

MARK 4:1-20

OBSERVATION: WHAT DOES THE PASSAGE SAY?

1. Where are we told that Jesus goes to teach in verse 1? How is the crowd described and what is Jesus forced to do?
2. What form of teaching does Jesus use according to verse 2?
3. The parable Jesus tells in verses 3-9 is about what?
4. What happened to the seed that fell beside the road?
5. What happened to the seed that fell on the rocky ground?
6. What happened to the seed that fell among the thorns?
7. What happened to the seed that fell into the good soil?
8. What question do the disciples ask him when they are alone? How does Jesus answer them?
9. What does Jesus identify as the seed which the sower sows?
10. What does Jesus say about each of the 4 categories of soil (road, rocky ground, thorny ground, good soil) upon which the word is sown?
11. Look at each different category and notice the emphasis on "Hear" or "heard". Note that each heard the message of the word, what are you told here is the distinction between the different responses?

INTERPRETATION: WHAT DOES THE PASSAGE MEAN?

1. What is a parable?
2. According to this passage, why did Jesus teach using parables?
3. What is the kingdom of God?
4. Summarize the parable of the sower.
5. What are the key elements in the response of men to the word that determine if that response is genuine or not? What keeps people from coming to Christ? How does this parable contribute to the discussion of the interrelationship between faith and works?
6. Define "bearing fruit."

APPLICATION: WHAT DOES THE PASSAGE MEAN TO ME/US?

1. What obstacles are you facing that keep you from responding to the word?
2. What fruit are you bearing in your life?
3. Look up James 1:19-27. What specific things that you have "heard" as a Christian do you need to "do"? What can you start this week?

ACTION PLAN

Spend time personally and with others in coming up with an action plan inspired by your study. What in this passage compels you to desire a change, to move to action, to become more like Jesus? It could be a change in thinking, behavior, character. It could be internal or external. It could be personal or relational. Just don't leave studying the Bible as simply an intellectual exercise.