

Mark 4

ASVh with Comments

Summary. Here in Chapter 4, the Lord Jesus teaches the crowd in parables, and it tells us that privately, He explains everything to His disciples. The chapter ends with the Lord Jesus and the disciples leaving the multitude and taking a boat on the sea. The Lord Jesus calms a storm, showing His disciples that He is more than just a human. The Lord reveals to His disciples the power and authority that He has over all things, seen and unseen things. Some of the parables in this chapter have similarities with other parables given by the Lord in the Gospel of Mathew and Luke, but as presented in Mark, they stand on their own and bring new understandings. The following is a summary of the parables given in this chapter. 1) The parable of the sower. The parable shows that the way your heart is is how the Word will grow, not how smart you are; the smartness will not help you understand the Word; the heart will help you understand. The openness and cleanness deep in the heart are like a curtain for the mind to understand the Word that has been sown down to it (the curtain for the heart is the openness and cleanness of your heart, which makes us understand more or less the meaning of the Word). 2) The parable of a lamp under a basket. The Bible is the lamp for all humans in the world, and the Bible cannot be hidden. Watch out and treasure your Bible; many will try to change things in the Bible. The way to know the true Bible is by the Holy Spirit; the Lord will send His Holy Spirit and convince your heart to think again and again before accepting something. 3) The parable of the seed growing. When the seed has been sown on a person, not all feel that they have something useful in them. The fruit is the gift of the Spirit; everyone has, but a different gift; when the fruit is ripe, the person who received the gift learns and accepts and knows that it is not by themselves they have it, but because of the mercy of the Lord, they have that gift. 4) The parable of the mustard seed. The whole parable relates to growing the plant. The mustard plant is easy to grow, fast, and efficient, spreading like wildfire. It is the same with the Bible; give one Bible to one country on the earth, and you will see it will grow like wildfire in that country, affecting every soul. The other garden plants refer to many faiths on earth; they all are plants on earth, but the mustard plant that the Lord picked grows bigger than them, making branches that even the birds of the air come to benefit from.

4 ¹ And again **He** began to teach by the sea. And a great multitude **was** gathered **together to Him**, so that **He**, **having** entered into a boat, sat in the sea; and all the multitude **was** by the sea on the land.

Comments 4:1. See Comments Matthew 13:1-2, and Comments Luke 8:4.

Q: Are the parables in Mark 4, Matthew 13, and Luke 8 given to the same group of people at the same time and in the same place? **A:** It was not a same-time event; it was a different group of people in the same general area, but the same parables were given. Remember that the Lord always travels. He doesn't stay long in one place, and that is why it was not exactly the same spot but a nearby area. Questions arise in many hearts; even now, look at how people struggle with the parables. In each Gospel, different words of using give different meanings. But in the Bible, it is not that the writers try to change the words; but because different people are listening, the understanding of each group and each place will be different even with the same words.

Q: Mark 4:1 and Matthew 13:1-2 say that the Lord Jesus sat in the boat, and the crowd was on the shore by the sea. Did the Lord teach this way (from the boat) on different days more than once? **A:** The Lord Jesus was in the boat on many, many occasions because there were different groups of people, and people crowded around Him. The Lord went into a boat to be able to teach each group each time. We can say that, even in Matthew and Mark, when the events show that the same parables were spoken by the Lord Jesus sitting in the boat, the Lord Jesus addressed different groups of people at different times. The Lord Jesus sat in the boat teaching, and people were coming and going, and He taught them in parables.

Q: Is this a one-time event? **A:** It was not a one-time event. Time was always changing; people were coming and going, and the Lord was traveling all the time. It has never been the same event, and it has not been in the same spot.

² And **He** began teaching them many things in parables, and said **to** them in **His** teaching,

³ Listen! Behold, the sower went **out** to sow;

⁴ and it came to pass, as he sowed, some fell by the **road**, and the birds came and devoured it;

⁵ and other fell on the rocky, where it had not much earth; and **straightaway** it sprang up, because it had no deepness of earth;

⁶ and when the sun was risen, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away.

⁷ And other fell among the thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit.

⁸ And others fell into the good ground, and yielded fruit, growing up and increasing; and brought forth, **one** thirtyfold, and **one** sixtyfold, and **one** hundredfold.

⁹ And **He** said, **He** who **has** ears to hear, let him hear.

Comments 4:1-9. For verses 1 to 12, see Comments Matthew 13:1-15 and Comments Luke 8:4-10.

Comparison Analysis Mark 4:1-9

Part 1: (Mark 4:1-2, Matthew 13:1-3a, and Luke 8:4). From these verses of Scripture, we can see that in each Gospel, the Lord teaches many things in parables, but the time and place given for each Gospel are different but not far apart.

