

**Mark: Chapter 4**  
**Mark 4:1-41**

Mark 4 [4:1] Again he began to teach beside the sea. And a very large crowd gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat in it on the sea, and the whole crowd was beside the sea on the land. [2] And he was teaching them many things in parables, and in his teaching he said to them: [3] *“Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow. [4] And as he sowed, some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured it. [5] Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil, and immediately it sprang up, since it had no depth of soil. [6] And when the sun rose, it was scorched, and since it had no root, it withered away. [7] Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain. [8] And other seeds fell into good soil and produced grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold.” [9] And he said, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”*

[10] And when he was alone, those around him with the twelve asked him about the parables. [11] 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, [12] so that*

*“they may indeed see but not perceive,  
and may indeed hear but not understand,  
lest they should turn and be forgiven.”*

[13] And he said to them, *“Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables? [14] The sower sows the word. [15] And these are the ones along the path, where the word is sown: when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them. [16] And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: the ones who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy. [17] And they have no root in themselves, but endure for a while; then, when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away. [18] And others are the ones sown among thorns. They are those who hear the word, [19] but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. [20] But those that were sown on the good soil are the ones who hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold.”*

[21] 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? [22] For nothing is hidden except to be made manifest; nor is anything secret except to come to light. [23] If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.” [24] 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. [25] For to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away.”*

[26] And he said, *“The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground. [27] He sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows; he knows not how. [28] The earth produces by itself, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. [29] But when the grain is ripe, at once he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come.”*

[30] And he said, *“With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable shall we use for it? [31] It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when sown on the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth, [32] yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants and puts out large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.”*

[33] With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it. [34] He did not speak to them without a parable, but privately to his own disciples he explained everything.

[35] On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, *“Let us go across to the other side.” [36] And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. And other boats were with him. [37] And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. [38] But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they woke him and said to him, “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?” [39] And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, “Peace! Be still!” And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. [40] He said to them, “Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?” [41] And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”*

Jesus is talking to people. But He's talking in parables. He's talking in riddles.

Mark tells us that he didn't speak to them without a parable. (so everything He says here is in a parable)

All of these people are still following Him. Still listening to Him. He's gotten their attention with the healings and miracles. Now that He has their attention He tells them stories in riddles.

And He keeps talking about the "Kingdom of God". He keeps telling us the Kingdom of God is like this or like that. He asks questions like "to what can we compare the Kingdom of God?"

Why did Jesus do all these miracles to get everyone's attention and not just tell them the plain truth? Why does He have to talk in riddles?

**Matthew 13:13-17** [13] *This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. [14] Indeed, in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled that says:*

*““You will indeed hear but never understand,  
and you will indeed see but never perceive.”*

*[15] For this people's heart has grown dull,  
and with their ears they can barely hear,  
and their eyes they have closed,*

*lest they should see with their eyes  
and hear with their ears  
and understand with their heart  
and turn, and I would heal them.’*

*[16] But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. [17] For truly, I say to you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.*

Jesus tells us in Matthew 13 that He speaks in parables to hide the secrets of the kingdom from some and reveal them to others This does not mean His parables are full of information that only a select few can understand. **It means they must trust Jesus.**

Many of Christ's enemies understand exactly what His parables mean; the problem is that they refuse to trust Jesus' teaching about Himself and God's kingdom.

Many people know what Jesus says about Himself don't they... They know but they don't believe it. They hear but they don't understand because they refuse to put their faith in **Him**. they refuse to believe.

The difficulty the Pharisees have is moral, not intellectual. They choose not to believe our Savior's words. Those who take up their cross gain more access to kingdom truth; those who reject Him lose whatever insight they had

**Matthew 13:12** [12] *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.*

Matthew Henry says parables make the things of God "more plain and easy" **to those willing to be taught**, and "at the same time more difficult and obscure to those who [are] willfully ignorant."

A person's final response to the parables reveals whether or not they trust in Jesus. It is all about Jesus. Always.

