

## Daily Bible Study

### *“Light & Responsibility”*

#### *Mark 4:21-25*

*February 21-27, 2010*

**THE LORD’S DAY & MONDAY** – This week as we continue to move along in **chapter 4** we will look specifically at **Mark 4:21-25**. This group of verses serves as a divider of sorts to the words of Jesus concerning the *Soil, Seed, and Sowers*. We will find that Mark returns in **verse 26-29** to elaborate further on the theme and specifics of the truths we saw in **“The Parable of The Soils”** recorded in **Mark 4:1-20**. This particular section of **Mark 4:21-25** is sometimes referred to as **“The Parable of The Lamp”**. It contains various sayings of Jesus that we can find recorded in many places elsewhere in the New Testament Gospels. These words and sayings were often repeated by Jesus in other settings and in other teaching scenarios. This is not to say that we have here a “hodgepodge” or totally disconnected truths from what we have just heard. We will show the continuity in thought as we progress through the study of this text. We just simply recognize the fact that these various verses and their thoughts are found repeated in several other places in the New Testament—I.E. (**Matthew 5:15, 7:2, 10:26, 11:15, 25:29, Luke 6:38, 8:16-18, 11:33**). One of the things we will learn from this group of verses is a lesson concerning mans responsibility and duty to the truth (*light*). Regardless of the fact that the truth being taught was often in Parables and that Christ Himself taught about Divine revelation being obscure and *hidden* to those without *ears to hear*, we are still clearly taught and told that men are still responsible. Those of us who “get it”, who understand this eternal truth are also responsible to shine *the light*, put the *lamp* out so that this dark world may receive the illumination and benefit of *the light*. God has determined the outcome of His gospel but it is our responsibility as His followers to shine this light of the gospel of the kingdom to the world. Truth will be revealed in God’s time and there will be reward given for diligent effort and obedience to *the light*. Not only do we see reward to the diligent and obedient hearer but also the judgment of the slothful and disobedient hearer as even what *light* he had is said to be *taken away* from him. *The Word* and the life in harmony with it are fertile hearts that resemble shining *lamps* which must not be hidden but instead must shine forth the gospel message.

*The Word Applied: Is your hearts desire to hear & obey the Lord’s Word? Do you see the need for improvement in your life concerning the shining of the gospel message? How bright is your lamp?*

*Suggestion for Prayer: Father, forgive my sin of complacency in not shining the light of your truth as I should. Help me love Your truth more & more and bless me in my understanding & sharing it.*

**TUESDAY** – **Mark 4:21** “Also He said to them, “Is a lamp brought to be put under a basket or under a bed? Is it not to be set on a lampstand?” In Jesus’ statement we are given a little education concerning the furniture in the homes of His day. The three words *lamp, basket, and bed* all describe very common pieces that would not only be familiar but also found in the homes of His hearers. Just taking this saying at face value it is obvious that it appeals to the common-sense of the hearer. A man logically does not take and light a *lamp* (candle or light) and then place it under a bushel basket or the bed if he wants light in the house. He instead takes and places this lamp on a raised stand or a shelf which allows it to visibly broadcast its light to the home. Jesus saw this very act preformed probably countless times in His life and the people listening to Jesus all could paint a visible picture in their minds as He spoke. As a side note, notice how Jesus takes the simplest things and matters of ordinary common life and illustrates such high, eternal truths from them. May we not be quick to discard the visible reminders of truth that lie before us each and every day. Here in our text, Jesus uses a common lamp and its light to teach that the light, the gospel, the truth is meant to be held up, to be shone. What is the light? The Psalmist has described *Thy Word* as both a *lamp to my feet* and also a *light to my path* (**Psalm 119:105**). It is the Word of God that provides sight to the blind in Salvation and also to provide visibility in this dark world for the believer to walk through this life with direction and guidance. We learn from historical accounts, one from Dr. Philip Melancthon (a colleague of Martin Luther and author of The Ausburg Confession), that when Luther discovered the truth of God’s Word he did not go hide it and plan some clandestine operation. Luther went and posted his 95 theses on the door of **The Church of All Saints** on October 31, 1517. This church faced Wittenberg’s main thoroughfare, and as was common back then, the church door functioned as a public bulletin board of sorts and was the logical place for posting important notices. By posting his document when he did, on the eve of the “All Saints

Day” mass, he knew his challenge to the sale of indulgences based in the truth of God’s Word would be seen and read by the immense crowds coming to the Church for worship the next day. We know what resulted but suffice to say if he were concerned with his safety and well being he would not have acted as he did. But Luther was shining the light of truth, holding it up as it were, placing it on a stand for the light to shine in the darkness. He was more concerned with truth and did not conceal it in the interest of cowardly safety. Read **Matthew 5:14-15**.