Part 2: (Mark 4:3-4, Matthew 13:3b-4, and Luke 8:5). The main point in all three Gospels is that a sower went out to sow his seed, and the seed fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured it. In Luke 8:5 we are also told that the seed was trampled underfoot. We can see that the parables are the same, but a few words make the difference, and it depends on the listener. Because the Lord knows the hearts of people, something people can take, the Lord wants to show the way for each group to see how to take the parable, but all have the same meaning. The Lord gave the words to the writer, and each Gospel will get a little different than the other, and the reader can find help from each Gospel in different areas. For example, here in Mark, it adds more things but also cuts something out. People who read the Bible are supposed to find out what each Gospel tells and put them together and get out the core meaning.

Part 3: (Mark 4:5-6, Matthew 13:5-6, and Luke 8:6). The difference between the verses in Mark and Matthew and Luke is where the seed fell down, specifically, on rocky ground or rock; they are similar, but separate the difference out. Find common ground: don't try to look for each word itself; the word may be different, but the meaning in all three Gospels is the same; don't pick on each individual word. The difference is the key; therefore, ask yourselves why it is different. If it is only one group of people, there is no need to make a difference, but because there are not the same type of people in Mark, Matthew, and Luke who hear, the parable has differences.

Part 4: (Mark 4:7, Matthew 13:7, and Luke 8:7). The words in these verses are very similar in all three Gospels, and their meaning is the same.

Part 5: (Mark 4:8-9, Matthew 13:8-9, and Luke 8:8). The verses in Mark and Matthew are very similar, with some order differences. But in the Gospel of Luke, the yield of the good seed falling on the good soil is given only as hundredfold. However, the meaning of the parable in all three Gospels is the same; the meaning is the same, just the arrangement and order of explaining are different, which does not change the meaning.

¹⁰ And when **He** was alone, **those around Him**, with the twelve, asked **Him** of the parables.

¹¹ And **He** said to them, **To** you **has been** given the mystery of the kingdom of **God**, but **to those who** are **outside**, all things are done in parables;

¹² so that seeing they may see, and not perceive;

and hearing they may hear, and not understand;

fearing that by chance, they should turn, and **should** be forgiven **them**.

Comments 4:10-12a. See also Comments Matthew 13:10-16 and Comments Luke 8:9-1.

Q: Was the Lord asked this same question more than once by His disciples and people around Him? **A:** Now, it is a point you can see: at different times, different people were asking questions and listening to the parables; therefore, each Gospel has different questions because they are not happening at the same time. The Gospels have been given, but in each Gospel, we can notice the different times and different people around the Lord Jesus asking; so, the questions have been asked not just once. Many, many questions have been asked, but each Gospel has a different purpose, which is why they give different records; the purpose of making a difference in each Gospel is the key.

Comments 4:11-12b. For Mark 4:11-12 see also Comments Matthew 13:11.

“That seeing ... not understand.” This saying talks about people who have seen and heard the teaching of the Lord; they saw it in front of them, but they couldn’t take it. The Lord was on earth; they saw the difference between common men and the Lord, but they did not accept the difference.

“Fearing that by chance, they should turn, and should be forgiven them.” Here is not the understanding that the Lord does not want them to have; therefore, pay attention to the meaning; the purpose of each person coming around the Lord is different. Some do not want to be forgiven; they come only to criticize and try to turn away people. Those ones, even if they hear, they will never understand or accept; but, by faking, they think they can have a chance to receive forgiveness. So, this is not about the Lord giving forgiveness; the Lord gives forgiveness to all who come with sincere hearts, no exception, but here the verse does not talk about these types. Most people interpret this verse to mean that the Lord fears they will turn. How can the Lord have fear? This “fearing” is not afraid, but instead, those who are not true pretend to be faithful and can turn away the true ones; that’s all. Here, you can link this verse to the parable of the wolf that comes in the sheep’s clothing (See Comments Matthew 7:15); they have known the Lord but did not accept and pretend to believe in order to create damage for other believers; it is blasphemy (See Mark 3:28-30).

[The understanding in Mark 4:12 is that two groups of people come to the Lord: those that have sincere hearts and searching, to whom the Lord will give an understanding of the parables, and those that are fake and not sincere, so they will never understand the parables. This second group, since they don’t understand the parables, will not be able to explain anything and convince the other group about their way of understanding and make those people in the first group somehow, by chance, turn away from asking for repentance and forgiveness from the Lord, since the first group will see clearly from the Lord that they themselves are correct. If those from the first group continue asking the Lord to see clearly, they won’t fall into a trap because the Lord will always help if you come to ask. Really, the Lord does not want people who do not have faith and do not ask the Holy Spirit’s understanding to use their own mind and understanding and teach others His Word.]

¹³ And **He** says to them, Perceive **you** not this parable? And how will **you** know all the parables?

¹⁴ The sower **sows** the word.

¹⁵ And these are they by the **road**, where the word is sown; and when they hear, **straightaway** comes Satan, and **takes** away the word which **has** been sown in them.

¹⁶ And these in like manner are **those** sown upon the rocky, who, when they **hear** the word, **straightaway** receive it with joy;

¹⁷ and they have no root in themselves, but **are for a season**; then, tribulation or persecution **having arisen** because of the word, **straightaway** they stumble.

