

(Through the Bible) Mark 4-5

by Chuck Smith

The sermon emphasizes the importance of hearing and understanding the word of God, and the power of prayer to bring about change and healing in our lives.

Duration: 1:26:43

Scripture: Matthew 13:1-2, Mark 4:1-2, Mark 4:10

Topics: "Discerning Truth", "Parable Teachings"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of being cautious about what we hear. He mentions how people often listen to various speakers without discernment, just to see what they have to say. The speaker then goes on to explain the purpose of Jesus using parables in his teachings. He states that parables are not meant to hide the truth, but rather to illustrate it in a way that captures people's attention. The sermon also includes a personal story about a man's remarkable conversion and highlights the need for open hearts and minds to receive the message of the gospel.

Transcript

Shall we turn now in our Bibles to the Gospel according to Mark, chapter 4. Beginning in chapter 4, we have the beginning of the ministry of Christ in parables. There is oftentimes a mistaken opinion as to the reason why Jesus went to parables. The purpose of a parable is really not to veil the truth, but to illustrate the truth.

And many times when people become dull of hearing, where they will not receive just straight teaching, when you've lost the attention of your students, a method by which attention can be drawn back again to the subject is by illustration. Tell a story. We are all of us very interested in life and in things of life.

And when you start to tell a story, suddenly people are paying attention again. And in the story, you are able to subtly illustrate the truth that you're trying to point out. In each of the parables of Jesus, there were truths that were being illustrated.

Truths that the people would not listen to on just a straight teaching method. And so the parable form of teaching was adopted that you might continue to bring them the truth, only now in a more subtle way. Some of the parables, the people understood, understood very well.

In fact, in some of the parables of Jesus, the Pharisees got very angry with him when they realized, oh, that one hit us, you know. And many of the parables were directed against the Pharisees and their attitudes. Sometimes the thought that was being illustrated still went right over their head.

But Jesus would then explain it to his disciples when they'd say, Lord, what were you trying to get across? And he would explain the parable to them in their private sessions. Now, Jesus said that these are pretty much the key to all of the parables. These parables concerning the kingdom of heaven, we covered these in Matthew's gospel, chapter 13.

And Mark does add just a little bit that Matthew did not give to us. He began again to teach by the seaside, and there was gathered unto him a great multitude, so that he entered into a ship and sat in the sea, and the whole multitude was by the sea on the land. We remember last week that he ordered a little ship that he might be in it, because at this point the crowds were beginning to throng him.

Someone had discovered that by touching Jesus, they were healed. And so everywhere Jesus would go, people began to reach out to touch him. Verse 10 of the previous chapter, for he had healed many in so much that they pressed upon him to touch him as many as had plagues.

And so it became a common practice if you had something wrong just to touch him. And you can imagine how after a time that could be pretty vexing when people are pushing and shoving to get near you just so that they can touch you. And so he, when the multitudes were gathered, and multitudes mean multitudes, when they were out on the other side, and we'll be getting to that in a little bit, of the sea, when the people gathered it said there were 5,000 men beside women and children.

So if you assume that for every man there was a woman and maybe one child, you could have as many as 15,000 people that had gathered in a deserted area to hear him. So you can imagine the tremendous crowds that were now moving with him, necessitating his having to get a little boat and just shove off and be out in the water just a little bit so that he could address all of the people without being thronged or pressed by them. And so he began to teach by the seaside.

There was gathered into him a great multitude, so he entered into a little ship and sat there in the ship by the shore. And the whole multitude was by the sea on the land. And he taught them many things by parables and said unto them in his doctrine, hearken, behold, there went out a sower to sow and it came to pass as he was sowing that some fell by the wayside and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up.

Some fell on stony ground where it did not have much earth and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of earth. And when the sun was up, it was scorched and because it had no root, it withered away. And some fell among thorns and the thorns grew up and choked it and it yielded no fruit.

And other fell on good ground and did yield fruit that sprang up and increased and brought forth some 30, some 60, and some 100. And he said unto them, he that hath ears to hear, let him hear. Now, these people were basically an agrarian society.

Practically everyone was involved in some way or other in agriculture. Even those who lived in the cities had their plot of ground in the country. And they all had their stone houses on their plot of grounds with their towers.

And they would go out and plant in their fields and they would harvest and live sort of out during the period of planting and harvesting and then move into the towns in the winter times. But they were all of them

close to the soil, an agrarian society. And thus, as Jesus is talking to them about farming, about sowing seed, he's taking something that is very familiar and very common with all of them.

And as he describes the various types of conditions that the seed falls on, it was something that was extremely familiar to all of them. I heard a very interesting lecture from a sociologist who was talking about the change that has taken place in America as we have shifted from an agrarian society to a industrial society, the urbanization and the effect that it has had upon our whole social life in the United States, in the family and in our attitude towards children or having children. In an agrarian society, children are welcome.

Every child born to the farmer represents about \$10,000 worth of labor by the time the child reaches 18 years of age. They learn to do their chores early. They learn to drive the tractor.

