the Gospel by your lips and your life.

Today you will hear 3 encouragements to do this most important work.

Our headings are:

You Must Share the Full Gospel 整全的福音

God Will Save his People

God Will Spread his Kingdom

Our goals are: That you will play your part in kingdom building by taking the message of the cross everywhere, and you must learn to wait for God to bless your efforts and bring many into his kingdom.

You must Share the Full Gospel

21 Also He said to them, "Is a lamp brought to be put under a basket or under a bed? Is it not to be set on a lampstand?

1. Jesus taught that if an apostle had a lamp he would not put it under a bushel basket or under a bed. Rather, he would put it on the lampstand so others could see. The Lord's point was that it makes no sense to hide the light of the Gospel. Men would be lost without the Gospel. Yes, you can learn from nature that God exists, but you won't know about sin, salvation, and service without the God's Word. Would you be pleased if you gave someone a gift for their kitchen and they left it in the garage? Of course not. So this was an encouragement to do, to shine, to cast the light of the Gospel on the lost!

Lesson:

a. You must boldly share the Gospel from your life and lips. Share it by books or bringing unbelievers to worship.

Matthew 5:15 "Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. 16 "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

b. It is selfish and sinful if you do not share the Gospel. The Gospel doesn't end with you. It is a treasure to be shared. The world needs the Gospel for their conversion and comfort.

22 "For there is nothing hidden which will not be revealed, nor has anything been kept secret but that it should come to light. 23 "If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear."

2. Jesus encouraged his disciples to reveal everything he had revealed to them: the full Gospel. He did not short change them.

This verse is often wrongly applied to be teaching about secret sins that would be revealed at the end of the world, but it is really speaking about the Gospel. Remember, context 上下文 is king! The disciples had to spread what they heard.

1Corinthians 4:5 Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God.

Lesson:

a. Don't water down the Master's Seed. There are many who think the Gospel is sowing seeds of money and reaping more money. That is not the Gospel-not by a long shot. Learn, believe, and preach the full Gospel.

b. You may not mix the Master's seed with culture or tradition 传统 as the Pharisees or Roman Catholics. Keep it pure. Don't preach the Gospel *and*...obedience, and tradition, and fasting, and charity...for salvation. Pure, full Gospel only!

24 Then He said to them, "Take heed what you hear. With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given. 25 "For whoever has, to him more will be given; but whoever does not have, even what he (thinks) has will be taken away from him."

3. Jesus encouraged his disciples to pay careful attention to what they heard from him and let it sink into their hearts –hearts with good soil...in order for them to be able to preach the full Gospel with the same dedication 尽心. (Note how this fits with the context of what was before and what comes after.)

Why must they carefully study the Gospel? God would judge them according to the quality of the Gospel they sowed.

On the other hand, if they heard great teaching, and they did, and they diligently passed that teaching to others, God would richly reward them. Sadly, the Pharisees thought they knew everything and had God's favor. But they only *thought* they had it. (Lk 8:18) Because they taught lies, they would be judged accordingly. They would be condemned to hell.

Lesson:

a. If the Word doesn't sink into you properly, you will never be able to speak with the degree conviction as you ought.

b. Grace grows by exercise. The more you study the Word of God and practice God's Word, **the more you will grow.** The more you grow, the more you will try to reproduce.

God Will Save his People

26 And He said, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground,

1. The Lord then taught his people to continue to sow the seed with the promise that he would cause the seed to grow. This has been the recurring theme in Mark and in other places.

Isaiah 44:3 For I **will pour water** on him who is thirsty, And **floods on the dry ground**; I will **pour My Spirit on your descendants**, And **My blessing on your offspring**;

Ephesians 2:1 **And you He made alive**, who were dead in trespasses and sins 过犯罪恶,

Lesson:

a. Are you reluctant 不愿 to engage someone that you meet at the bus stop with the Gospel? They may never have the opportunity again to hear the Gospel. So sow the Seed of the Gospel everywhere.

b. Do you find yourself involved in useless discussions instead of sowing seed? Avoid them. There are more important things to do. There are others who want to listen. (But don't ignore people who have struggles 挣扎!)

27 "and should **sleep by night and rise by day**, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how. 28 "For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head.