¹⁸ And others are **those** sown among the thorns; these are **those who hear** the word,

¹⁹ and the cares of **this age**, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it **becomes** unfruitful.

²⁰ And **these** are **those** sown upon the good ground; such as hear the word, and **receive** it, and bear fruit, **one** thirtyfold, and **one** sixtyfold, and **one** hundredfold.

Comments 4:13-20. For verses 13 to 20 see also Comments Matthew 13:18-23 and Comments Luke 8:11-15.

Comparison Analysis Mark 4:13-20

Part 1: (Mark 4:13-14, Matthew 13:18, and Luke 8:11). The important understanding in this part is that the “seed” is the Word of God. The “sower” is not specific who it is. The sower refers to people all over the world who are willing to tell the Word to whosoever they meet. They have the Word in their mouth all the time to tell it out to whosoever they meet; not missionaries, not pastors, all the believers who believe in the Word should tell, because everybody has a mouth to talk; this is what the mouth should speak: the Word of God.

Part 2: (Mark 4:15, Matthew 13:19, and Luke 8:12). Notice some differences in the words used in these verses of Scripture, but all give the same meaning: The ones along the path hear the Word but do not meditate on it but instead listen to the temptations of the world (See also Matthew 13:19 Comments).

Part 3: (Mark 4:16-17, Matthew 13:20-21, and Luke 8:13). Notice that in these verses in Matthew and Luke, we have the ones sown on the rock, and in Mark, the ones sown on rocky. The main understanding is that the seeds sown

on rocky ground or on rock have no root or no root in themselves. When tribulation or persecution on account of the Word comes, or testing of faith comes, they fall away (See also Matthew 13:20-21 Comments).

Part 4: (Mark 4:18-19, Matthew 13:22, and Luke 8:14). The main understanding from these verses is that these are those who hear and know what the Word says, but because they enjoy more the pleasures and riches of this world choose not to follow the Word (See also Matthew 13:22 Comments).

Part 5: (Mark 4:20, Matthew 13:23, and Luke 8:15). Comparing these verses in Mark, Matthew, and Luke, we can see some differences in the words used, but the meaning is the same. Matthew, Luke, and Mark, all three Gospels may say differently, with a little bit of difference in each Gospel, but all hold one meaning together. The Lord gives one meaning in all three Gospels: different ways of saying but one meaning. (See Matthew 13:23 Comments).

²¹ And **He** said to them, Is the lamp brought **so that it might** be put under the bushel, or under the bed, and **not that it might** be put on the lampstand?

²² For there is nothing **hidden**, **except** that it should be manifested; neither was anything made **hidden**, but that it should come to light.

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

Comments 4:21-23. See Matthew 5:15-16 Comments, Matthew 10:26 Comments, and Luke 8:16-17.

This parable in Mark 4:21-22 has similarities with other parables spoken by the Lord Jesus that are given in Matthew 5:15-16, Matthew 10:26, and Luke 8:16-17, but as given in Mark 4:21-23, it stands on its own.

Parable Analysis Mark 4:21-23

Part 1: (Mark 4:21). “The lamp.” The lamp gives light; the Bible is the lamp for all humans in the world. If you do not come to the light, you are in darkness; come and read the Living Word of God.

“Under the bushel, or under the bed” means that the pride of men covers above the knowledge that the Lord has given to humans; this is because when one reads the Bible, they make their own understanding, then they claim this to be what God means but did not ask God for the meaning. Humans do not like to admit that their knowledge does not come from themselves but has been given by God. Humans want to be proud that they know all things but forget to acknowledge the One who gives them that knowledge from the beginning (meaning from when they are born). They go to a human school and think they are smart, but they forget who gives them the intelligence; this is like going and hiding under the bushel. You cannot hide about the One who gives you that knowledge; you must always glorify the One who gives you that knowledge. The world’s criticism should not make you hide and not admit who the real One is who gives you that knowledge.

“And not that it might be put on the lampstand?” (Lamp put on a lampstand). This verse tells all believers clearly that if you call yourself a believer, and when people see you, they should see that you follow the Bible’s teachings. In Christian households, when you visit, have you seen the Bible in their house? The Bible is not to be hidden; if in your home, you can’t show people that you have the Bible as a guide, will you do it outside? In your own home, as the verse tells, don’t hide the Bible, but put it on a stand, so people will notice that you have the Bible, not just the sign that you are a believer, but people need to see the Bible; the cross they can see everywhere, but the Living Word they don’t see it. It must be made known that you have the Bible as your guide, not all the entertainment as your guide. The Bible is the Living Word, and living means alive; treat the Bible as the living Word, not just as a book; some Christians don’t do that; some even use their feet to push their Bible aside. Humans think of living as eating and drinking, but the Bible is a Living Word that lives in humans’ hearts. Are humans dead or alive? As long as humans exist on earth, the Bible will always be the Living Word. Even on Judgment Day, we have the Lord Jesus Himself alive in the human body as well, and the Living Word still exists in Him, and He will be forever; that it explains why the Bible is the Living Word.

