

DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS

Our Mission: Reaching out to leaders who can change the world.

24-28 Oct 2011

LESSON 4 GOD'S SERVANT SOWING

INTRODUCTION:

Do you think it is Biblical to be a “fruit inspector?” Explain.

OBSERVATION/INTERPRETATION:

Note. *The Parable of the Soils deals with the inner change that takes place in the life of an individual in response to hearing the Word of God. In Jesus' teaching, we see emphasized not just what is received but how it is received (receptivity of hearers). We can learn from this parable not only the spiritual truth that Jesus desired, but a “style” of communicating that may apply in our own ministry. “Listen” (vs. 3) in today's language could be, “Pay attention - the meaning is not obvious.” The people were used to hand broadcasting of seeds and its inherent inefficiency.*

Read Mark 4:1-20

1. Why is Jesus teaching by the lake instead of a synagogue? Vs 1
2. How is the seed different?
3. What happens to the seed in each soil?

Note: Vs 9 “He who has ears to hear, let him hear” This is a Semitic idiom. It shows the need for careful thought and personal application. This probably reflects the Hebrew prayer, the Shema (Deut. 6:4), which meant “to hear so as to do.” Hearing must result in action (James 2:14–26).¹

4. Why did Jesus teach in parables? Vv 11-12; **Matt 13:14**
5. Why would Jesus choose to give more details to a chosen few? **Lk 12:48; 2 Cor 4:4**
6. Why is the seed more productive in some soil than in others?
7. If the Holy Spirit and personal receptivity are needed to understand spiritual truth, who can be saved? **Matt 11:25-27; John 6:44; Mark 3:29** How?
8. Do you think that salvation is more of an initial decision to trust Christ or a lifelong commitment to discipleship?
9. What spiritual lesson(s) is Jesus teaching?

APPLICATION

- There are really just two types of soil – productive and nonproductive. Which one are you?
- How would you encourage someone towards hearing and responding to the Gospel?

Initial acceptance of a truth is not the only criterion (vv. 17 and 19). Biblical faith is not based on a past emotional decision, but on a growing relationship. Salvation is not a fire insurance policy or a ticket to heaven, but a restored “image of God,” which allows intimate fellowship with God. A joyful germination is no substitute for a fruit-bearing relationship (v. 20).²

Parables, which typically revealed truth, are shown in this context to conceal it. Is this a contradiction? No, because parables are more than illustrations; they are also spiritual tests. They hide the truth from those who do not seek truth, but they reveal truth to those who seek it.³

^{1 2} Utley, R. J. D. (2001). *Vol. Volume 2: The Gospel According to Peter: Mark and I & II Peter*. Study Guide Commentary Series (54, 56). Marshall, Texas: Bible Lessons International.

³ Cooper, R. L. (2000). *Vol. 2: Mark*. Holman New Testament Commentary; Holman Reference (67). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.