

**“Follow Me”**  
**A Study in Mark’s Gospel**  
**Session 20 Mark 4:21-25**

**Introduction:**

**Truth:** A proper response to spiritual truth leads to greater spiritual truth, while an improper response leads to the loss of what one currently has.

**Review:** We have entered into a section of Mark where he is taking us through multiple parables of Jesus. We looked at the parable of the sower and the seed last week.

Mark 4:9-13 (ESV) *“And he said, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”<sup>10</sup> And when he was alone, those around him with the twelve asked him about the parables.<sup>11</sup> And he said to them, “To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside everything is in parables,<sup>12</sup> **so that** “they may indeed see but not perceive, and may indeed hear but not understand, lest they should turn and be forgiven.”<sup>13</sup> And he said to them, “Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables?”*

Doesn’t Jesus want them to “see”, “perceive”, “hear”, “understand”, “turn” and be “forgiven”? Of course, but He knew they wouldn’t.

This can be a confusing teaching. The key is context. The verses under consideration are a quotation from Isaiah 6:9 and following. Isaiah lived in a day when Israel had rejected God for centuries and many had crossed the point of no return. Isaiah’s preaching would not lead them to salvation, but would further harden them and condemn them. In the same way, many who were coming to Jesus in the multitudes were beyond the point of return. Their hearts were hardened to the message and they would not repent regardless of the truth that would be shared. Further truth would simply increase the sufferings of their eternal life. Jesus spoke in parables knowing that those who had ears to hear would see through the parables to the eternal truth that is contained, but those who were hardened would not.

**Two important principles to keep in mind:**

1. China to dogs and jewels to pigs. Matthew 7:6 *“Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you.”*
2. Many blows to much knowledge. Luke 12:47-48 (ESV) *“And that servant who knew his master’s will but did not get ready or act according to his will, will receive a severe beating. <sup>48</sup> But the one who did not know, and did what deserved a beating, will receive a light beating. Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required, and from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more.”*

**Summary:** Jesus knew that many in His day were hardened to the truth of the kingdom and to open their minds to this truth would not change their hard hearts, but would only increase their condemnation and severity of judgment for eternity.

**T.S.:** The parable that we come to in the text for this study illuminates this concept of hidden and revealed truth even further.

**Text:** Mark 4:21-25 (ESV)

*“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? <sup>22</sup> For nothing is hidden except to be made manifest; nor is anything secret except to come to light. <sup>23</sup> If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.” <sup>24</sup> 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. <sup>25</sup> 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.”*

**Essential Clarification:** This parable is not synonymous with the teaching of Jesus in Matthew 5:14-16.

This parable is about the **Stewardship of Spiritual Truth**.

**Verse 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?”*

The lamp referred to here is a small clay dish in which oil was poured and a wick was placed in it and lit.

When we receive spiritual truth, what we do with it is of utmost importance.

1. We can hide it by questioning its truth.
2. We can hide it by refusing its correction.
3. We can hide it by rejecting its direction.
4. We can hide by failing to share it with others.

**Truth:** Spiritual truth is not meant to be hidden, but believed, received, applied and proclaimed.

### Verse 22

*“For nothing is hidden except to be made manifest; nor is anything secret except to come to light.”*

Things are not hidden to be kept hidden, but to be revealed to the proper people at the proper time and the proper place.

Jesus doesn't hide spiritual truth or keep spiritual secrets because He doesn't want to share, but to ensure that the proper people receive them at the proper time of life and in the proper places.

*“I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.”*  
John 16:12 (ESV)

### Verse 23

*“If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.”*

Notice, Jesus doesn't say “If anyone has ears.” He says, *“If anyone has ears to hear...”*

Jesus is saying that those who really work hard to understand the parables are the ones who are going to hear and truly understand.

### Verse 24-25

*“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.”*

Mark records Jesus saying, ***“Pay attention to what you hear...”*** Luke records it as ***“Take heed how you hear...”*** There are multiple ways to hear.

- You can hear to hear or you can hear to heed.
  - James 1:22-25 (ESV) *“But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. <sup>23</sup> For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. <sup>24</sup> For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. <sup>25</sup> But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, **and perseveres**, being no hearer who forgets but a **doer who acts**, he will be blessed in his doing.”*
- You can hear to heed or you can hear to hammer others.
  - Two responses to spiritual truth:
    - 1. “I am so glad I am here to hear this. I need this reminder, the rebuke, this correction, this information, this encouragement.
    - 2. “I sure wish \_\_\_\_\_ were here.” “I sure hope \_\_\_\_\_ is listening.”

**The Law of Increase:** How we respond to spiritual truth determines the increase of spiritual truth.

***“with the measure you use, it will be measured to you, and still more will be added to you. For to the one who has, more will be given...”***

You can accelerate spiritual understanding. The more you know, the more you are capable of knowing. Understanding increases our capacity to understand.

God can only take us as far in the spiritual realm as we are willing to receive, respond, walk in and share what we have received.

**The Law of Decrease:** Use it or lose it.

**Verse 25**

***“...and from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away.”***

You can atrophy spiritually.

Two ways to avoid spiritual atrophy:

1. Listen, read and write.
2. Disseminate the truth you receive.
  - “I never really understood it till I tried to explain it to someone else.”
  - “When I began to teach, I began to learn.”
  - Spiritual truth may be learned in private, but it is preserved and enhanced in relationship with others.

**Conclusion:**

**Truth:** A proper response to spiritual truth leads to greater spiritual truth, while an improper response leads to the loss of what one currently has.

“In response to this passage I need to...”