Part 2: (Mark 4:22-23). (For verse 22 see also Comments Matthew 10:26b). “For there is nothing hidden, except that it should be manifested.” For this portion of Scripture, we have two meaningful understandings.

Understanding 1. “Nothing hidden.” This refers to the Word of the Lord; the Word of the Lord cannot be hidden. Also, the Word of the Lord cannot be changed. Humans tend to make the Word change to fit themselves, but that is blasphemy; you cannot change the Word to fit the human’s way of living. Whatever the Word says, you teach or do not interfere. If you teach and change the Word, you are the one who blasphemes, not those who do the wrong things, but the one who teaches. The Word of the Lord cannot be hidden, and the light of the world cannot be hidden; the light will shine out; you cannot put it under cover; the light will explode out.

Understanding 2. “Nothing hidden.” This refers to the Word as the shield. If you use the Word to shield your soul, the dark cannot snatch you. But when you ignore the Word, what it says, you have opened the door for the dark to come in, and the Lord won’t fight for you because you are the one who opened the door. That is why a lot of Christians are sinning because they think they are under the shield of protection. They go and sin, knowing that they sin against God, but for those sins, the Lord will not protect you because you sinned knowingly. When you have the Living Word, instead of using it, you put it away, and this comes in the same way as hidden; the Word cannot be hidden; use the Word.

“Neither was anything made hidden, but that it should come to light.” Now, this part of the verse refers to the Lord; only the Lord is the light, and you cannot make secret where the light is. The verse is clear on its own. When someone talks about the Word of God, they can’t interpret it in a different way, and the true meaning can be revealed only through the Holy Spirit. When someone interprets it in their own way, they try to cover the work of the Lord; however, only the Holy Spirit can interpret the true meaning of the Word of God. No person can claim that they got the knowledge of the Word of God on their own.

²⁴ And **He** said to them, Take heed what **you** hear; with what measure **you** measure, it will be measured to you, and more will be added to you.

²⁵ For **who** has, to him will be given; and **who** has not, from him even that which he has will be taken away.

Comments 4:24-25. See Matthew 7:2, Matthew 13:12 Comments, and Luke 6:38).

This parable in Mark 4:24-25 has similarities with other parables spoken by the Lord Jesus that are given in Matthew and Luke, but as given in Mark 4:24-25, it stands on its own.

Parable Analysis Mark 4:24-25

Part 1: (Mark 4:24). “Take heed what you hear.” This is a warning when you listen to things about the Bible, not only from preachers but also from persons claiming they have high knowledge about the Bible related to the original text and its languages. Bible’s original text knowledge only a few people know it. Watch out; they come with proof of trying to change things in the Bible; that is why you must use your inner eyes as well as the Lord speaks directly to your heart; use the feeling as well, not just knowledge; compare what will come out from these people and what you have inside your heart from the Lord, and you will know the difference between them. You, as a person, listen to who is telling you things and watch out for the purpose of telling. If you are hearing someone telling you things, listen by the spiritual eyes (which refers to a gift the Lord gives), not just the ears. The spiritual eyes see things that the ear needs to know, and they will support each other. Remember, we commented about changing the true Bible translation: See Comments Matthew 24:4-5.

“With what measure you measure, it will be measured to you.” This measure is talking about the fake bible translation that will come out. If we believe it is fake, we must be able to support our words with the true Bible; however, if we cannot find support to debate against it, we better be quiet. That is the measure to be used, the true Bible, and that must be used. When we use the true Bible to measure the fake bible, the Lord will use the true Bible to measure our heart’s deed as well; that is the measure used, the same one.

“And more will be added to you.” Now, it is talking about understanding. When you notice a fake bible and can support that idea (that is fake) with the true Bible, the understanding of how to do it will be given more to you if you notice that. If you do not notice, the Lord will not give you an understanding of how to use the true Bible to fight against the fake one. If the Lord does not give you instructions on how to use the true Bible and how to fight against fake ones, you will not be able to point out and tell that they are not true. The Lord will give this knowledge to fight against the fake bibles only to select ones.

Part 2: (Mark 4:25). Verses 24 and 25 link together with believing in the Bible. If people believe in the Word of God, this verse will come out alive and make understanding (be true), and to what you have, more will be added. But for those who do not understand and find a human way and believe this way to be right, what they have in the beginning to think about will be taken away. Specifically, if you base your theories on the human way, not on God, they don’t last; people come up with new theories all the time, and the old ones become obsolete. Verse 25 tells many things; when people read this verse, they should think about what the Bible is teaching and not read the Bible just to kill time. For every word in the Bible, you need to keep in prayer to get understanding; even for simple sentences, nothing that the Lord gives will be simple until it does not need help from the Lord for understanding; that is why the Bible is called the Living Word. Verse 25 is put here to support and tell us to make sure that we meditate and pray to the Lord for the understanding of verse 24.

²⁶ And **He** said, **Thus** is the kingdom of **God**: as a man should **throw** seed upon the **ground**,
²⁷ and should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should spring up and grow; he **knows** not how.

