

BIBLE READING DAY 15, SUNDAY: MARCH 13

Jesus Warns His Hearers

Mark 4:21–25

Then said Jesus, “Is a lamp fetched to be placed under a bushel or under a bed, and not on a lamp stand? There is nothing hidden that will not be revealed, nor anything secret that will not be brought to light. If any man has ears to hear, let him hear.

“Take heed how you hear. The measure you give will be the measure you receive. For more will be given to him who holds fast what he receives, but even what he has will be taken from him who does not hold it fast.”

How the Harvest Comes, Mark 4:26–29

“The kingdom of God,” said Jesus, “is like a man scattering seed on the ground, and then while he sleeps by night and rises each day, the seed sprouts and grows—how, he does not know. The earth produces fruit of itself: first the blade, then the head, then the full grain in the head. But when the grain is ripe, he immediately puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come.”

The Tares, the Mustard Seed, and the Explanation, Matthew 13:24–43

Jesus put another parable before them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field, but while his men were asleep, his enemy came and sowed darnel among the wheat, and went his way. When the crop sprouted and began heading out, then the darnel showed up.

“Then the servants of the landowner came to him and said, ‘Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where did the darnel come from?’

“‘An enemy has done this,’ he replied.

“Then the servants said to him, ‘Do you want us to go and gather out the tares?’

“But he said, ‘No, lest in gathering out the tares, you root out the wheat along with them. Let them both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time, I will say to the reapers, ‘Gather the tares first and bind them into bundles to burn; but gather the wheat into my barn.’”

Jesus put another parable before them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field, which indeed is the smallest of all seeds, but when it is grown, it is the largest of herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and build nests in its branches.”

And he told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till all of it was leavened.”

All these things Jesus spoke to the crowds in parables. Indeed, he said nothing to them except in a parable, in fulfillment of the word of the prophet,

I will open my mouth in parables;

I will utter things hidden since the foundation of the world.

Then Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house. The disciples said to Jesus, “Explain to us the parable of the tares in the field.”

“He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man,” replied Jesus, “and the field is the world. The good seed are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. Just as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so will it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send forth his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all offenders and those who practice wickedness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.”

Kingdom of Heaven Parables, Matthew 13:44–53

“The kingdom of heaven,” said Jesus, “is like treasure hidden in a field which a man finds and hides; and in his joy over it, he goes and sells all he has and buys that field.

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking exquisite pearls. Finding one very precious pearl, he went and sold all he had and bought it.”

“Again,” said Jesus, “the kingdom of heaven is like a net which was cast into the sea, gathering all sorts of fish. When it was full, the men drew it ashore and sat down and sorted out the good fish into tubs, but the worthless ones they threw away. So will it be at the end of the age. The angels will go forth and separate the wicked from the righteous and cast them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Have you understood all these things?”

“Yes,” they replied.

“Therefore,” said Jesus, “every scribe who has become a disciple of the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings forth out of his storehouse new treasures, as well as old.”

And when Jesus had finished these parables, he departed from there.

Jesus Calms the Storm, Luke 8:22–25

Now it came to pass on a certain day that Jesus got into a boat with his disciples and said to them, “Let us go over to the other side of the lake.”

So, they set out, and as they sailed, Jesus fell asleep. And a windstorm swept down on the lake, and they were filing with water and were in danger. And the disciples came and woke Jesus, exclaiming, “Master, Master, we are perishing!”

Then Jesus rose and rebuked the wind and the raging waves, and they ceased, and there was a calm. And he said to them, “Where is your faith?”

And they were afraid, and marveled, saying one to another, “Who is this man? He commands even the winds and the sea, and they obey him!”

Approximate Timeline of Jesus’s Public Ministry

EARLY LIFE	EARLY MINISTRY	1 st Feast of PASSOVER	SUMMER	1 st Feast of BOOTHS	WINTER	SPRING	SUMMER	FALL	WINTER	2 nd Feast of PASSOVER	SUMMER	3 rd Feast of BOOTHS	WINTER	FINAL PASSOVER
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DEVOTIONAL DAY 15 (SUNDAY MARCH 13)

Food for Thought...Literally!

Based on Matthew 13:24–53; Mark 4:21–29; Luke 8:22–25

One of my favorite Bible teachers, when discussing the attention to detail that God pays to the celebration of festivals, commented, “I love worshiping a God that spells out, in detail, food to eat to celebrate and remember Him!”. And who wouldn’t agree with that!?

We are a culture where we use food to help us celebrate everything from birthdays to football games. Sacred days such as Christmas and Easter are characterized by the gathering of family around turkey, ham, and macaroni and cheese (I had to make sure to include my favorite side dish).

This same teacher pointed out that the food we use is a gift from God. He created it and provided it from His bountiful harvest. It’s through the parables on harvests and fishing that Christ so effectively spoke to so many as He walked this Earth.

Today’s reading brought to mind the above teaching and made me appreciate something else: God is a God who meets us where we are and teaches us in a way that we can understand. We often hear politicians who speak over the heads of their audience in an attempt to come across as “the smartest person in the room”. While experience and education are good, it is wasted if your audience doesn’t understand your message.

Jesus could have come to Earth in any way He wanted, at any time He wanted, and delivered His message in the powerful ways the devout Jews of the day would have anticipated. Instead, He was born in a manger, humbly raised to be a carpenter, and spoke to the thousands who came to hear Him in a way they could understand.

For years men from our LifeGroup have met at Papa’s Café in Harker Heights for breakfast on the first Saturday of the month. We drink double brew coffee, eat grilled biscuits, and in the process, let down our guards and get to truly know each other. We don’t come in with agenda or lesson plan; instead, we just talk, and in that talking, we get to truly know one another. In that gathering around bountiful amounts of food, we can sift through the weeds in our lives and encourage our brothers in Christ to stay the course and to be God’s hands and feet in their daily walks.

In the same way, everyone in Jesus’s audience would have understood the frustration from trying to sort out the weeds from the grain at harvest time or the fear of being out in the boat fishing as a storm threatened them. The idea that a mustard seed can sprout up to be the greatest of plants would not only have been familiar to them, but also seen as a source of encouragement to an oppressed people who were tired of living under the rule of a harsh empire and longing for the rewards of Heaven that Jesus promised.

God didn’t speak over the heads of the people then nor does He now; instead, He sent His Son to speak to us and give us the hope only He can provide.

Heavenly Father. Thank You for speaking to us in a way we could understand. Thank You for sending Jesus to give hope to the hopeless and assure a weary people that the fears of this world were temporary, and the true reward could be found in Heaven. Help us to meet people where they are and to speak Your truth in a way that overcomes the noise and sin around us and brings hope and grace into a weary world. We love You Lord. Amen.

--By Chris Diem

WRITE DOWN YOUR THOUGHTS IN RESPONSE TO WHAT YOU HAVE READ:

WHAT DID GOD SAY TO ME?

PRAYER: WHAT DID I SAY TO GOD?

ACTS OF PRAYER: ADORATION, CONFESSION, THANKSGIVING, SUPPLICATION (How God Can Supply Needs)

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