God sends Jesus to speak in parables so that the rebellious will rage against Him more fiercely and manifest the justness of their condemnation. There is never any middle ground with Jesus. Some people want to pretend to like Jesus. They say things like... He was a good teacher, or, I like Jesus, I just don't like His followers very much. But when confronted with Jesus, we can make only two determinations... 1. He is either the Son of God 2. Or He is not.

R.C. Sproul says "God decrees that those whom His grace passes over will hate His Son. And those whom His grace passes over do choose to hate His Son without coercion. We are always free to do what we want, but apart from God's grace we do not want to love Jesus."

John Calvin writes that the Lord opens a man's ears "**and that no man obtains or accomplishes this by his own industry.**"

We should marvel at God's grace every time we recall that we have trusted Christ alone for our salvation. Before the Lord quickened us, we were dead in sin and had no desire at all to know or serve Him. But by His Spirit our Creator **overcame this stubbornness and changed our hearts**, enabling us to believe the Gospel. Take time today to thank God for His matchless grace **and remember that your deeds contribute nothing to your salvation.**

**Those that don't know Jesus don't want to know Him. They are not willing to give up their own lordship of themselves and place their trust in Jesus where it rightfully belongs. They want to be the god of their own life.**

**And many of us still try and take the lordship of our lives back from Jesus too... don't we. We start wanting to satisfy ourselves horizontally instead of vertically.**

**Horizontal satisfaction is the desire to fulfill our lives with the gifts of this world. Money, possessions, power, relationships, romance, material or relational fulfillment.**

**Vertical satisfaction comes only from Jesus. When we trust in Him ...everything else around us loses its ability to influence our peace and joy. We are able like Paul, to be beaten and placed in prison and in spite of our difficulties and trials, we can sing praises to our God. And in doing so influence a Roman guard to want to know that God that gives such contentment, even in the hour of their death.**

**It means that in the face of illness, we can rejoice because we have Jesus knows our pain and suffering. It means in the depths of poverty, we know that all our needs are supplied according to His riches in glory. It means that when relationships are broken, we have a friend that sticks closer than a brother.**

**Many people want to know God for what He will give them. A spouse, a family, a house, a car, The American dream. But that is just using God to fulfill your Horizontal dreams. That is not trusting Jesus. That is trusting your idea of Jesus.**

**But what wonderful news for all of us. For those that are meeting Jesus for the first time today, or those that have known Him a lifetime... this is wonderful news. That in spite of all the sin in us and in the world, Jesus saves. Jesus saves us. We are now free to enjoy all these blessing that He gives, not to focus on the blessings but to know the one who blesses.**

[41] And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, *“Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”*

And in the end Jesus performs, in my mind, His greatest miracle yet. He shows His dominion over nature. He shows He is the God of Creation. Only the God of Creation has control over the wind and the waves of the sea.

Have you ever been at sea? Even just out here in the Puget Sound? Port Gardner Bay? The weather can change very quickly.

Late last Summer I took a pastor friend and his father on a short fishing trip. My boat was moored at the Everett Marina and we headed out about 7:30AM. It was overcast skies but not much wind. Very little chop on the water. It looked like it would be a nice morning for fishing. Finish story.

Jesus calls us. He shows us how much He loves us. He introduces Himself as a friend that sticks closer than a brother. He heals to show His love. He delivers to show His love. He does miracles to show His power. He teaches to show His authority.

Then He tells us stories about His father’s kingdom. He tells riddles that are simple yet complex. He invites us to trust Him.

And then... He demonstrates to the world who He really is. His awesome physical power over the universe.

Jesus is stretching out His hand again today. He’s shown us how much He loves us. He’s shown us that He is God. He’s shown us that there is only one way to salvation. And he’s here again today to say you are His child.

Can you see your way clear to Him today? Can you see past all your questions, all your doubts, all the mysteries scripture and say... even though I have questions... I believe. I believe that Jesus is who He says He is...

#### ***Apostles' Creed***

*I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.  
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit  
and born of the virgin Mary.  
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
The third day he rose again from the dead.  
He ascended to heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty.  
From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.*