²⁸ The earth **bears** fruit of **itself**; first **a** blade, then **an** ear, then full grain in the ear.

²⁹ **Then** when the fruit is ripe, **straightaway**, he **puts out** the sickle, **for** the harvest **has** come.

Comments 4:26-29. See also Matthew 13:24-30 Comments.

This parable in Mark 4:26-29 has similarities with another parable spoken by the Lord Jesus and given in Matthew 13:24-30, but as given in Mark 4:26-29, it stands on its own.

Parable Analysis Mark 4:26-29

Part 1: (Mark 4:26). **Q:** What does it mean when the Lord says, “Thus is the kingdom of God,” and He gives a parable?

A: Because the kingdom of God cannot be explained in human words (no language on earth can describe the meaning of the kingdom of God), the Lord gives parables to describe the true meaning of the kingdom. That is why there are many parables. Because of the limitation of the language, one parable describes in a way for the humans, and another parable will help out; all parables will help each other for humans to understand.

“As a man should throw seed upon the ground.” Here, the kingdom of God is compared with the action of a man throwing seeds upon the ground.

“A man” refers to the servants of the Lord, including the prophets and those special ones the Lord has called for a certain job; “seed” refers to the Word of God; “upon the ground” relates to a specific area where the servant gets the order of where to go.

This verse shows that the Lord Jesus throws the seed upon the earth through His servants. The seed is the Word of the Lord in the Bible, which the Lord gives to the earth; everywhere on earth, people have the Bible, but not everywhere people use the Word from the Bible. In the past, they did not have the Bible but still had mouths to talk. The Bible tells us in many places to teach our children the deeds of the Lord, so they know and remember. We all have the duty to tell our children about the Lord and teach them the value of the Bible; all children should know the meaning. If we teach them to respect the Word of God, the Word itself will grow root in them. If the children treat the Bible just as a storybook, the root of faith will not grow deep; they will have some root but not deep in the heart; that is for the spiritual world as well; if the root is not deep, when they go in the spiritual world, they don’t understand as well; it is important to teach them.

Part 2: (Mark 4:27). “And should sleep and rise night and day ... he knows not how.” The servant, after he does the job does not stay to watch out how the job turns out to be, he departs and goes somewhere else. The job that the servant does has no one’s guidance; the words spring out by themselves from the sowing of the servant’s job. The servant does not know how the job turns out to be, where it grows, and where it doesn’t; it is the Lord’s duty to make the seed grow. After the servant sows, the persons have the Bible to guide them, but not the servant to stay around to give guidance. The guidance is in the Bible; that is why the Bible tells you to meditate on the Word of God.

Part 3: (Mark 4:28). “The earth bears fruit of itself.” In this portion, it means that the persons that the servant has sown, because they did not stay idle what has been sown in them, will start to work, and those will produce the fruit of faith. The faith of persons will grow as they meditate upon what has been given.

“First a blade”: this happens after faith is grown and they start to produce by going out and telling what they understand; “then an ear”: now is a time of waiting until the faith is fully grown to fill the ear; “then full grain in the ear”: now it is the result of what comes after fully grown, good ear or withered ear; the result it is upon feeding from the inner meditation to feed the ear. In a person, faith has a difficult time growing because of so many things around, and lack of meditation makes the ear not grow well; meditation on the Word of God is important for the ear to be fully grown.

Part 4: (Mark 4:29). “Then when the fruit is ripe.” In this portion, remember one thing: who is the one who planned the way how it should be when the fruit has grown to be ready? The fruit is the gift of the Holy Spirit; everybody has a different gift. When the fruit is ripe, the person who received the gift learns and accepts and knows that it is not by themselves they have it, but because of the mercy of the Lord, they have that gift.

“Straightaway, he puts out the sickle.” He, in this section, refers to the person who receives. Pay attention to the words “puts out”; when the Lord has given you something, take it and treasure it; the gift is not for being treated as unimportant. Some gifts may be some small thing, even small, but it is not in the eyes of the Lord that is small; only the human eyes think that it is small. Small gifts the Lord gives, but they always have a purpose to use for glorifying the Lord, not for making themselves important, but to give importance to the Lord is the purpose of that gift. Some think that they deserve it; they do not deserve it, but by the mercy of the Lord, they have received that gift. Don’t be proud of yourself; the Lord gives, but the Lord also can take away the gift; therefore, be thankful and use them in the way the Lord intends for you to use those gifts.

“Because the harvest has come.” The harvest in this place refers to the time when the person who receives the gift understands the purpose of that gift; not only understands but is willing to use it according to the Lord’s will, not their own will. Watch out; many misuse the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

[To remember the person who gives, because this is talking about the gift, the common man cannot give you the gift; the servant of the Lord brings the gift and gives it.]

³⁰ And **He** said, How shall we liken the kingdom of **God**? Or in what parable shall we set it **into view**?

³¹ **As to** a grain of mustard, which, when it has been sown upon the **ground**, is **smallest of** all the seeds **which** are upon the earth,

³² **and** when it **has been** sown, it **grows** up, and **becomes** greater than all the **garden plants**, and **makes** great branches, so that the birds of the heaven **are able to perch** under the shadow of it.

