**Follow – The Gospel of Mark - Wk 9 – Sow What!**

**The search and the cry of every heart – walked the earth 2000 yrs ago.**

**The Gospel = amazing life changing news!**

**God thru Jesus redeems & restores mankind to the creator.**

**John Mark – cousin of Barnabas - travelled w/ Apostles Peter and Paul. The first & shortest - fast paced.**

**Mark takes a break from his pace to give a glimpse into the teaching of Jesus.** **Before take a look at them – let’s ask the same Q – the disciples asked.**

**Mark 4:10 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.”**

**Purpose of the Parables:**

* **Parables were given to both hide the truth and reveal the truth**

**“Parables are for followers” – not just cool sermon illustrations.**

**They hide truth from those who are not really seeking truth.**

**Those who really want to know truth - will find understanding, those who want stuff - will be confused. The casual and curious will be turned off.**

**Parables separate those who wanted a slice of God from those truly hungry for God. They turn some into followers and turn others off.**

**Two things to understand about the Parables**

**1. They're often mistreated and misapplied**

**Read them the way they would have heard them - not pour our meaning into them, but pour God's meaning out.**

**2. They're not intended to preach doctrine**

**Every detail in a parable does not mean something, but they are meant to be a big picture of God's kingdom w/ a backdrop.**

**They're meant to capture attention and transform perspective.**

**Parable of the Sower - Mark 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. 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.”**

**13 Then Jesus said to them, “Don’t you understand this parable? How then will you understand any parable?**

**Jesus then explains the parable of The Sower:**

* **The sower is Jesus – the seed is God’s word. (v14)**
* **The 4 soils are 4 types of people / hearts - given God’s word (v15)**

**The walked on hard path = Hard Heart – Satan steals it away**

**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.**

**This person is not interested, Word never penetrates their soul**

**Been there, heard that, done that, read a book, been hurt too many times - I'm no fool - so the enemy snatches any seed**

**The rocky soil = Shallow Heart - receives, grows, but never roots**

**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.**

**Enthusiastically responds, but it's a shallow - problem is not sudden growth, but lack of depth - Trials come but no roots**

**The thorny soil = Distracted Heart - receives, grows – but drawn 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.**

**They grow... for a while - but worry, competing pursuits, distractions, desires, and misplaced priorities - choke it.**

**Weeds kill by draining nutrients from the crop, they can't co-exist. Weeds kill where they live no matter how strong the crop**

**The good soil = Attentive Heart – ready, hear, accepts, and bears fruit**

**20 Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop - some thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times what was sown.” (diff degrees of fruitfulness – but all have fruit)**

**The open heart that removes the thorns and rocks - and grows**

**Ready to hear - distractions and other pursuits are left behind**

**What we can learn from these SIDE BY SIDE parables**

1. **Not everyone will say yes to Jesus**

**Sad reality of this parable is – the possibility that not everyone in your family will know Jesus. Some hearts will not receive God’s word.**

**Jesus taught perfectly God’s word (God is lit speaking to them) and yet there were still those who did not get it and walked away.**

1. **Not everyone who says yes to Jesus is truly His**

**Don’t be misled by the quick growth – and those who quickly plug in.**

**Why do some start off on fire then drift away? Truth is not everyone who says yes to Jesus is truly His.**

**BTW Attendance in the crowd does not assure they are in the Kingdom. Not every ministry can be defined by its visible numbers.**

1. **Time will tell – who is really born again**

**One common thing about all 4 people is - they all heard! - The difference was - that only one kept it, nurtured it - and grew with it.**

**Year from now – we will know who is still following Jesus.**

**Parable of the Lamp - Mark 4:21 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, what he has will be taken away.”**

**Disciple – when you hear the Word of God, you are accountable to know it and share it.**

1. **Your faith is not a personal thing**

**This was a challenge specially to his disciples – this was a line in the sand for them. But we can’t be quite about what we’ve been given.**

**Parable of the Seed Growing: Mark 4:26 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.”**

**We are to scatter the seed of the Word of God in the lives of others (the ground) & sleep well knowing the rest is up to God.**

1. **It is not our job to save people**

**We are to faithfully spread what we know – sleep well and wait on God.**

**Up all night tossing for our children / parents / friends – God save them. His response – tell them – and leave the rest to me.**

**Isaiah 55:11 My word goes out from my mouth: and will not return to me empty but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.**

**Bible isn't an instruction manual or list of rules to follow. It lives & works its life in us. Speak it, live it, trust God to grow it.**

**The Parable of the Mustard Seed: Mark 4:30 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…**

1. **Never underestimate what God can do – through you**

**The kingdom of heaven came in a humble unassuming way - Jesus. The kingdom in the earth had small humble start - in His church.**

**A small homeless group of men & women... walking the countryside thru the HS became the Body of Christ.**

**The mustard seed teaches us - Don’t judge the end of God’s work by the beginning. God is saying - give it some time, just watch me…**

**Jesus followers started with thousands, then hundreds, then 70, then 12, then 11 – who knew that 11 men could turn the world upside down**

**Mark 4:32 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.”**

**But what about the birds here? Many see this as the presence of evil and corruption - as the kingdom grows there will be those who will try to nest in it, eat at it, steal its seed - to kill it.**

**Be careful of the nesters! They’re the ones that don’t scatter the seed, they just sit around and eat the seed up – The reality is - the church of God will grow – but so will the enemy’s attempts to eat the seed.**

**Mark 4:33 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.**

**I want to end with a seed questions? Do you have ears to hear?**

**What soil are you? The Stiff hearted - The Shallow - The Sidetracked - The Accessible – Are you listening...?**

**The seed of God’s grace has been sown… what will you do with it?**