

**Feb 17<sup>th</sup>, 2019**  
**Parables Continued**  
**Mark 4:21-34**

**BIBLE IN A YEAR READING PLAN**

Feb 10 Leviticus 26-27	Feb 14 Numbers 7
Feb 11 Numbers 1-2	Feb 15 Numbers 8-10
Feb 12 Numbers 3-4	Feb 16 Numbers 11-13
Feb 13 Numbers 5-6	Feb 17 Numbers 14-15

**Lesson Introduction:** Last week we spent time looking at *The Parable of the Sower*, and discussed why Jesus spoke in parables, and what He was teaching us about God's kingdom through them. This week, we will cover three more teachings of Jesus, looking at each one individually, and once again, we will learn about the nature of the kingdom of God. As we study, we will consider **A Lamp Under a Basket, The Parable of the Growing Seed, and The Parable of the Mustard Seed.**

**FOUNDATIONAL TRUTHS OF THE PASSAGE:**

- **Christ is made manifest to the world by the light He shines through His followers (V. 21-25)**
- **Faithful service to the Lord results in more growth and responsibility (V. 24-25)**
- **Salvation and Spiritual growth is produced by God through the seed of His Word (V. 26-29).**
- **The kingdom of God arises by seemingly insignificant means, to the glory of God (V. 30-32)**

**Mark 4:21-34**

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, even what he has will be taken away."

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."

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, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade."

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.

**Discussion Section 1: A Lamp Under a Basket (V. 21-25)**

-What (or Who) does the lamp represent?

-What did Jesus mean by saying that "**nothing is hidden except to be made manifest**"?

-How is Jesus made manifest to the world today?

**Note:** Throughout the Gospel of Mark, we have seen Jesus continually tell people not to make Him known after performing miracles. Even in our passage today, we see once again how He spoke in parables to those on the outside, only explaining them later to His disciples (V. 33-34). Yet we come to these verses about a lamp, and in them, Jesus is making clear that the purpose of a lamp is not to be concealed, but to be shone forth brightly, placed on a stand to light the way for those who would otherwise be in darkness. This lamp that is meant to shine brightly rather than remain hidden, is none other than Jesus Himself.

Jesus makes the statement in verse 22 that, "**nothing is hidden except to be made manifest; nor is anything secret except to come to light.**" As we considered last week, at this point in Jesus' ministry, He was concealing His messiahship, waiting for the Father's perfect timing to come about. In our passage today, Jesus is stating that there is coming a time where He will no longer seek to conceal who He is but will instead command His disciples to make Him known freely to the ends of the earth (**Matthew 28:19-20**)! As Christians, we are not called to conceal Christ's identity, but rather, we are called to

shine forth His Gospel as brightly as possible, in both word and deed (**Colossians 3:17, Matthew 5:14-16**). What a privilege it is to be called to be lampstands for the light of Christ's glory!

Jesus makes clear to His disciples that, because they have been blessed with the light of Christ, much is expected and required of them (**V. 24-25**). As believers, because much has been given to us in Christ, much is expected of us as His disciples! We have been seated with Christ in the heavenly places (**Ephesians 2:4-6**) and called to shine forth His glory through good works which He has prepared for us (**Ephesians 2:10**). As we continue to faithfully sow what God has given us, Jesus is telling us that He will continually add more and more blessings to our lives (**Galatians 6:8-10**).

### **Discussion Section 2: The Parable of the Growing Seed (V. 26-29)**

-What does this passage tell us about the way growth in God's kingdom comes about?

-What does this section teach us about our role in bringing others to salvation?

-How might understanding this passage give us freedom?

**Note:** *This section is meant to coincide with Jesus' earlier parable of the sower, which we covered in our lesson last week. There, we saw how the responsibility of the sower is to simply scatter the seed liberally. In this continuation of that parable, we see Jesus giving more insight into the way the harvest is ultimately brought about.*

*In verse 27, Jesus makes plain that the sower is not the one who ultimately decides how the seed will grow and flourish. Ultimately, the growth comes about through a rather miraculous process, which the sower cannot control. Jesus uses similar language when discussing the role of the Spirit in the new birth with Nicodemus. There He says, "Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." (John 3:7-8). So, what we learn from Christ is that salvation and spiritual growth are like a plant that mysteriously grows in the soil, and the wind, which blows where it pleases.*

*Understanding this parable should lead to great freedom in the lives of believers! First, we should rejoice that our salvation is not a work of our own might or stick-to-itiveness, but a work of God, the Gardener of our souls, who has saved us through His Son, by the power of His mighty rushing Spirit. Secondly, because this reality is true, we are free to spread His word liberally to all, knowing that we serve a powerful God, who is able and willing to take our efforts in sharing the Gospel, and reap a bountiful harvest by the power of His Spirit!*

### **Discussion Section 3: The Parable of the Mustard Seed (V.30-34)**

-Why does Jesus choose a mustard seed to compare with the kingdom of God?

-What is Jesus ultimately saying about God's kingdom in this parable?

-Why does God choose to bring about His plans and purposes by seemingly insignificant means?

**Note:** *We close out this lesson by considering how Jesus compared the kingdom of God to a mustard seed. It might seem strange that Christ would choose such a small seed to help us understand such a grand topic! One would think that Jesus might have said, "the kingdom of God is like a grand palace." But instead, He uses the example of a small, ordinary seed, in order to show that His kingdom is a kingdom that takes seemingly insignificant people, and radically transforms them into something glorious.*

*Throughout the Scriptures, God is always taking that which seems insignificant to the world and using it for His glory (**1 Corinthians 1:26-28**). He continually picked the youngest to be heir (**Genesis 25:23, 1 Samuel 16**), used barren women to further His purposes (**Genesis 11:30, 25:21, Luke 1:7**), and ultimately, He sent His Son into the world to be laid in a manger, live a life that led to ridicule even from His own family, and die on a cursed tree as an accused criminal. All of these are examples of God's overwhelming power to take what the world deems foolish, and through it, create a great kingdom. For those of us who are His children, we can rejoice in knowing that He has taken us, as insignificant people, and made us into people who are meant to bless the entire world by the power of His Spirit in us (**Acts 1:8**).*