They learn how to plow a field. They learn how to work on the harvesters. And a child is looked upon as a blessing because he is an asset.

And that is the reason why so many times on the farms they had big families, a lot of children, and they were all welcome. And boys more than girls because they were able to work harder in the fields. But moving from an agrarian society to our urbanized type of society and industrial type of society, every child that is born represents a liability.

They estimate now that it will cost you approximately \$60,000 to take and raise your child from infancy to 18 years old or through college. So every child that is born, you say, who needs it? Another expense. And it definitely affects the way that we look upon children that come into the home.

And this sociologist was saying, unless you understand this, you cannot understand the problems that we are faced with in our society today. As far as children are concerned, the rise of child abuse and all of these things that we just can't understand can only be understood by the fact that from the turn of the century, the United States has developed from an agrarian society to more of an urbanized industrial society where children no longer are an asset, but a liability. What he said seemed to make a lot of sense.

What Jesus said made a lot of sense. He was talking to people about things with which they are familiar, and that is so important. As he is giving this parable, they all had experienced these very things as they sowed their seed.

And he was talking about things that were just down home. Now, when he was alone, those that were about him with the twelve asked him the parable. And he said unto them, unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God.

But unto them that are without, all of these things are done in parables. That seeing they may see and not perceive, hearing they may hear and not understand, lest at any time they should be converted and their sins should be forgiven them. Now, is Jesus trying to hide the truth to keep man from conversion? No.

As I said, parables are used to attract attention and to illustrate truth. But they were not listening to the teachings anymore. And yet it was important that they still hear the word.

And so parables were adopted even though in hearing they did not understand, yet it was important that they hear. God will be fair when he judges man. Everyone will have a chance to hear, even though they have closed their minds, their hearts.

It's an amazing thing when a person's heart is closed to God and to the gospel. It's amazing how we perceive what is being said. You know, there are people that come to Calvary Chapel out of constraint.

Their friends have constrained them to come. And it's amazing what they hear me say, you know, because they're just looking for something to jump on and to get angry about. And they're not really listening at all to the content of the message that we bring.

But they are only listening to find something to fault, something to disagree with, something to get angry about, so that they can say, I'll never go back there again. And they want an excuse not to come back. And so they're not really hearing and not really wanting to hear.

Now he said unto them, know you not this parable? How then will you know all parables? And Jesus is now giving us a key. And in parables, there is this expositional constancy. If you're going to, if you don't know this parable, how are you going to know all parables? Here is a key to the parables.

That is the word or the seed is the word. Now this is one of the keys to parables. Whenever in a parable you get to the seed being planted or whatever, know that the seed is the word of God.

He's saying, don't you know this parable? Then how are you going to know all parables? So he's, he's telling you now this expositional constancy of what represents what. The sower soweth the word. And these are they by the wayside where the word is sown.

But when they have heard Satan comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts. So the fowls of the air that come and pluck out the seed is actually Satan who takes away the seed that is sown. It doesn't even have a chance to get root.

And these are they likewise, which are sown on stony ground, who when they have received the word immediately receive it with gladness, but they have no root in themselves and so endure. But for a time and afterward, when affliction or persecution arises for the word's sake, immediately they are offended. Now these are they which are sown among the thorns, such as hear the word and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches and the lust of other things entering in choke the word and it becomes unfruitful.

And these are they which are sown on good ground, such as hear the word, receive it and bring forth fruit. Some 30, some 60, some a hundred. So the parable of the sower is how the word of God is received in the hearts of different people.

With some people, the seed never has a chance to even root. They're not open to the word of God at all. As soon as it is sown, their mind is set against it and Satan plucks up that which was sown.

Has no effect. There are others who get all excited, receive it with gladness and joy. And of course we've observed these people and they start off with a bang.

But when persecution comes, a trial or testing, they fall away because there is no real depth. All they've had is an emotional experience. They've had the gladness, the excitement, but there's no real depth at all.

And thus there is that falling away the moment testings come. This third category is the category I'm interested in because I think that this category covers probably a greater number of people in the church than almost any other category. Those who receive the word, it begins to develop in their lives, but it is

among thorns.

And the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things, choke out the effectiveness of the word in their lives. And so there is no real fruit brought forward by them. Now it is the Lord's desire that each of us bring forth much fruit.

Herein is the Father glorified that you bear much fruit. But I think how often a person's work for God is thwarted or limited, that their lives are not really productive for the kingdom because their hearts are drawn away. They're not sinners.

They're not out and out rebellious against God. They love the Lord. They have the right desires for God, but they also have desires for the world, for the things of the world.

And thus their lives never achieve what they should and could achieve for the glory of God because the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for these other things have choked out that full fruitfulness that God would have them to bring forth for him. It is so difficult to maintain the right priorities in this world today. The pressures of the world are heavy and it is so difficult to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness in all of the pressures that we are faced in our culture and society based as it is so much around material things.

