

“The Sermon by the Sea”

Mark 4:21-34

Introduction

- Prepare to be blessed – for this morning we are going to listen to the greatest teacher there has ever been, and for those of you that are thinking what???– okay, Jason your arrogance has just gone off the charts
 - For you that think I am talking me, you are mistaken

No – what I am really talking about this morning is we are given a great opportunity to hear a first hand account of what Jesus, the greatest teacher that has ever been, choose to teach the multitudes as they sat by the sea of Galilee

- So picture it with me in your mind
 - Jesus is out a few feet onto the sea of Galilee, sitting on the edge of a boat, you hear the small waves gently lapping onto the shore where you are sitting
 - **Around you is the Galilee and pictures are rotating through on the screens so we can help your imagination**

And Jesus is about to share with you a five point sermon on growing in your relationship with God and expanding God’s Kingdom in your world

- a Five point sermon, I have entitled, “The Sermon by the Sea”
 - each point separated by the phrase, “And He said to them”
- if you have a Bible where Jesus’ words are in red, it is really clear as you can see on the screen how it looks in my Bible, v21, v24, v26 and verse 30

accept *it*, and bear fruit: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred.”

²¹Also 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? ²²For there is nothing hidden which will not be revealed, nor has anything been kept secret but that it should come to light.

²³If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.”

²⁴Then 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. ²⁵For whoever has, to him more will be given; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him.”

²⁶And He said, “The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground, ²⁷and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how. ²⁸For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head. ²⁹But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come.”

³⁰Then He said, “To what shall we liken the kingdom of God? Or with what parable shall we picture it? ³¹*It is* like a mustard seed which, when it is sown on the ground, is smaller than all the seeds on earth; ³²but when it is sown, it grows up

and becomes greater than all herbs, and shoots out large branches, so that the birds of the air may nest under its shade.”

The Sermon by the Sea – Mark 4:1-34

5 Point Message on Growing in Christ and Expanding the Kingdom

Point One – Our heart needs to be good soil – Mark 4:1-20

Point Two – Don’t hide your light – Mark 4:21-23

Point Three - Be careful how you listen - Mark 4:24-25

Point Four - Do your job, then trust the Lord – Mark 4:26-29

Point Five - Watch out for the birds – Mark 4:30-32

- Pastor Rob covered the first one last week – if we want to grow in Christ, if we want to see the Kingdom of God expanded then we need to have hearts ready to receive
 - If you missed last week’s sermon, do yourself a favor and listen to it online or from our podcasts
- But we have already gone over point one, and now it is my job, because I talk faster I guess to cover points 2-5 in the same amount time as we took last week to cover point one

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Jesus being the greatest teacher to ever live, uses pictures that were familiar to people to explain a point

- people ask me sometimes, meanly, I don’t understand - why do you tell so many stories?
 - The answer - because it helps people, I know you have the whole Bible down, except the parts about love
 - But some people needs pictures, I need pictures to help me understand

Sometimes I read directions and I just can’t get it, what IKEA?, what little knob do you want me to turn with that tool you gave me, that isn’t even really a tool, it’s a device to make you question your manhood, but anyway – I read the directions, attach piece dd to zz with a sprocket and you nicely provided for IKEA tool – what?? – but then I see it in picture form and I think oh – I get it, that piece looks like this piece, and I attached it to what looks like this piece, with my IKEA tool and okay – I like pictures

- Well Jesus used pictures to teach truth

And Jesus is using a lantern to teach how we hold the truth God has put into our heart

- Jesus asks, “what is the purpose of a lantern”? What is the purpose of light?
 - Well, for one it helps us see - the older you get you realize this

I laugh at our younger pastors, you go into their offices and they have this low

mood light on, look cool if you were going out to dinner but they come to my office and the florescent are up full blast and they ask – why? I can't get into the Spirit in this light - and I say we'll I can't read in your office - I used to make fun of my parents, now I'm just glad my iPhone has a light and most books I read are on an iPad, I need light, light helps us see

Light also chases away the darkness, and the critters that love the darkness

I remember when we were on a missions trip to Maui, (Another story?? – love brother, love) because someone has to do it and I was willing - and the house we were staying in was older and the first night a guy got up to go to the bathroom and I thought I saw the wall move, so I got up and turned on the light and hundreds of coach roaches on the wall began scurrying to the holes in the walls

- light sent away the darkness and the creatures that love the dark creatures

Now seeing this, that light helps us to see, that is chases away the darkness - we begin to understand what Jesus is saying

- you want to grow??
- you want to expand the kingdom of God in your sphere of influence?
 - then you can't take the light that God has placed in your heart and hide it under a basket

The light that was meant to help people see the truth, that light was meant to make the darkness flee - you can't hide that

- You know a secret agent Christian is not the plan - some people are like that –
 - I just have my own faith but its hard to see because I don't want to put my faith on others

Brothers and sisters - why not???

