

# Mark 4

Tuesday, April 8, 2025 8:00 AM

## PARABLES AND THEIR PURPOSE

And he said, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.” (**Mark 4:9**)

Jesus gives an appeal to think about the kind of soil that represents their heart. If it is hard-packed and beaten down by continual neglect of God, or perhaps even by conscious opposition, He calls that person to allow His Spirit to break up the ground and make it receptive to His Word. If the soil of a person’s heart is shallow and superficial, He calls that person to allow the Spirit to remove the rocky resistance that lies beneath the surface of his seeming acceptance of the gospel and give him true faith. If the soil of a person’s heart is infested with the weedy cares and concerns of the world, He asks that person to allow the Spirit to cleanse him of his worldliness and to receive Him with no reservations or competing loyalties. (**MacArthur**)

The word parable comes from the idea of “to set alongside.” As Jesus used parables, the idea was to set a spiritual truth alongside a daily truth of living. Though this is commonly called the parable of the Sower, it should really be called the parable of the soils. The difference is not the seed, but the kind of soil it falls on.

The spiritual meaning of the parable was not immediately apparent. The disciples of Jesus, including the twelve, didn’t know what Jesus meant and they asked Him about the parable.

Jesus would answer the disciples’ questions about the parable, but first He would teach them why He used parables.

The disciples, who wanted the things of God, were given to know the mystery of the kingdom — they could be spoken to plainly. But others were often taught with parables. In the Bible, a mystery isn’t something you can’t figure out. It is something that you would not know unless God revealed it to you. In the Biblical sense of the idea, you may know exactly what a mystery is, yet it is still a mystery because you would not have known unless God revealed it. Notice that even with this “simple” parable, the disciples themselves do not understand (**Mark 4:10, 4:13, 4:33, 4:34**).

Parables, in their spiritual function, are more like riddles or puzzles than easy illustrations. They can be understood by those who have the right “key.” A parable isn’t exactly an illustration. A good teacher can illustrate by stating a truth and then illustrating the truth through a story or an analogy. But when Jesus used

parables, He didn't start by stating the truth. Instead, the parable was like a doorway. Jesus' listeners stood at the doorway and heard Him. If they were not interested, they stayed outside. But if they were interested, they could walk through the doorway and think about the truth behind the parable and what it meant to their lives. (**Guzik**)

What kind of soil best matches your spiritual condition? What needs to change?

Lord, help us to look deep inside and see what kind of soil we are so we can seek you with a pure and humble heart. One that can receive the key to your wisdom and love. One like in this parable is that we can receive the Word of God.