That's the one that I would study and be most concerned in my own life. This is the thing that concerns me most in the parable. Jesus said to his disciples, you have not chosen me, but I've chosen you and ordained you that you should be my disciples and that you should bring forth fruit and that your fruit should remain.

The greatest desire that I have is that my life bring forth fruit that does remain. Now, these are they which are sown on the good ground. They hear the word, they receive it, and they bring forth fruit in varying degrees, some 30, some 60, some 100.

And then he said unto them is a candle brought to be put under a bushel or under a bed and not to be set on a candlestick for there is nothing hid which shall not be manifested. Neither was anything kept secret, but that it should come abroad. If any man has ears to hear, let him hear.

Statement that Jesus is always making as he is speaking is, hey, if you have ears to hear, hear. And unless our ears are opened by the spirit of God, we don't have ears to hear. It is only as the spirit gives us the capacity for the natural man cannot know the things.

It does not understand the things of the spirit. Neither can he know them. They are spiritually discerned.

But all the way through in the book of Revelation, when Jesus is talking to the church again over and over, he's saying he that hath an ear to hear, let him hear what the spirit says to the church. Now you are the light of the world. A light is intended to illuminate the darkness, not to be hid under a candlestick.

The light that God has given to you is not something that you are to just hold for yourself. It is intended to bring light to others. And he said unto them, take heed what you hear.

Now there is a common thing today of people saying, well, you know, let's hear what he has to say. You know, they turn on channel 18 and that guy's talking with his high squeaky voice and he's got his flowers, you know, and, and, and, well, let's listen. Let's see what he's got to say.

The Lord said, take heed what you hear. You know, someone says, well, I, I want to, I want to, I want to hear what they're saying. You know, I want, I don't want to know what they're saying.

I have a friend who had a very remarkable conversion. He lived out in the area of Victorville. He owned about five different businesses out there.

It was an extremely wealthy family. He was an extremely successful person. He owned a tractor agency.

He owned a excavating company and just had many business interests. He was an Episcopalian, very nominal Christian, one of the Christmas Easter variety. And one night he had a dream in which he was holding a sick little baby in his hands and he was praying for that baby and it was healed and he woke up and it was very vivid and he went back to sleep and this dream repeated itself three times.

So in the morning he called up his priest to share with him this dream about praying for a baby and it was healed. The priest said, I don't know anything about that. Maybe you should call Paul Smith, who was my brother, and he can probably tell you about it.

So this fellow called my brother and my brother talked to him about the Bible, about healing in the Bible and things of this nature. Well, he was delivering a tractor part to one of his customers in the evening on his way home. He had the part had come in.

The guy was needing it real bad. He thought, well, I'll drop it by his house on my way home. And when he got there, the fellow wasn't there.

So he was explaining to the wife just how to tell her husband, you know, the procedures by which the part was to be put on the tractor. And as he was getting ready to go, this little child began to cry in the other room and the mother went to get it. And he was shocked when she brought the child in.

It was crying. It was the child that he had seen in his dream. And the mother explained how that the little baby had swallowed some gasoline and had burned the stomach lining and how that the child would wait until the hunger pains were so great that they were greater than the pain of eating.

When the child would eat, the stomach would because of the rawness would just begin to convulse and the child would be in tremendous pain. And there was really nothing they could do about it, but just wait for the slow healing processes. And evidently the child was having the hunger pains again and was crying.

And so the mother said, I guess I'll have to feed it. And she was just really upset. And he said, well, ma'am, he said, I don't know what's going on.

I don't understand this at all. But he said, I had a dream and I couldn't understand the dream, but it's in the dream. I was holding a child in my hands.

And I said, as I look at your child, it's the child I saw in my dreams. And he said, as I was holding it in my hands, I prayed for it and it was healed. He said, would it be all right with you if I would hold your child and pray for it? And she said, yes, of course.

And so he took the child in his arms and prayed for it. And the child said, mommy, I'm hungry, you know. So the mother said, would you mind waiting while I feed the child? Because in just a few moments, it'll really start screaming as the food begins to hit the stomach.

So he waited and the child ate, no response at all, completely healed. Well, this guy didn't know what to make of it at this point, something totally new to him. But needless to say, he really started to dig in the word of God, in the gospel, in the book of Acts.

He decided that the Lord was maybe calling him into the ministry. And so he sold his businesses and went to the Claremont School of Theology, which is about as liberal as any institution you can attend. There's more atheism and unbelief, I think, there than probably in most secular universities.

And as he was sitting in the classes, listening to the professors, seeking to discount the miracles, seeking to discount the word of God, seeking to discount Jesus Christ, his virgin birth, resurrection, and all of these things, he was only desiring really to get the degree so he could go out and start ministering in the Episcopal priesthood. And so he thought, I don't believe this junk that they are telling me. And he thought he had his defenses up.

And he thought as this stuff was coming out, that he was rejecting it and thoroughly rejecting it. And you know, I know that isn't true. All I want is a degree from this place.