- Is it not true that in His presence fullness of joy???
 - Is not Jesus the best thing that ever happened to you???
 - not that there is not trials, but I love Jesus
- He is the only hope for the world and I want everyone to know - So let it shine
 - The song we sang as kids, not the best musically, but theologically it was pretty good

This little light of mine, I am going to let it shine

- hide it under a bushel – no, I am going to let it shine
- won't let Satan – puff it out – I am going to let is shine – let it shine, let it shine
 - people let it shine
 - let what Jesus has done in your heart, effect the way to live at work, at home, with your friends
- you want to grow, you want to see the Kingdom of God expanded – let it shine!!!!

- And help people to see
- Help drive away the darkness

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We want to grow, we want the kingdom of God expanded

- we need to not just let our lights shine, but in order to have light in us, we need to be careful, how we hear, that we hear

Listen, we live in a world in which the availability of good bible teaching is everywhere - it used to be that you could use the excuse, well if I went to a good church then I would grow, but I have to listen to pastor Jason so what hope do I have?

- Well, in this day and age you can be discipled by anyone
 - A simple search on line and you have at your finger tips years of Bible studies by almost any Bible teacher – online teaching, podcast are available whether your favorite teacher is pastor Jason or pastor Rob or some pastor that lives on the other sides of the country

And if you can do this little thing called reading – you have ability to be discipled by anyone that has ever lived - We have no excuses

Besides listening to our pastor every other Sunday, I have those times in the week when I'm mowing the lawn, pulling weeds, spending time at the gym, God just pressed upon my heart years ago – redeem the time - I have a few pastors that I listen to every week, not to prepare a Bible study, but just because I love Jesus and I want to grow in Him – I want to keep growing in my relationship with God

The opportunity is there, we need to listen and we have to be careful how we listen

- because as Pastor Rob mentioned last week, just because something is entering your ears, it doesn't mean you are listening

You know its too bad, hearing is such an important part of life, of marriage and growing in the Lord, but you can't take a class on hearing

- You can take a class on communicating - make eye contact, review your material, introduce and conclude
 - But hearing – I don't know of a place where you major on hearing, but it is too bad because it is important

So how can we hear?

- Well, I think something that is so key is to **#1 - write down what you are learning.**
 - There is so much rattling around up there that if I don't write things down, I forget

You know, you are in a Bible study and God is ministering to your heart and you think I need to do that – yes Lord, and then the worship

team does a final song and you start to think burrito from Oscars – 2 hours later you are thinking – what life changing thing did God do in my heart today???

So what do you do? How do we combat that so we can do as Jesus exhorted and take heed how we listen?

- Write it down!!!!
 - For you younger people they have these cool things, called notebook and pens – they are made out of trees, plastic and ink and they are a fabulous invention
- They are so good for as Pastor Rob was talking about last week to write down what God is showing you, and then read over later and stay on track

We need to write down what we are learning, secondly we need to #2 - avoid distraction

- Pen and Paper??? – I have an Ipad, I have an iphone with a Bible program on it - what are you saying I can't use my ipad?
 - Yes you can, I love mine, I love mine because I can't read my own handwriting, so I pick up journals from 10 years ago and spend most of my time, thinking what does that even say
 - I love that it lights up, I can make the text as large as I want so this old man can read
 - but let me warn you, avoid distraction

When you are sitting down to read your Bible, and you can, the One Year Bible Website on the Ipad, you can get your any version of the Bible on your I-pad on the I-Pad

- But when you are sitting down to read, when you are in those of you with the Bible on your phone, Bible on the Ipads, can I encourage you to turn off the internet function, to put it on airplane mood for the few minutes you are reading your Bible, the few minutes we are teaching the study – turn off the internet
 - Why – that sounds like legalism, not, it is because I know it is so easy to get distracted