Comments 4:30-32. See also Matthew 13:31-32 Comments and Luke 13:18-19.

This parable in Mark 4:31-32 is the same as the parables given in Matthew 13:31-32 and Luke 13:18-19, but it is spoken at a different time and to a different group of people.

Parable Analysis Mark 4:31-32

Part 1: (Mark 4:30-31). The kingdom of God is “as to a grain of mustard, which, when it has been sown upon the ground ...” In this verse, there is also meaning linked to the spiritual world. The mustard seed, when it is sown down, is small; think of one seed; how many seeds will that seed make? The same is true of the Holy Word, a small book and many people can read and meditate on the Word, and faith will never stop growing in every person who reads and meditates.

“... is smallest of all the seeds which are upon the earth.” All need to learn, when reading the Bible, to meditate on the Word and not use worldly things to compare with spiritual things; they walk in parallel with each other. Here, for example, do not think about the fact that the mustard seed may not be the smallest seed ever. Within the whole earth, what seed will the Lord use which can multiply fast? In this place, the meaning of the parable relates to growing the plant; the mustard plant is easy to grow fast and efficiently, spreading like wildfire. It is the same with the Bible; give one Bible to one country of the earth and see that it will spread as wildfire in that country, affecting every soul.

Part 2: (Mark 4:32). “and when it has been sown, ... under the shadow of it.” Look at the words “garden plants.” Garden plants refer to many faiths on earth; they all are plants on earth, but the mustard plant that the Lord has picked grows bigger than them, making branches that even the birds of the air come to get the benefit of. The other garden plants are small and tiny; the birds of the air can’t make nests, which is why the Lord picked out the mustard plant for this parable. For us, as Christians, be likewise, look at the mustard plant; from a small seed, it grows and makes branches so the birds can nest. All believers should think about that and spread out their hands. Whoever comes and asks for help, do not deny it if you can help, but if you can’t, the Lord will provide another way.

“The birds of the heaven” here refers to all human beings.

“Can lodge under the shadow thereof.” When the persons under the Lord’s protection spread out their hands to help someone, the Lord will also stretch out His hand and go along with that help.

³³ And with many such parables **He spoke** the word **to** them, as they were able to hear;

³⁴ and without a parable **He** did not **speak to** them; but privately to **His** own disciples **He explained** all things.

Comments 4:33-34. **Q:** Why did the Lord Jesus explain the parables to His disciples privately and didn’t explain them to the people? **A:** The verse says, “as they were able to hear,” but not everyone’s ear was open to hear.

Thousands and thousands of people around, but how many in the thousands were able to hear? Many came with an ear that was closed; as the Bible tells, in many places, you have an ear but do not hear. People took the voice of the Lord as a wind passing by the ear, with no meaning; however, for His disciples, not just the ear was open, but the heart of the soul has been open; many places in the Bible tell who has ears let them hear.

³⁵ And on that day, evening having come, He says to them, Let us pass over to the other side.

³⁶ And having dismissed the multitude, they take Him with them, even as He was, in the boat. And other boats were with Him.

³⁷ And comes a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat is now filling.

³⁸ And He was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they awaken Him, and say to Him, Teacher, is it not a concern to Thee that we perish?

³⁹ And He awoke, rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.

⁴⁰ And He said to them, Why are you fearful? Have you not yet faith?

⁴¹ And they were terrified with great fear, and said one to another, Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?

Comments 4:35-41. See also Comments Matthew 8:23-27 and Comments Luke 8:22-25.

The events described in Mark 4:35-41, Matthew 8:23-27, and Luke 8:22-25 are the same but different ways of presenting. Combining the words from all three Gospels, we can get a more complete picture of the storm situation and what the Lord Jesus did on that day. The way of presentation in these three Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) is given from different eyes of a person, but all present the same event. Pay attention to the way each Gospel addresses the Lord Jesus. The way to address the Lord makes the presentation different in each Gospel; this characteristic, accordingly, is not only in this Bible paragraph but also throughout the entire Gospel.

Q: What does it mean to have “the same event but different eyes of a person” in the light of the Bible being dictated by the Holy Spirit? **A:** Even though the Holy Spirit dictated the Gospels, always the Holy Spirit gives the Gospels to be as well according to the faith of the person that writes; when writing the Gospels under the control of the Holy Spirit, each writer’s faith will not be the same. Neither writer has the same faith; each writer’s faith is different, and that is why the presentation comes out differently. The Holy Spirit is always looking to make the best out of each writer; the Holy Spirit will give accordingly; if the Holy Spirit will give the same way, Bible study will not be needed. Everything has a purpose, one Holy Spirit, but not the same readers. The Holy Spirit dictated it word by word, but the point of using in each Gospel is different; each Gospel book, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, will touch people’s hearts in a different way; the same story, but a different way of telling in each Gospel will touch people in a different way, that is why it becomes the Living Word, an alive book that touches everyone. The person who has a chance to read the Bible will never understand what they read if their heart is not open.