Get out of here and really start serving the Lord. But day by day, this junk was pouring in and he was hearing it. Be careful what you hear.

He found that as he was talking with his Christian friends and someone would bring up a scripture, he would say, oh, but you can't believe that. You see, in the original, that isn't there. And he realized that this junk that was coming in was somehow taking root and was affecting his whole attitude and opinion of the Bible.

He ended up one evening in an orange grove out in Upland, sitting in his car with a 45 pointed to his skull, ready to pull the trigger. He was so confused by the teaching that he was receiving there at the Claremont School of Theology. He was ready to take his life.

It just brought him into a complete confusion. And there the Lord began to speak to him again. And he, of course, quit Claremont School of Theology and opened up a little church in Big Bear and just started to minister.

But you got to be careful what you hear, because whatsoever man sows, that shall he also reap. You cannot sow to your flesh and reap with the Spirit. Be careful what goes in your ears.

It's going to leave its mark. It's going to have its effect upon you. I don't appreciate people just dumping garbage in my mind.

Be careful what you hear. And with what measure you meet, it will be measured to you. By whatever standard you are judging others, that is the standard by which you are going to be judged.

And unto you that hear shall more be given, if you hear the truth. For he that hath to him shall be given, and he that hath not from him shall be taken, even that which he has. And he said unto them, so is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed, and that would be the word, into the ground.

And he sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, and he knows not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself, first the blade, then the ear, and after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest is come.

Now what the Lord is saying is that there is this beautiful, unconscious growth taking place as God's word is being planted in your heart. As you come Sunday nights, and as we go over the word, and as you're hearing the word, the seed is being sown, the seed is being planted. And you go home, you sleep, you live life as normal, but the word of God is having its effect.

You can't always see it immediately, but there is that growth. First the blade, and then, you know, the stock, and then the ear, and then the full corn. But the word of God will have its effect in your life.

And gradually you will see your life being transformed and changed just by the power of the word that is coming into your heart day by day. The glorious power of God's word changing a person's life. For if you sow to the Spirit, then of the Spirit you're going to reap.

Now sometimes we get restless, and we get impatient, and we want to see the fruit immediately. You know, we want to plant our seeds like Jack and the Beanstalk, and go out the next morning, and climb the thing, you know, that's fully matured. We would like instant growth, but our spiritual growth is imperceptible many times.

There's just that unconscious work on our part. But then we look back, and we see how far we've come. Wow.

I can see the work of God. I can see how far the Lord has brought me. And this is just the beauty and the value of God's word being sown in your hearts.

You know, without even realizing it, by your being here, and God's word being sown in your heart, there are changes that are taking place slowly, gradually, imperceptibly on a day-by-day basis. But over a period of time, you can see things developing and growing. And oh, how glorious when it begins to really bring forth fruit in your life.

When you find that God has really changed your attitudes. And things that used to just make you so totally angry and upset, you know, just sort of, well, you know, they need help, you know, pray for them, you know. And you find that, hey, is that me saying that, you know? Wow.

And you can see that God's word has had its effect, the life-changing effect. And it's so unconscious, really. It's not struggling.

It's not laboring. It's not trying so hard, I'm gonna do this now, you know. It's not that big works effort, but it's just that beautiful, unconscious work of God's spirit transforming, changing me into the image of Christ through the effect of the word of God being planted, the seed planted in my heart.

And he said, where unto shall I liken the kingdom of God? Or with what comparison shall we compare it? So this is a comparison now. It is like a grain of mustard seed, which when it is sown in the earth is less than all the seeds that be in the earth. Mustard seed is a very tiny little dark seed.

Looks like a carnation seed. But when it is sown, it grows up and becomes greater than all of the herbs. Now they all had their herb gardens, and they all grew their mint and anise and cumin and rosemary and so forth.

Their spices, their mustard. And this grows up taller than the rest of those herbs that they grew. And it shoots out great branches.

Wait a minute. This isn't what a mustard plant does. So here we have an abnormal growth so that the fowls of the air may lodge into the shadow of it.

Oh, things are bad when the fowls of the air, because remember what the fowls represent? Satan coming in, taking away the seed that was sown. Christianity is a term that was first used in Antioch by the people of Antioch who put this tag upon those who were living like Christ. They said, oh, they're Christlike.

And that is what the term Christian actually means. Christlike. However, in time, the term has come to a much broader meaning, and it is a term that has been applied like in the Middle East.

If you're not a Muslim, then you're a Christian. And in America, if you're not an atheist, you're a Christian. And we used to say a Christian nation.

But it's far from a Christian nation. Thus, it is quite obvious that those things that have been done recently in West Beirut, in the Palestinian camps, are not at all Christlike. For Jesus said, love your enemies, do good unto those that despitefully use you, bless those that curse you, bless and curse not.

He taught us that we were to love, that we were to forgive, that we were to help. And thus, to say that the Christian militia went in and slaughtered the Palestinians is totally wrong. The militia went in, to be sure, but not a Christian militia.