You are listening to me and I start to go off on a tangent, you are reading the Word in the morning on your phone and a thought pops in your head

- I wonder how UCLA is doing - oh their football team played in the PAC 12 championship game - did USC, oh they didn't – how about UCLA basketball - oh the won the PAC 12 regular season, and played in the championship game, did USC, no, - oh look UCLA won their first game in the NCAA Tournament, how did USC do in the NCAA tournament – oh they didn't make it
 - And all of sudden because I wonder during a tangent in a message or a thought from the enemy pops into my head while I'm reading – and I miss what God is trying to speak in to my heart

I would never search ball scores on my iphone while I listen to my Bible study, I am way too busy to be into sports

- okay, so for you busy person, don't access your calendar
 - what – but you don't understand I love to plan and sometimes right while you are speaking pastor Jason, I just remember things I am going to do and so I add it to my calendar and made me think of something else and then
 - but you don't understand because I am a planner

No – you don't understand, I am also a planner

- when I was pastoring the church in Texas I had seven years of Bible studies planned out, not prepared, but I knew, 3 from now on a Wednesday Night I am going to cover Nehemiah 1-4, I had it planned
 - Pastor Rob is trying to heal me of that
 - But I understand planning

So if you must plan during a Bible study – #3 - plan your obedience

- As you listen, God convicts you of something, speaks to your heart about an issue, go ahead plan, but not your to do list for Monday
 - Instead plan how you are going to obey the Lord
 - God I hear your Word and I will write that email to that guy, I will get that out of my house
 - Lord this is my plan to obey what I am hearing!

You want to get more out of Bible studies, you want to get more out of Bible reading

- write down what you are learning
- avoid distraction while you are learning
- And then obey - Be a doer of God's word, not just a hearer
 - The book of Hebrews chapter 5 says that strong meat is for those who use it

“But strong meat belongs to them that are of full age, *even* those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.” – Hebrews 5:14 – King James Version

- Strong meat is not for babies, its not for those who don't have teeth
 - Strong meat is for those who know what to do with it
- I don't get anything out of messages, I don't get anything out of Bible reading
 - Jesus would say – Be careful how you listen
 - Write it down, praying it in, think it through
 - Avoid distraction and then plan your obedience and obey!!!!
 - The Word, whether spoken from this pulpit or read in the morning will come alive!!!

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- Again Jesus uses pictures, pictures they would all be familiar with in order to teach truth
 - And the picture He gives here to teach them how to keep growing in the Lord and seeing His Kingdom expanded in our sphere of influence is like a Farmer, you need to do your job, but then you just need to trust the Lord to work

Being a farmer, especially in Jesus' day would have been as it is in our day, hard work

- but after the toil is done, after the work is completed of preparing the soil and planting the seed, a lot of being a farmer, again especially in Jesus day was trusting God would bring a harvest
 - even today with all of our advances in science, we still can't cause a seed to turn into a plant, its miracle even though we see it happen every day, it's a miracle that life comes out of that little planted seed
 - and it takes faith as a farmer to sit back and trust God to do what He does

But the same thing is very similar to growing in the Lord personally and expanding the Kingdom of God in your sphere of influence

- There is work for you to do, there is some discipline that is needed
 - Your job to read your Bible and pray every single day – to plan obedience, follow through

There is something for you to do – you will not deepen in your walk with God sitting on the couch watching TV eating burritos any more than you will become a great athlete doing that sort of program – there is work for you to do

- But that said – you can't change your heart
 - You can't transform your mind
 - But as you have done your part, putting your mind and heart in the good soil of God's word, in the light of His presence as we gather together to worship, watered by His Spirit
 - Trust God that He is going to work

“Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.” – James 1:7-8

- I shared this with our young men and women in chapel the other day
 - We have our part – submit to God, resist the Devil, draw near, make the conscious decision to draw near to God
 - But then He will draw near to you
 - He will do the lasting work that you so desperately need in your heart
- I don't see any evidence, keep plugging away

- I still see so much sin – keep drawing near
- I give in so much – keep resisting
- And let God do what God does in your heart

And what is true for you, is true for others

- you so desperately want to see your friends come to know the Lord
 - you so desperately want to see your loved ones come to Christ
- Well, do your part – pray for them, fast for them
 - As the Lord gives you opportunity – plant seed, share truth with them – invite them to Easter, To Gather

Do your part – no one will be one through your life if you hide your light under a basket, secret agent Christian win no one to the Kingdom