2. The Lord then used a beautiful picture of various stages of how he makes the seed grow. Literally, the seed grows "automatically." **God provided the rain from heaven and the sunshine.**

Joh 3:8 "The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

Micah 5:7 Then the remnant 余剩的人 of Jacob Shall be in the midst of many peoples, **Like dew from the**

LORD, Like showers on the grass, That **tarry for no man 不仗人力 Nor wait for the sons of men.**

Remember: Paul plants, Apollos waters, **but it is God who gives the increase.**

Lesson:

a. Conversion is a mystery 奥秘 like the seed dying to give life. In in mysterious in 2 ways:

First, it reminds you that **you have to die to yourself** to receive the things of God. (Spiritual)

Second, it reminds you that **you must die in order to inherit the fullness of eternal life.** (Physical)

For everything you normally have to be alive to **get!**

b. Christ's promise of God working to give life takes the pressure off you when you take the Gospel. It is not up to you to make anyone into a Christian.

c. You are not to take the credit if your children walk in the way of the Lord.

d. Learn to be patient when you don't see fruits of your labors. Conversion is often a long process for most. It is not up to you or your timing. It is the Lord's doing. Plow the ground; give God the glory.

e. Don't worry and think you have labored in vain. Even if the person does not repent, your testimony would be basis of God's judging them and he will be glorified.

29 "But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle 就用镰刀去割, because the harvest has come."

3. The Lord then pointed out that the sower will receive a reward even though he had nothing to do with the life of the plant nor the grains that came from it.

Lesson:

a. The Gospel, which is sown by man, is guaranteed to produce a rich harvest. The world will not be saved by your articulate gabbling 瞎扯, your gravitas 庄重, or your generosity. The world needs the simple seed of the Gospel.

b. This harvest brings you reward, and it brings glory to Christ.

God Will Spread his Kingdom

30 Then He said, "To what shall we liken the kingdom of God? Or with what parable shall we picture it?"

31 "It is like a mustard seed芥菜种 which, when it is sown on the ground, is smaller than all the seeds on earth; 32 "but when it is sown, it grows up and becomes greater than all herbs, and shoots out large branches, so that the birds of the air may nest under its shade."

1. The Lord then encouraged you by illustrating the effectiveness of seeds you sow...even the smallest seed of the Gospel. Others receive the benefit also. The Gospel grows from tiny beginning to the ends of the earth – universality. Gill wrote:... for the church will fill the earth, and the kingdoms of the world will become the church, and all nations of the earth will flock unto it; the people of the Jews in general will be converted, and the fullness of the Gentiles will be brought in...

BTW, the mustard seed was used to illustrate the great amplitude of the kingdom. So ignore those who try to talk about the flavor of the mustard seed, or the heat that comes from it, or how it has to be bruised to get the flavors. Those things may be true, but that is not the intention of the story.

The use of the mustard seed as the smallest seed...is hyperbole夸张. It was the probably the smallest of all cultivated crops, but there are smaller seeds. Was promised expansions fulfilled? It surely began that way with 120 at Pentecost. Look how God blessed their labors! Wait to total fulfillment.

Lesson:

a. Are you encouraged by the fact that Gospel will spread throughout the world? You should be.

b. Yet, this means you must walk by faith in the promises of God...that even though you don't see this great spread of the Gospel in North America, you know God will do it.

c. The more liberally you share the Gospel, the more you will be rewarded.

33 And with many such parables He spoke the word to them as they were able to hear it. 34 But without a parable He did not speak to them. And when they were alone, He explained all things to His disciples.

2. The Lord continued to teach his disciples the Gospel to his disciples and explaining difficult things to them. As they heard, this prepared them to speak. At the same time, Jesus hid knowledge from others. (BTW, Jesus was speaking of preaching the Gospel for conversion.)

Lesson:

a. Learn to explain the Gospel in a clear way, giving consideration to the person with whom you are speaking. If you use complex terminology or archaic language古代语言, you are defeating the purpose.

b. Pray for the Holy Spirit to help the one you are evangelizing to grasp what you are hearing.

Conclusion:

After you share the Gospel, Christ will work through it to save his people and expand his kingdom throughout the earth.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. You probably learned "This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine." Do you? Once received, you have to use this gift for the good of others and the glory of Jesus. Burying a talent is betraying a blessing!

2. Equip yourself with the details of this light...the message of truth...so you can answer the challenges posed by those in darkness...and give them the reasons they should look to the crucified but resurrected Savior.

3. Wait for the Gospel to work and for God's kingdom to grow. Don't be impatient. Pray for the Holy Spirit to work.

4. Pray for and encourage those who are spreading the light to the world. It is not an easy job.

Finally: If you are not a Christian, know that Jesus is the light of the world. He shines through his Word. His Word exposes your sin and shows you the way back to God. Come to the light. Come out of darkness.