Had a Christian militia gone in, they would have taken food and clothing and medicines, and they would have helped those people, because that's what Christ taught us to do. And it is extremely unfortunate that there are enemies of Christ, especially planted in many areas of the news media, who like to pick up on the misnomer of Christian militia and to somehow lay the blame of the slaughter of the Palestinians upon all of Christianity or upon all the Jews, whom they also hate. And so, we see very sad caricatures of Christianity or Christians, such as was in the register this week, where you have this ghoulish looking character with a gun smoking and tramping over the bodies in refugee camp number two, and underneath the caption, onward Christian soldiers.

The Santa Ana Register is making an attack against every one of you who believe in Jesus Christ. They are ridiculing your faith. It is a definite attack upon every true child of God.

It's a blasphemous attack. It's an unfair attack, but they don't care about fairness in their war. But we, in being Christ-like, must obey and follow Jesus Christ, and we must love and we must forgive.

There is, throughout the world still, a very strong anti-Semitism feeling in the hearts of many people. This has existed for centuries, and people are just looking for some excuse to hate the Jew or to be mad at the Jew. Paul the Apostle represented the feelings of every true Christian, where he said, my heart's desire and prayer for Israel is that they might be saved, and I could wish myself a curse for God, for my brother's sake, that they might know Jesus Christ.

But unfortunately, in the name of Christianity, in the name of the church, the Jews have been persecuted through the centuries. Our guide in Israel told us that his very first exposure to Christianity was as a boy in Argentina when he first went to public school. The first day, he was beat up by the other boys as they called him a Christ killer.

And he said every day he had to run home from school, rocks being thrown at him as he was called a Christ killer. He said, I didn't even know who Christ was. But he said, I learned to hate him because of

what was happening to me.

How in the world can you ever win someone to Jesus Christ if you hate them like that? Hatred is something far, far from Jesus and the teachings of Jesus. For any group, for any ethnic group, surely Jesus did teach us that we are all one. There's neither Jew nor Greek, barbarian, Scythian bond, or free, but Christ is all.

And a true child of God sees it that way. A true child of God has to be colorblind. For God made us all, and God loves us all, and Jesus died for all.

And there is no superior race. We are all one. We all belong to the human race.

We are all one. These attitudes that have arisen have not arisen from true Christianity, though many of them have prevailed in the church. And unfortunately, in many churches today, there are still areas of strong feelings of anti-this or anti-that.

And that's sad indeed. And so, within the church, under its shadow, all kinds of horrible things have found refuge. Within the church today, this super world council of churches, every kind of foul exists.

Things are being done in the name of the church or Christianity that have nothing to do with Jesus Christ. Enemies of Christ, even, working from within the church. So, when it is sown, it becomes greater than all of the herbs.

Shoots out great branches. That's abnormal growth. That's not the true growth.

That's abnormal growth. The fowls of the army lodge under the shadow. And with many such parables, spake he the word unto them as they were able to hear it.

But without a parable, spake he not unto them. And when they were alone, he expounded all of the things to his disciples. And the same day, when the evening was come, he saith unto them, let us pass over unto the other side.

Notice the words. Let us pass over to the other side. And when they had sent away the multitude, they took him even as he was in the ship.

And there was also with him other little ships. And there arose a great storm of wind. And the waves beat into the ship, so it was now full.

And he was in the hinder part of the ship asleep on a pillow. And they awoke him and said unto him, Master, don't you care if we perish? Jesus must have been extremely tired, having all of these multitudes of people pressing him, grabbing him, touching him. So that as they started to cross the sea, he fell asleep in such a deep sleep that as the storm came up and the ship was being tossed, he continued to sleep until finally the ship was almost full of water.

And so they came back and they woke him up and they said, Master, don't you care if we perish? And he arose and rebuked the wind and said unto the sea, peace, be still. And the wind ceased and there was a great calm, tremendous power. And then he said unto them, why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith? First he rebuked the wind and the waves, and then he rebuked the disciples.

He rebuked them for having no faith. Why would he do that? The ship was full of water. It looked like it was going to sink.

Why would he rebuke them for not having faith? Because you go back to the beginning, what he first said, let us pass over unto the other side. He didn't say, let's go under. He said, let us pass over to the other side.

And when Jesus said, let us pass over to the other side, there's no way they could go under. See, this is God speaking. God's word must come to pass.

And that's why he rebuked them for little faith, because they had his word that they were going to go over to the other side. He had told them, now be careful what you hear. They weren't careful what they heard, you see.

And they feared exceedingly and said one to another, what manner of a man is this that even the wind and the sea obey him? Now they came over to the other side of the sea to the country of the Gadarenes. Now that is on the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee. It is the area near the beginning of the Golan Heights, Gilead.

The area when Moses was bringing the people toward the land for their conquest, they had passed over the other side of the Jordan and had gone up in the area of through Moab and up to the area of the Ammonites and all which was this area to the east of the Sea of Galilee. And the tribe of Gad came to Moses and said, look, we are cattlemen and this is great grazing land and all. We would just as soon have our inheritance here, because they had defeated the Ammonite kings and all.