- but then as you do your part, you have to trust the Lord to work
 - you can't save anyone
 - I have had people to say to me – I expected you to save more people with that message – what???
 - I can't, you can't save anyone
- You can't change your loved ones heart, you can't convert your co workers soul
 - But you can do your part – pray
 - You can do your part – fast
 - You can do your part – share and invite
- And then once you have done what God calls you to do in your own life and in the lives of others, you need to trust God to do eternal things
- Pastor Rob covered the first one last week – if we want to grow in Christ, if we want to see the Kingdom of God expanded then we need to have hearts ready to receive

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- Watch out for the birds – they only had one good song that ripped off from Solomon

Listen when you are dealing with Parables, unless Jesus explained the parable like He did with the text that Pastor Rob covered last week, it is really hard to understand what Jesus is trying to say

- Here he compares the Kingdom of God to a mustard seed
 - The smallest of seeds that the Jews at this time would have in their gardens - **picture**
 - And yet it grows into a pretty good size bush - **picture**

And so it could be that Jesus is just teaching once again like point

number four that when it comes to growing in the Lord and expanding His Kingdom

- we just do our part and God will do more than we could ever expect
 - God often starts in our lives and in our ministries with something so small and then does something so great from the perspective of eternity
 - That could be all Jesus is trying to say

But there is something that we are taught as Bible teachers that is called the Law of Expository Constancy

- and what that fancy term basically means is, if something means something in one parable, that is what it means in all the parables
 - for example we know from the parable Pastor Rob taught last week – Jesus explained it and said, the seed is the Word of God, planted in the field which is the world full of hearts
 - and therefore every time Jesus is talking about a field or seed in a parable He doesn't suddenly change the meaning

“Well now the field is the Oceans and the seed on the ships on the sea that are under my command” – I mean it would be impossible to understand the parable if Jesus was constantly shifting meaning

The seed is the Word, the field are hearts into which that Word is sown - So with that understanding – when Jesus used the picture of birds in the first parable, He tells us in Matthew's version of this parable, Matthew 13, that the birds who took away the seed, were those under the influence of the evil one

- and if we keep the pictures consistent, what Jesus is saying in this last point in His sermon by the sea is we want to grow the Kingdom of God
 - and as we do our part, God will bless and it will grow, but we need to be on guard because sometimes in our lives “birds” come along, those who are not part of God Kingdom but seem to be
 - in other places in Scripture Jesus called them..
 - Wolves in sheep clothing

“who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.” – Matthew 7:15

- He called them in Matthew 13, tares among the wheat

“tares among the wheat” – Matthew 13:25

- Most of people in a church are genuine people that love God, I mean they are sinners, don't get me wrong, but real people who love Jesus
 - **But there are going to be tares, a weed that looks like wheat, but it is not - comparison picture #1**
 - **there are going to be wolves that look like sheep but they are not – sometimes its hard to tell – Pictures #2**
 - **other times, its not so hard – picture #3**

What – I want to expand the Kingdom of God, but sometime people

will pretend to be believers and will actually be there to rip off the flock of God – what do we do?

Well, every time Jesus teaches this principle He tells His people to be on guard, to be careful

- but to let the Lord sort it out
 - again Matthew 13 – Jesus says in the end I will deal with separating the Wheat from the Tares
 - the reason for that is - we sometimes are horrible at telling the difference
- I think of the disciples and I think no one would have picked Judas out to be the wolf, the tare
 - They probably would have picked Peter – yeah that one, lets kick him out the church, and if they did – it would have been a great mistake

So we aren't to go around kicking people out, we aren't to go accusing people of being a wolf

- but we are to be wise
 - We are to understand friends - People will let you down, people will disappoint you
 - And it maybe because they are a wolf in sheep's clothing
- **Or They may just be a sheep that bites - pic**

But don't let it distract you, and don't let it rip you off from serving the Lord –that's the enemy's plan – well if this is how God's people are, I'm out

- you know what – sometimes that is how God's people are
 - Because there is only one Jesus
 - There is only one who saved you
 - And it is for Him, not for me, not for Pastor Rob, not for the person sitting a few rows from you
 - We are here for Him

And as long as we keep our eyes on Him, our trust in Him and realize I am living to please Him – then you are going to grow, and God's Kingdom will expand in your sphere of influence – review the points!!! And close!