JESUS CHANGES OUR PERSPECTIVE

Mark 4

Awareness

Before listening, reflect:

- What is a parable? How would you explain the purpose of a parable?
- What does it mean to be a disciple of Jesus Christ?

Jesus often taught in parables. If we're anything like his first disciples, we don't always understand the meaning of Jesus' parables right away. The parables in Mark 4 point us to who Jesus is and what he came to do. But they also cause us to look in the mirror and ask, what about me? Do I understand the basic meaning of his parables? Do I have ears to hear? Have I opened my heart and mind to receive his teaching, and grasp his deeper kingdom meaning? Study Mark 4 and consider how Jesus' Parable of the Sower and Parable of the Growing Seed might change our perspective and invite us to both grow in faith and witness God at work in our world.

Listen:*Jesus Changes Our Perspective*

Reflection

After listening, consider:

- What is the relationship between knowledge and faith in your own life? Which one tends to come first?
- Throughout the episode hosts Dave Bast and Scott Hoezee and their guest Gary Burge refer to various ways Jesus' teaching challenges us to reconsider what we think we know. For example, in segment 1, Dr. Burge notes that "Jesus, by teaching in parables, actually reverses [our expectation that with more knowledge will come more faith] entirely. He would say: If you have faith…if you move toward me in discipleship, then knowledge will emerge" and while discussing the Parable of the Sower in segment 2, Dave clarifies that Jesus isn't describing three types of non-believers and a believer, but rather positions of the heart, saying, "He is talking about us, because I can be any of those soils at any given time in my life." What other teachings of Jesus Christ can you recall that changed your perspective or reversed your expectations?
- How do these parables contribute/support Mark's purpose and goal of helping his readers recognize Jesus Christ as the Messiah and understand what he came to do?
- Where in your life do you need to be reminded that we do not need to engineer or manipulate anyone or anything to bring God's kingdom into our world because God is at work and his Kingdom is both here already and unfurling?

Related Passages

- **Isaiah 6:9-10**

- **Matthew 13:1-43**
- **Luke 8:4-5**
- **Joel 3:13**
- **Isaiah 28:11-29**

Conclusion

In the episode, Dr. Burge calls parables both “judging and revealing” observing that a parable “diagnoses where we stand.” Reflect on that thought and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the position of your heart. Are there any biases or preconceived notions or expectations getting in the way of your discipleship, blocking you from having a receptive heart or being a willing listener? Offer a prayer of confession as you feel led, then pray for God’s revelation. Close by re-reading Mark 4:1-20, 26-29 again.

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