And they said, we would just soon stay here and live and we really don't care for an inheritance in the land. And half the tribe of Manasseh was with him. So, of course, Joshua was upset at their request because he was afraid that they're wanting to stay there might discourage the rest of the people from coming in and taking the land.

And they said, no, no, we'll send our troops to fight. But when it's all over, we'd like to come back and settle here. We like this land.

And so the tribe of Gad and half the tribe of Manasseh were given this area to settle. So the people came to be known as the Gadarenes, who were living on that side of the Jordan in the Sea of Galilee. And so they came over to the area of the Gadarenes.

And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him a very fierce man who was living there in the tombs, a man with an unclean spirit, who had his dwelling among the tombs. And no man could bind him, no, not with chains. When this demon power would take control of his life, he had superhuman strength.

They could not even hold him with chains. Because often they have been bound with fetters and chains, and the chains have been plucked asunder by him and the fetters broken in pieces, neither could any man tame him. Tremendously pitiful sight, a man possessed by demon spirits.

And always, night and day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs crying and cutting himself with stones. And so Mark here paints for us a very vivid picture of a tormented soul. And when he saw Jesus so far off, he ran and worshipped him.

But Jesus will have nothing to do with the worship of evil spirits. He cried with a loud voice and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God that you torment me not. For Jesus had said unto him, Come out of the man thou unclean spirit.

And Jesus asked him, that is the spirit in the man, What is your name? And he answered, saying, My name is Legion, because we are many. And he besought him much that he would not send them away out of the country. Luke's gospel tells us that they begged not to be sent to the abyss.

We'll talk about that more when we get to Luke's gospel. Now there was nigh unto the mountains a great herd of swine that were feeding, and all of the devils besought him, saying, Send us into the swine that we may enter into them. And forthwith Jesus gave them permission, and the unclean spirits went out and entered into the swine, and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea.

And there were about two thousand, and they were choked in the sea. Now it would be wrong to assume that there were two thousand demons in the man. The swine probably, when the demons infested some of them, they probably began to be wild, and the rest of them, like a herd of cattle and all, just sort of followed and went right down into the sea, as they began to just panic and go together.

Now why would Jesus allow these demons the freedom of going into the swine? Well, you go back to the Mosaic law, and you find that they weren't to keep swine. That was a forbidden meat under the law. This was an illegal venture, raising swine.

And so this, no doubt, is the reason why the Lord allowed them that permission to go into the swine, and he got rid of an illegal industry, as far as the Jews were concerned. And they that fed the swine fled, and they told it in the city and in the country, and they went out to see what was done. And they came to Jesus, and they saw him, they saw him that was possessed with the devil and had the legion, and he was sitting, and he was clothed, and in his right mind, and they were afraid.

Hear this man that they couldn't bind with chains and fetters. Hear this man that was out there screaming, crying, cutting himself with rocks and could not be tamed, naked, tragic, horrible spectacle. And now he's seated there, clothed, in his right mind.

And they saw it and told them how it befell, let's see, and they were afraid, and they that saw it told them how it befell to them that was possessed with the devil and concerning the swine. The witnesses began to tell what had happened. And the people began to beg Jesus, they prayed him to depart out of their coast.

And when he was coming to the ship, they said, would you just mind leaving here? How inhuman humans can be. Rather than being grateful that this poor wretched man was helped and healed. They were just upset because they had lost the swine.

They were more interested in pigs than they were human beings. Their descendants are still around. People who really don't have a real concern for others' needs, for human beings.

They could care less, especially if it meant a loss of profit to them. And they prayed that he would leave them coast. And so when he was coming to the ship, he that had been possessed with these evil spirits prayed him that he might be with him.

How be it Jesus would not allow him to go. But he said unto them, go home to your friends and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee and hath had compassion on thee. And he departed and

began to publish in Decapolis, that is the ten cities, how great things Jesus had done for him.

And all men did marvel. This man became a living witness, going around and telling of the great things that Jesus had done. And when Jesus was passed over again by ship to the other side, many people gathered unto him.

And he was near the sea. And behold, there came one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name. And when he saw him, he fell at his feet.

And he besought him greatly, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death. I pray thee, come and lay thy hands on her that she may be healed and she shall live. And Jesus went with him and many people followed him and thronged him.

So coming now back to Capernaum, Jairus, one of the rulers of the synagogue there in Capernaum, came to Jesus, driven by desperation, because at home, notice, he besought him greatly, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death. Probably the easiest way to get to the heart of a man is through his children. To see our children sick, to see them suffering, moves us more than almost anything else.

And to see his little daughter dying, we are told that she was about twelve years old. We are also told in another gospel that she was their only little girl. And so for twelve years, she had brought sunshine, life and blessing into the home, as only little girls can do.

But now the father's heart is breaking. It's obvious that his little girl is dying. Nothing can be done.