*The Word Applied: Do your actions demonstrate you have a greater fear of God or Man? Do you cherish and love God’s truth? Is it important enough to you to shine it regardless the cost?*

*Suggestion for Prayer: Father, help me to love You and Your Word more than I do. Give me greater boldness to speak the truth in love and shine the light in this dark world.*

**WEDNESDAY – Mark 4:22** “For there is nothing hidden which will not be revealed, nor has anything been kept secret but that it should come to light.” Some see Jesus in this verse only speaking concerning the principle that sinful man is often attempting to hide and conceal things and the Lord will one day expose and uncover them. This is a Biblical principle which we should learn from as Scripture points to this truth over and over (**Ecclesiastes 12:14, Romans 2:16, 1 Corinthians 4:5**). Scripture is clear in teaching that mankind will not “get away” with anything. Although this Biblical principle is seen here from this verse the particular context of

the passage does not allow us to stop there in our interpretation. Jesus is saying that temporary concealment is for final manifestation and a means to that end. Taking all the places in Scripture where Jesus spoke about these issues we learn that this truth of *nothing hidden* and *kept secret* goes hand in hand with the disciples mandate to *shine the light*, proclaim the truth of the gospel. *The light* exposes the sin and reveals. Jesus has been speaking of the shining forth of *the light* and the scattering of the *seed of the word*. Remember that He has been speaking these truths in parables which were hidden to many eyes and hearts. He is now explaining to his disciples that they have a role in this distribution (*sowing seed, shining light*) of His Word. When we hide something say from our spouse or children it is hidden with the thought in mind that when the time comes we will reveal it and surprise them as it were. In Jesus ministry and God’s time table if you will certain things were hidden, they were mystery. We are not to sit and speculate about God’s plan but rather obey Him by shining the light. We are to trust God that the Light will do its work and in God’s time the hidden things will be brought to light. Jesus spoke along these lines in **John 16** as He instructed His disciples concerning His departure and The Holy Spirits coming. After Jesus’ Resurrection and Ascension things hidden began to be even more revealed and understood. In God’s time certain mysteries were made known (See for example **Ephesians 1:9, 3:2-6**). In closing read these passages which tie together this matter of revealing along with the mandate to proclaim the truth and shine the light of God’s Word and gospel. **Matthew 10:26-27, Luke 12:2-12**.

*The Word Applied: Are you to busy trying to figure out God’s next move that you fail to obey the clear commands He has already revealed? Our responsibility is to trust God and shine the light.*

*Suggestion for Prayer: Father, help me be faithful to trust You for all of what I don’t yet know & to obey You in what I do know. Increase my growth in grace & knowledge of Jesus and obedience.*

**THURSDAY – Mark 4:23-24** “If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.” Then He said to them, “Take heed what you hear. With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given.” We find for the second time in this chapter (**4:9, 23**) Jesus calls for men’s attentive hearing to the eternal, momentous truths He is declaring. **Verse 23** repeats **verse 9** but they differ in that we now have a condition “If anyone has ears to hear” as opposed to the relative clause “He who has ears to hear...” Perhaps Jesus already has seen some inattention among the hearers. He then calls them to diligently pay attention to what they hear. In **Luke 8:18** we are told to take heed how we hear. Both what and how are in view as we are called to be attentive and aware of what, to whom, and how we listen. The reason we must take heed is found as Jesus continues. He says in essence to the degree in which you work at hearing, obeying, and applying My Words, to that degree you will be rewarded. The measure is given accordingly. The person, who labors studiously to understand and faithfully obey, will find that you will be granted more spiritual knowledge. Men will be treated according to what they make of their opportunities of learning. Pay attention, labor to hear and obey and you will be well rewarded. Be lazy, inattentive, and slothful and your reward will be small accordingly. We also find the language here speaks to this issue of

sowing and growing crops and producing fruit. This concept is found in the use of the word *measure*. Jesus seems to also be saying that these rewards go beyond personal growth but they extend to the harvest of souls and spread of this Kingdom message and gospel. God is a generous God and He rewards diligent obedient effort. Scripture is replete with this message. We have many examples both directly and indirectly of this Godly blessing and generosity. We will see some illustrations of this throughout Scripture this Lord's Day but for now read these verses containing this truth: **Matthew 6:33, John 1:16, Ephesians 1:7, James 4:6.**

*The Word Applied: Do you spurn God's grace by not working hard at learning and listening to His Word. Do you faithfully avail yourself to all of God's generously given teaching that takes place in and through this local church and His appointed teachers? How should you approve?*

*Suggestion for Prayer: Father, convict me of my lazy and selfish sinfulness of not working hard at learning and listening and of not being faithful to expose myself to what You have so generously given and provided for me to learn. Help me see I'm hurting myself and my growth.*

**FRIDAY & SATURDAY** – **Mark 4:25** “For whoever has, to him more will be given; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him.” This last verse of our texts graphically and horrifically drives home the point we were making yesterday. In its fullest and truest sense it speaks to *the light* being “eternally shut off” if you will for the one who does not hear and heed the gospel message. The person who is deceived and thinks they *have* will find out that even that superficial acquaintance with spiritual matters that they once had will be *taken away from him*. This is a warning Jesus often gave to the religious Jews and to professing Christians or disciples. Even what *light* these false professors thought they possessed will be snuffed out and they will then and forever realize their eternal lost and dark state. The warning is to not be indifferent, slothful and lazy concerning the light and its revelation but to be honest before it; humbly repenting and turning before it is too late. In **Matthew 6:22-23** and **Luke 11:33-36** we read of this warning again and see it is about one's ability to perceive accurately their state and humbly repent and by God's power, change. Not only are the false professors warned in this text but us who are true and genuine believers are as well. We who have Gospel *light* and knowledge, and diligently hear and obey, making use of it, we will have more. We will grow in grace and knowledge of Jesus and be conformed to the image of Christ as we grow and mature into the measure of Christ (**Ephesians 4:11-13**) and finally shine like the stars forever and ever (**Daniel 12:3**). Those who diligently hear and obey Jesus' words will increase and abound more and more in the knowledge of the truth.

*The Word Applied: How diligent are you at hearing & obeying? Are you superficial or real?*

*Suggestion for Prayer: Father, I confess my sin of slothful listening. Help me grow and mature.*