

March 27

Scriptures: Read Mark 4

Key Verse: “He who has ears to hear, let him hear!” (Mark 4:9)

Overview

This has been called by some commentators the chapter of parables. Mark suggests in verses 2, 33 & 34, that the parables here are just some of many Jesus taught. Two of them deal with the kingdom and what the kingdom of heaven is like; the other two talk about a proper response to the gospel. Just a few comments about that first parable, that of the sower. It is not so much about seed or sowers, as it is about soil. Broadcasting or scattering seed was often used as an illustration of the act of teaching, and the students were seen as the soil. Some students produced a harvest and others produced nothing—only barrenness.

The point of the parable is that any broadcasting or sowing of the truth involves some loss. And I don't think we can assume from this that because there were four kinds of soil, and only one kind bore fruit, that we should expect a return of only twenty-five percent. I feel we can assume that the good ground is most of the field. Nevertheless, men can choose to hear or not to hear. They can also choose to respond or not to respond. So it's not a case of passively bearing fruit, or passively deflecting the seed. Rather it's a matter of one actively allowing the seed to take root in one's heart. Notice the conclusion of the chapter. It's the story of Jesus calming the storm. I think the outstanding aspect of this is the terror and consternation in the minds of the disciples as they ask, “Who is this Jesus anyway? Even the winds and the waves obey Him. “Obviously the disciples hadn't tuned in to know what the demons already knew. We've seen in Mark that evil spirits were very much convinced of who Jesus was. It's ironic that Jesus should have to take three years to demonstrate who He was to an increasingly recalcitrant and hard-headed group of disciples. Perhaps we shouldn't be too hard on the religious leaders who misunderstood and rejected Jesus. His own disciples, our spiritual forefathers, not only misunderstood Him, they even forsook Him during the critical hours of His passion.

If the evil spirits recognize Jesus only because they dwell in the darker regions of the spirit realm, we shouldn't be surprised that the disciples didn't recognize Him until He had been resurrected in the space and time realm. Later, as their hearts were quickened by the Day of Pentecost events, the disciples became powerful witness to who Jesus really was—the eternal Son of God.

Prayer

All praise is due You, oh God, for the storms You calm in our lives. Grant that we might have the peace in the midst of the storm You demonstrated by sleeping in the bottom of the boat.