Q: What is the Holy Spirit’s dictation of the Bible? **A:** The dictation from the Holy Spirit works directly into the person’s understanding, then that understanding will tell to someone else which will go work in the heart, not as the Holy Spirit works in the understanding (for example, a person gets a word from the Holy Spirit through the gift of speaking in tongues which comes directly into the understanding of that person, the person speaks the tongue out loud and another person or the same person will get the understanding of that speaking in tongue in the heart and mind through the Holy Spirit living inside that person).

Q: What is the difference between Holy Spirit dictation and Holy Spirit inspired? **A: Dictated:** The Holy Spirit works straight to give the understanding; the Holy Spirit speaks directly to the soul and spirit of the writer, and then from the soul and spirit, the understanding goes to the heart and from the heart into the head. When “Holy Spirit dictated,” the writer will have only one understanding to write down. The dictation from the Holy Spirit works directly to the writer’s understanding, to give the words to write down, then that understanding (the words written down) when meditated on by someone else, that meditation will guide the heart by the Holy Spirit to understand. **Inspired:** The Holy Spirit gives the understanding to convince the heart of the person and becomes understanding in this way, different from the Holy Spirit dictated. Inspired is understanding in the heart and from the heart to the head; the meditation of the Word gives the understanding; in this case, there is no direct communication between the Holy Spirit and the soul and spirit of the writer. (For example, the Holy Spirit that dwells inside a person’s heart will stir that person’s heart to think something, and this stirring will produce understanding in the mind and language – the difference is that in this way, the understanding can be influenced

to some degree by the person's feelings or other things in the person's mind; this plays as the free will of the person – the Holy Spirit speaking into the heart doesn't have a direct path into the mind and it can be influenced and give different meaning in the person's mind).

Q: How does the Holy Spirit dwell inside a believer? **A:** The Holy Spirit dwells in each believer and the Lord Jesus as well, but there is still only One Holy Spirit. Also, we should think about how big the Holy Spirit is to cover the whole earth! We are all in Him, and He is in us as well. We could think that the seed and some gift from the Holy Spirit are planted inside a believer's heart at the moment the believer accepts and invites the Lord Jesus into their heart. Both the Holy Spirit and the soul dwell in the heart of a believer, the same place overlapped but different dimensions. We could think that the heavenly dimension and earthly dimension walk in parallel through the heart of a believer. The soul is part of the earthly dimension. When the Lord gives the soul to a person, that soul becomes part of the earthly dimension. The body, the soul, and the spirit of a person coexist together as a unit; that is how the Lord built us. The breath of the Lord is complete, and He has both soul and spirit when He gave life to Adam (See Genesis 2:7). In the case of "Holy Spirit dictation," the Holy Spirit is the giver and the receiver at the same moment. In the case of "Holy Spirit inspired," the Holy Spirit is the giver, and the soul of the believer is the receiver.

Comparison analysis:

Part 1: (Mark 4:35-36, Matthew 8:23, Luke 8:22). "And on that day, evening having come" refers to the Sabbath day, after the Sabbath day ended in the evening, when they could continue their daily activities. "Even as He was" in this place means the Lord Jesus had been with people all day long, no eating, no resting, tired as He was, and they took Him as He was, hungry and tired. "And other boats were with Him." This refers to other people who followed the Lord Jesus as He sailed away; many people followed Him everywhere He would go. The main idea in all three Gospels for this part is that the Lord Jesus and His disciples got into a boat to cross to the other side of the sea, and the Lord Jesus was tired.

Part 2: (Mark 37-38, Matthew 8:24-25, Luke 8:23-24a). The main idea in this part is that the Father created the storm, the Lord Jesus was asleep, and the disciples were afraid and went as a group to awaken the Lord. The situation described in Mark is that the Father created this great windstorm with waves breaking into the boat, the Lord Jesus was tired and sleeping on a cushion in the stern, and the disciples were all frightened and went to wake the Lord. The main difference between the Gospels in this part is the way the disciples address the Lord Jesus when they go as a group to awaken Him. In Mark, they call to Him "Teacher"; in Matthew, they call to Him "Lord, save us"; and in Luke, they call to Him "Master, Master".

Q: Why do we have three different ways the disciples called to the Lord Jesus? **A:** Keep in mind that the disciples were all common men and frightened by the storm, and all rushed to look for the Lord to awaken Him. Each one called to the Lord with a loud voice in their own way, and that is why each Gospel gives a different dialog to reflect that there were many ways the disciples called to the Lord, each according to their own heart; in that time what was in their heart they would address the Lord.

First, bring out the definition of each name. Some called the Lord Jesus "Teacher": in this term, accepting that the person has put the Lord above them and being below the Teacher. That is the heart of the person to accept that they are below and also accept the Lord's teaching; to be a disciple of the Lord, you must accept the Lord Jesus' teaching. Some called the Lord Jesus "Lord": when the person called out as Lord, that person had already accepted to be a servant of the Lord Jesus; only a servant would call out right away as Lord. Some called the Lord Jesus "Master": the person who called the Lord Master pronounced the Lord to be above all, and they are below and also have shown they are willing to receive the orders from the Master; here, you can use the term "listen and obey" when you call Master.