They have only one hope. He had probably been in the controversy the other day, that Sabbath day when Jesus was there in the synagogue and healed the man with the withered hand. And though he argued over the violation of the Sabbath, he was in need.

He was desperate, driven to come against prejudice to Jesus. Torn between wanting to be by his little daughter's side, but knowing that she had to have help quick, he left the mother with the little daughter and he himself set out to find Jesus. And when he did, he found Jesus surrounded by a crowd who were thronging him.

But his desperation pushed him through the crowd until he was standing face to face with Jesus and he begged him, please come. My little daughter's at the point of death. Just lay your hand on her and she will be healed.

He knew that Jesus could bring healing even to this condition of the point of death. And Jesus went with him and many people were following and thronged him. The pushing, shoving, rude crowd.

And a certain woman which had an issue of blood for 12 years and had suffered many things of many physicians. They probably all of them had their own cure and she tried them all. And she spent all that she had and was not any better, but rather was growing worse.

When she had heard of Jesus, she came in the press behind and touched, the word touch, but his clothes, I shall be whole. And immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague. She had set up, she had set a point of releasing her faith.

The moment I touch, I know I will be healed. Someone wanted to know what the difference between this and positive confession was. Positive confession would be if she continued to hemorrhage to say I'm

healed.

That's Christian science also. I'm not sick, I'm healed. When in fact you are still hemorrhaging and you have your sicknesses.

She said I know I will be healed the moment I touch and she was healed. That was just releasing faith and setting a point to release faith. Now had she gone on hemorrhaging and saying I feel great, I'm healed, I'm not hemorrhaging.

That would be positive confession. That would not be the truth though. So there is a definite difference between the two.

12 years. According to Jewish law, her husband could not touch her as long as she was hemorrhaging. According to Jewish law, everything she touched was unclean.

Whoever touched her would be unclean. Whoever would touch anything she touched would be unclean. Therefore, she could not continue to live with her family to prepare them food and all to do their clothes.

Finally, according to Jewish law, she could not enter the place of worship as long as she was hemorrhaging. She was ceremonially unclean and for 12 years she lived in the shadow of darkness. With Jairus, 12 years he lived in the sunshine of this beautiful little girl.

The light she brought into her home, but the light was going out. With a woman, 12 years, she was living in the shadow of this ostracized condition, but a ray of light was shining, a hope. I know if I can just but touch him, his garment, I will be healed.

And immediately, the fountain of her blood was dried up and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague. She could feel that touch, that healing in that moment. Have you ever had that kind of a healing where you actually just felt it? Wow.

There was one Sunday morning when we were still over in the other little church that I woke up on Sunday morning too sick, too ill to go to church. I got up and I tried to study, but I was feeling so miserable that I could not concentrate. I couldn't get any message together.

I was just too miserable. I was just too sick. So I went downstairs and I woke up Chuck and I said, Chuck, you're going to have to go out and preach for me this morning.

I'm really too sick. I just can't do it. And he said, okay, dad.

And he jumped up and started studying in a hurry and he came out and took first service. And of course, they announced that I was at home sick, couldn't make it because I was so sick, which was so true. I was lying in bed, just miserable, but they prayed for me that God would heal me.

And as I was lying in bed, just as sick as could be, I felt the healing. I jumped up out of bed in cases. What's wrong with you? And I said, I'm healed.

And I went in and got dressed and came on out and took the second and third services. I felt the healing. I felt it happening.

It was just suddenly there. Glorious thing. Just felt it.

I've had an experience of laying my hand upon a little child who was running a very high fever. And as the elders and I were praying and my hand was on her forehead, I felt the heat go out from her. I felt her forehead just cool off.

As we were praying, her mother was a nurse and had just taken her temperatures up to about 103. And so I said, I felt the temperature go. She took her temperature again and it was down normal.

Just by the time that I could feel it, I could feel it happening. And this woman could feel it. She knew it's happened.

She can feel it within herself. And those are beautiful experiences when you actually feel God's touch upon your body. You know it.

You don't need just, you know, someone to tell you it's happened. You know it's happened. You can feel it.

And so immediately knowing in herself or immediately knowing in herself, she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague. And Jesus immediately, knowing in himself that this healing had gone out of him, he turned around in the press, the crowd, and he said, who touched my clothes? And his disciples said unto him, Lord, you can see the multitude thronging you and you say, who touched me? You got to be kidding, Jesus. Trying to make our way through this crowd with all the shuffling and jostling and shoving and pushing.

And then you stop and say, who touched me? Come on. And he looked round about to see her that had done this thing. Now she knew what had happened and he knew what had happened.

She probably was very relieved. She's frightened when he said, who touched me? Because she knew what happened and very relieved when she heard the logical argument of the disciples. Lord, you got to be kidding.

Look at the crowd. Everybody's shuffling, pushing. No, no, it's different.

Oh, the crowds around Jesus and in all the crowd around him, one woman touched him. You know, you can be close to Jesus without touching him. You can be among the press.

