

SERIES: GETTING TO KNOW JESUS

SUBJECT: Do You Dare Find Out Who You Are?

SCRIPTURE: Mark 4:1-2; 10-12; 21-25; 33-34

SERMON NO. 7

Introduction

Jesus knew His audience and what they needed; He knows us as individuals and what we need. In the coming weeks as we get to know Jesus, our eyes shall be opened as to who we are and what we need, to become true and effective followers of Jesus Christ.

Popular people draw crowds. Jesus continues to gain popularity and the crowds are getting larger and larger. Jesus actually fears for His safety, and has already discussed with his disciples a plan of escape should the crowds get out of control....

Mark 4:1 He began again to teach by the sea side, and there was gathered unto him a great multitude, so that he entered into a ship, and sat in the sea; and the whole multitude was by the sea on land.

The crowd grew because they wanted something from him. He was healing the sick, the lame, the blind, the deaf, the demon possessed, and the lepers. However, one fact stands out.. Every person Jesus healed eventually died and still dies today. When a person dies, they face the reality of eternity, either with God, or separated from God. This was what Jesus was most concerned about, and still is today! *We were reminded of this in..*

Mark 1:15 The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye, and believe the gospel.

In Chapter 4 Jesus begins His teaching ministry concerning a personal relationship with God. He is using parables or stories to get his point across to both His disciples and to the crowds. Jesus had just told a parable about a farmer who plants his seed. Those about him had a problem understanding this method of teaching. *Notice...*

Mark 4:10 *When he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve asked of him the parable.* We don't understand...So Jesus gives three reasons why He uses this unusual teaching method.

I. THERE ARE TWO KINDS OF HEARERS. (4:10-11)

1. The first kind of hearer is the minority. (11a). Those who really want to follow Jesus and learn from Him. This group of people listen to Jesus, accept His authority, and are committed to Him. To this group of people he gives the "**mystery of the Kingdom of God**", which is a relationship with God.

Illustration: When all of our children were at home our family loved to put together jigsaw puzzles. If there was a jig saw puzzle in a yard sale we bought it! We would gather around the table putting that jig saw puzzled together. It was so disappointing to have the puzzle almost completed, yet to find out that some of the pieces were missing. Without those missing pieces the puzzle was incomplete.

Does this describe your life? You have put all the pieces in place; education, position, recognition, marriage, nice home, friends; yet, with all these pieces in place, something is still missing! Your life is not complete. *It is not complete because...*

You have not established the proper relationship with Jesus Christ. As a follower of Christ, you have not submitted to His authority as the leader of your life. People who submit to this authority are the first group of listeners. *Notice the last part of this verse...*

2. The second kind of hearer is the majority, those without. (11b). **But unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables.** Those on the outside are people who are not disciples of Jesus, they do not follow him. They are not open to understanding and obeying the leadership of Jesus in his or her life. To these people, the truth is hidden. To these people, the parables will only be stories without much meaning. *Jesus quotes from Isaiah..*

Mark 4:12 **That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them.**

Who closed these people's eyes? It wasn't God, was it?! It was the people themselves who closed their own eyes! And why did they close their eyes?

Matthew 13:15. **For this peoples heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.**

These are the people who refuse a relationship with God. They do not want to be healed from the sickness of sin in their lives. This describes the majority of people in this crowd, as well as today.

II. THE UNIQUE WAY PARABLES WORK IN A PERSON'S LIFE. (22). **There is nothing hid, which shall not be manifested; neither was anything kept secret, but that it should come abroad.**

There are three ways parables work.

1. They hide the truth to make it more visible. (22). **There is nothing hid, which shall not be manifested;**

Illustrate: This technique is used all the time. I remember Johnny Carson talking about an interview he had with Jack Benny years ago. To express his discomfort with being interviewed, Benny said, "I feel like a pair of brown shoes with a tuxedo." In other words, he felt out of place. But instead of coming right out and saying the truth that he felt uncomfortable, Jack Benny hid the truth of his feelings in a word picture. And that word picture conveyed his feelings far more powerfully than if he had come right out and said how he really felt. So, that's the first way that parables work. *Notice the second way...*

2. By searching, you find more than you expect. (24). He said unto them, take heed what ye hear; with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you; and unto you that hear shall more be given. This means that when you search for truth about a relationship with God, you will not only find it, but you will find more than you ever expected.

Illustrate: If you read your Bible only as a book, and not as the source of truth about God and a relationship with Him, it will only be a book. And probably the most dull and boring book you can ever imagine reading. But if you search the Bible and seek the truth about life's mysteries and look to it for the answers to life's difficulties, then you will find these answers in abundance. *Notice the third way parables are used...*

3. Use it or lose it. (25). For he that hath, to him shall be given; and he that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath. This is a simple fact of growth and life. If you do not use what you have in life, you will lose it. If you exercise your spiritual muscles and search for God's truth in His word, you will increase your spiritual strength. You will become stronger in your faith, stronger in your understanding of your relationship with God, and stronger in your ability to communicate that faith. But if you slack off from studying God's word and you don't work to put that truth into practice in your life, the faith you do have is going to shrivel up to where your faith in God won't make much of a difference in your life at all. *Third reason for parables...*

III. WE CAN ONLY UNDERSTAND SO MUCH. (33-34). With many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to hear it. But without a parable spake he not unto them; and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples.

God only reveals as much to us as we can understand at any given time.

(33). With many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to hear it. Parables were designed to reveal something about God and a relationship with Him in bit-sized and manageable pieces for us, so we can take them and use them, without being overwhelmed by the truth of the greatness of God.

Conclusion

Do you want to know who you are regarding what is really important in life and eternity? Will you dare to find out?

There is an old gospel song where one verse goes like this...

Open my eyes, that I may see Glimpses of truth Thou hast for me; Place in my hands the wonderful key, That shall unclasp and set me free.

May God open each of our eyes in the coming weeks and months to show us who we really are, as we get to know Jesus through his parables, teachings and conversations. If we need changing, to give us the willingness to change. If we are doing it right, to give us the power to keep doing it right. If we need help, to give us the courage to ask Him for it.