



THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK, PART 2 FEBRUARY 20,2024

1) Mapping Jesus

"Again Jesus began teaching by the lake/sea." (Mk 4:1)

As we continue through the New Testament, make sure you have a good map of ancient Palestine. Your study Bible should have at least one that you can refer to regularly.

2) Parables – "...he was teaching them many things in parables..." (Mk 4:2)

- About 1/3 of Jesus' teachings were in parables.
- Not all parables are stories.
- They are paradoxical. They reveal and conceal. They are relatable yet mysterious. They contain everyday examples but shocking twists.
- The parables typically have one main point and the details support that point, but the details don't all necessarily represent something.
- Jews were familiar with teaching by means of parables, it was a favorite method of teachers. A famous parable is in 2 Sam 12:1-7.

A common Jewish parable of Jesus' day:

One day, Parable and Truth came to town. The people ran and hid from unadorned Truth. But when Parable came, dressed in brightly colored clothes, they poured into the streets and celebrated. Truth complained to Parable, "I don't understand. Yesterday the people ran away from me. But when you told them the same thing today they celebrated." Parable explained, "People can't stand up to look on naked Truth, but they will listen to it dressed in Parable."

2 Things to Remember:

- 1) To understand any parable properly we need to have a knowledge of the circumstances in which it was spoken.
- 2) It is impossible to find the whole of the Christian faith in any one parable. Each parable illustrates one aspect of truth.

The Structure of Mark 4

1-9 = Parable of the Sower

10-12 = Purpose of the Parables (note: no longer in the boat speaking to the massive crowd)

13-20 = Parable of the Sower explained

21-25 = The Lamp Under the Bushel

26-29 = Parable of the Seed Growing

30-34 = Parable of the Mustard Seed (note: at the end of this story, looking into vv 35-36, they are now in the context of a boat, leaving the crowd)

35-41 = What is the purpose of this story in the context of the rest of this chapter?

THINGS TO NOTE:

- Mark's sandwich technique

- Insiders and outsiders "to you" and "to those" (this motif was started in Mark 3)

Jesus' Authority – Extends to Power Over Nature

In many Old Testament passages, the sea represents chaos and danger. Wind and water typically symbolize hostile forces against which God prevails. One dimension of God's power is the divine ability to bring order and rescue out of chaos. Jesus' power of command over a storm

(and later his ability to walk on water in Ch 6) would likely have reminded Mark's readers of Psalm 107:23-32.

The disciples are witnessing Jesus do only what God can do. Are they beginning to understand what is going on? "Who then, is this?" (note this question was asked at the beginning of Mark's gospel in 1:27).

Fearing God is twofold – it is reverent awe and it is fearing the might of the power that God exacts (that can be scary!)

Exodus 14:31 – "And when the Israelites saw the mighty hand of the Lord displayed against the Egyptians, the people feared the Lord and put their trust in him and in Moses his servant."

The question here, at the end of Mark 4 is: Will the fear the disciples feel lead them to "trust in Jesus?"

Mark 5 – From a Violent Storm Outside to a Violent Storm Inside

To Consider:

- The geographic location of the story of the man with the demon

- The insider/outsider motif

- Both this story and the previous story of the storm end with people feeling afraid. What do these stories tell about human responses to Jesus?

The Markan Sandwich – 5:21-43

21-24 – Jairus begs Jesus to heal his daughter

25-34 – A hemorrhaging woman is healed by Jesus

35-43- Jesus resurrects Jairus' daughter

What are the similarities between the two stories?

Why might these two stories be told after the Gerasene man with the demon?

How does this “sandwich” literary device add more depth to the stories?