You can be among the people. You can be among the person touching him. And there's a vast difference.

She touched him. It was the touch of faith and healing came. With the woman fearing and trembling and knowing what was done in her body, she came and fell down before him and told him all the truth.

I mean, she confessed everything. And he said unto her daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole. Go in peace and be whole of thy plague.

Now, in as much as this was a common practice, many were touching him and being healed. We read that in chapter three, verse nine. And as we continue on in the text, in the next chapter, verse 56, and whether so ever he entered into villages or cities or country, they laid the sick in the streets and besought him that they might touch if it were but the border of his garment.

And as many as touched him were made whole. This is the only one where Jesus stopped to say, who touched me? That is recorded. Now, it was happening all the time.

Why would he stop at this particular time and say, who touched me? When this was a common occurrence. And when Jairus was so desperate, his daughter was so close to death. The reason why Jesus stopped is he knew that the daughter had died already.

And he knew that soon those messengers were going to be there telling Jairus, your daughter is dead. And Jesus had compassion on Jairus because of the grief and all that he was going to receive when he heard news that his daughter was dead. And he was seeking really to give to Jairus a ray of hope even in the midst of the bad news.

So while Jesus was saying to the woman, be thou whole of your plague. And Jairus was seeing the power of Christ manifested just by someone touching him and being healed of a condition that existed for 12 years. That same amount of time that he enjoyed the beauty and the glow of his little daughter.

As Jairus turned from those who brought the message to Jesus, probably say, Lord is too late. Nevermind. Jesus just said to him, don't be afraid.

Only believe. He had given him a basis for his belief. He had given him courage in the darkest hour.

Surely as Jairus turned, it must be that the blood had drained out of his face and he was probably an ash and white and just had that sad, desperate. Oh God, it's too late. And just that my daughter's gone.

And just that grief, hopelessness. He had been hoping that Jesus might get there just to touch her. I know that if you lay his hand on her, she'll be healed.

Now it's too late. My little girl is gone. But Jesus just said to him, don't be afraid.

Only believe. And at this point, Jesus stopped the crowd. He said, that's it.

Don't go any further. You stay here. I'll be back.

And he took Peter and James and John and the father and they journeyed together probably in order that they might get there more quickly because it's awfully slow moving with a huge crowd of people trying to work your way through the crowd. So they stopped them in order that they might come with haste to the house. And as they were coming to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, they saw the tumult and those that wept and wailed greatly.

It was a custom in those days to really show your great love for the deceased by wailing loudly for them. And the louder the wails, the more it expressed your grief and love for the one who was deceased. And so they have professional wailers, people who were especially skilled in wailing.

And they would hire them to come and to wail on these occasions in order that the whole neighborhood might know the grief that you are feeling in this hour of loss. And so many times when a person was dying, the wailers would assemble so that at the moment of death they could let out the cries and the wails, which were as an announcement to the neighborhood and all of the tragedy that had befallen the family. And so there was the tumult, great weeping and wailing as they approached the house.

And when they were come into the house, Jesus said unto them, what's all the big fuss about and why are you weeping? The damsel is not dead, she's only sleeping. And their wails turned to laughter of scorn. They laughed Him to scorn.

And so He put them all out. And He took the father and the mother of the damsel and those that were with Him, that is Peter, James and John. And they entered in where the damsel was lying.

And He took the damsel by the hand and He said unto her, Talitha Kumi, that's Aramaic. And because it is Aramaic, it was probably the household language, the language used around the house. Jesus probably generally spoke in Greek, but the household language was Aramaic.

And that is why Mark says, which is being interpreted, damsel, I say unto the arise. More literally, the Aramaic Talitha Kumi is my little lamb arise. Jesus was speaking to this little girl in extremely endearing terms.

Looking at this little form of the 12-year-old daughter of Jairus that was lying there still in death, He said, my little lamb arise. And immediately the damsel arose and walked, for she was about 12 years old. And they were astonished with great astonishment.

And He charged them strictly that no man should know it. And He commanded that something should be given to her to eat. The question arises, why would Jesus bring this little girl back into a world of strife and misery and woe? Surely being with the Father in heaven would be much better than to be in this world with all of its heartache and all of its pain and all of its suffering.

Why would the Lord call her back into this world? Only because of His compassion for the parents' grief. It was for their sake, not her sake, that He did it. It was because of His compassion upon the great grief that they were feeling that He brought the little girl back to life.

For her sake, He would have left her in the kingdom, away from the strife and the turmoil and the ache and all of this world. But for their sake, He brought her back. Next week, we'll start with chapter 6. It's a long chapter, so we dare not try to get started with that tonight.

May the Lord be with you, bless you, give you a good week. And may you begin to see fruit from the seed that has been sown in your heart. As God begins to take the Word and use it just as a life-changing power.

And may the Word of Christ dwell in your hearts richly by faith. And may the Lord touch your life with His touch of love and strength, in Jesus' name.

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