

Chapter 4

¹Again Jesus began to teach beside the sea. Such a large crowd gathered to him that he stepped into a boat to sit out in the sea, while the whole crowd was on the beach by the sea. ²He was teaching them many things through parables. Some of what he taught them was this:

³“Listen! The sower went out to sow. ⁴As he was sowing, some seed fell beside the pathway, and the birds came and devoured it. ⁵Other seed fell on rocky ground where it did not have much soil, and immediately it sprang up because the soil was not deep. ⁶But when the sun rose it was scorched and withered because it did not have sufficient roots. ⁷Other seed fell into the briars which grew up and choked it, so that it bore no fruit. ⁸But other seeds fell on good soil and bore fruit as it grew up and increased, and produced a yield of thirty, sixty and one-hundred-fold.”

⁹And he kept saying, “Whoever has ears to hear, let him hear.”

¹⁰When he was alone, those around him with the Twelve were asking him about the parables. ¹¹He said to them, “The secret of God’s kingdom has been given to you, but to those outside everything is in parables. ¹²So that,

*even though they see, they may not know,
and even though they hear, they may not understand,
otherwise they might turn and be forgiven.”*

¹³Jesus said to them, “If you do not understand this parable, how will you know the meaning of any parable?”

¹⁴“The sower sows the word. ¹⁵Some people respond like the seed along the pathway, where the word is sown. As soon as they hear, Satan comes and takes away the word that is sown in them. ¹⁶And some respond like the seed sown on rocky ground. When these hear the word, they enthusiastically accept it, ¹⁷but it does not take root in them and their experience is short lived. Then when hardship or persecution happens because of the word, they quickly fall away. ¹⁸“And others respond like the seed sown in a briar patch. These hear the word ¹⁹but the anxieties of this world, and the seduction of wealth, and cravings for other things enter the soul, choking the word so that it yields no fruit. ²⁰And others respond like the seed sown on good soil, who hear the word and welcome it and bear fruit – some thirty, some sixty and some one-hundredfold.”

²¹He also said to them,

“A lamp is not lit to be placed under a grain measure or under a dining couch, is it? Isn’t it placed on a lampstand? ²²For whatever is hidden is destined to be revealed, and whatever is made secret is certain to come to light. ²³If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.”

²⁴He continued,

“Pay careful attention to what you are hearing! According to the measure you use, it will be measured out to you and even more added to you. ²⁵For whoever has, will be given more. Whoever does not have, even what little he has will be taken away from him.”

²⁶He also said,

“The Kingdom of God is like a man who casts seed on the soil. ²⁷He sleeps and rises day after day, but how the seed sprouts and grows he does not know. ²⁸The soil bears a crop all by itself - first the stalk, then the ear, then the full kernel in the ear. ²⁹But when the crop is ripe, he immediately wields the sickle, because the harvest has come.”

³⁰“What can we compare the Kingdom of God to? How can we describe it in a parable? ³¹It is like a grain of mustard seed, though smaller than all the seeds on earth, when it is sown on the soil ³²grows up and becomes larger than all the garden shrubs and grows branches large enough so that the birds of the sky can rest in its shade.”

³³He used many similar parables to speak the word to them, to the extent that they were able to understand. ³⁴And apart from a parable he was not speaking to them, but privately he was explaining everything to his own disciples.

³⁵That day when evening had come, Jesus said to them, “Let us go over to the other side.”

³⁶Leaving the crowd, they took him with them, as he was already in their boat, though other boats were with him. ³⁷Then a fierce gale arose, and the swells were rushing into the boat, so that the boat was quickly filled. ³⁸But he was in the stern asleep on the pillow.

And they were rousing him and saying, “Teacher, don’t you care that we are perishing?”

³⁹Being awakened, he rebuked the wind and said to the sea, “Silence! Be quiet!”

The wind ceased raging and it became completely calm. ⁴⁰Then he said to them, “Why are you afraid? Do you not yet have faith?”

⁴¹Greatly terrified, they asked each other, “Who is this man, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”