

Ron Armstrong • August 10 & 11, 2019

Original: Be the One Who Hears and Listens

Mark 4:1 Again Jesus began to teach by the lake...[2] He taught them many things by parables, and in his teaching said: [3] "Listen! A farmer went out to sow his seed. [4] As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. [5] Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. [6] But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. [7] Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants, so that they did not bear grain. [8] Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up, grew and produced a crop, multiplying thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times."

[9] Then Jesus said, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear." [10] When he was alone, the Twelve and the others around him asked him about the parables. [11] He told them, "The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables [12] so that,

" they may be ever seeing but never perceiving,
and ever hearing but never understanding;
otherwise they might turn and be forgiven!"

[13] Then Jesus said to them, "Don't you understand this parable? How then will you understand any parable?"

[14] The farmer sows the word. [15] Some people are like seed along the path, where the word is sown. As soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them. [16] Others, like seed sown on rocky places, hear the word and at once receive it with joy. [17] But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. [18] Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; [19] but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful. [20] Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop--thirty, sixty or even a hundred times what was sown."

A. Verse 12 isn't about a secret; it's about choice.

1. Parables were intended to VIVIDLY teach, not to cleverly hide.
2. Jesus is quoting Isaiah 6. This is where God directs Isaiah to go tell "Verse 12" to the people. It was a WARNING, not a conclusion.
3. Choose to hear AND listen.

B. What do we do with the seed of the Gospel?

Choose door #4; choose door #4!

1. Choices 1, 2, and 3 raise multiple questions and theological PUZZLES.
2. The goal of the parable isn't to understand the future or fairness of the first 3, it's to be the 4th.
 - a. Don't be the HARD-HEARTED one.
 - b. Don't be the shallow one.
 - c. Watch out for the tendency of life to choke what Christ is doing in you.
 - d. Be the person who embraces the good news, digs deep into it, and produces a huge CROP.
3. Saved and unsaved will not fit neatly because it isn't a salvation parable, it's a KINGDOM parable. (It's not about what God does with you in eternity. It's about what he is doing in you now.)

C. Living in the "Already, but not yet" Kingdom.

1. We see wonderful BLESSING from God right along with extreme pain because we live in the "Already started, but not yet fully here" Kingdom of God.