To call someone God, you see the different ways; a group does not have the same words; in each Gospel, pay attention to it; one will always call the Lord Jesus as Teacher, some come by and call as Master, others will glorify always and call as Lord; now is a difference in calling but no difference, since there is only one God, but for each group God has a different meaning. Think of yourself as well. How would you call the Lord? Think about that. The disciples came to the Lord to awaken Him up as a group, and each one in the group addressed the Lord in a different way; one called to Him as Teacher, one as Master, and the other as Lord; the Gospels, each one gives one account showing who the Lord Jesus was for His own disciples.

Part 3: (Mark 39, Matthew 8:26b, Luke 8:24b). Each Gospel gives a snapshot of the discussion between the Lord and the disciples. In each situation, the Lord teaches His disciples, and all the time, the Lord will teach His disciples as a Teacher and Master, which is always teaching and ordering. The main point of this part is that the Lord Jesus

is the Son of God, and He has power over nature by His Word, and peace is in His Word. In Mark, we are given the Words the Lord Jesus used to calm the storm: “Peace, be still!” Concentrate on these two words: peace for the whole earth and nature; when you find that peace, you will be still and waiting for the Lord’s guidance. The Lord speaks in the peace of your heart; you can feel it clearer if you are still. Do not just remember the words; practice as well. You never gain benefits by knowing the Word and not practicing. In this place, it clearly says, “Peace be still,” and the Lord will not say things lightly without meaning; here is the place showing. To have peace in you, come to the Word, and you will find that peace. Not the peace of the mind alone, but the peace of the soul; you will feel deep peace of the soul. You will know the difference, not the peace in the head but the peace of the soul; everybody has that chance to feel it, but we never really pay attention and think of the different ways that we feel. The Lord Jesus speaks “peace” to nature, and nature obeys, but men do not obey. In this part, it shows all humans that nature obeys suddenly; just the words come out from the mouth of the Lord, and nature obeys. The peace is in His Word; nature can find it and obey, so the men can, by obeying His Word.

Part 4: (Mark 40, Matthew 8:26a, Luke 8:25a). **Q:** In each Gospel, the words of the Lord are slightly different, but the meaning is the same. Why is there a difference in the words? **A:** Each Gospel is slightly different because it has a reason to be; each Gospel gives a different angle for the inner soul to see. The Lord has mercy on all, and the humans coming after the disciples will read each Gospel and benefit in a different way. A slight difference in the Gospel itself makes a big difference for each person who reads it; it is a purpose to be different in each Gospel. Ask yourself which one is for you that touches you first, and if you ask someone else, the point of touch won’t be the same.

Q: When a Gospel quotes the words of the Lord, why are there differences in each Gospel? **A:** These are partial quotes, meaning that the Holy Spirit dictated the words that the Lord has spoken to each writer in a different way. There was a long conversation, but the Holy Spirit divided the parts for each Gospel so that all Gospels would complement each other. However, the conversation was more than it is given in all three Gospels combined, so some conversation is not shared.

“Why are you fearful? Have you not yet faith?” This is not a rebuke, but it is the way to grow their faith. By confronting them, each person’s heart will search for the answer; the Lord wanted to help them and lift up their faith. They may think they have faith, but can they use that faith when the situation comes? This confrontation would work in each disciple’s faith to use their faith to fight in the future; they all needed this.

Part 5: (Mark 41, Matthew 8:27, Luke 8:25b). In this part again, we have slight differences in each Gospel as per quoting the words of the disciples, but we should follow the main point in all Gospels. Looking in another way as well, this miracle also proves to them and makes them come to accept who the Lord Jesus is: just a human or the Lord? It is a turning point for them and creates the question in them: can He be just a human? It is important for them always to think about this as they follow Him. In their heads always, He is not just a human, and that is what the Lord, in all who believe in Him, wants to see as the disciples have come to see in that time who He is; even the nature obeys Him, “can He be just a human?” and that all humans should think about.

Life and Faith Applications. 1) Your heart is the ground for the Word of God; come with an open and clean heart to the Word of God so you will understand the Word. 2) Show that you are a Christian and do not be ashamed to display your Bible and talk about the Word of God with others. 3) If you use the Word of God to shield your soul, the dark cannot snatch you, but when you ignore the Word, you have opened the door for the dark to come in. 4) Ask the Holy Spirit in the name of the Lord Jesus to guide you in understanding the true Bible. 5) As a Christian, spread out your hands to help someone if you can; the Lord will also stretch out His hand and go along with that help. 6) When someone comes to the Lord, the Lord will always give a gift that you can use for serving; treasure it; the gift is not for being treated as unimportant; some gifts may be small things, but they are not small in the eyes of the Lord, and you are called to use them. 7) Peace is in God’s Word, and nature can find it and obey it, so people can find it by obeying His Word.