

Hide it under a bushel...no!

I. Slide#1 Announce:

- A. Slide#2 Easter Schedule: Good Fri Communion Service (7-7:30am); Crosswalk(11am Temeku); Easter Service 7:30am lower campus.
 - 1. Also a *Baptism* coming up April 14th.
- B. Slide#3 School Vision Meeting & Open House: join Pastor Des & I this Fri at 5pm.
 - 1. We'll share our goals, hopes, & desires for the upcoming school year.
 - 2. We have some great Public Schools in our Valley & even greater teachers, but the reason we provide "*Christian Education*" is so we have the opportunity to speak to the *whole* child, integrating *Jesus* into every subject.
 - 3. **5-6pm** Free Dinner (in gym); **6-6:30** Sneak Peek Vision Meeting (In sanctuary) - **6:30-7:30** (visit our classrooms)
- C. Prayer: Harold/Natalie in Haiti (Med.)

II. Slide#4 Intro:

- A. We have 3 *Kingdom* Parables this morning. Kingdom? (26,30)
- B. World history has revealed many forms of government.
 - 1. Slide#5 The most common types have been: **Dictatorships** (ruled by military strength); **Republics** (ruled by law); **Democracies** (ruled by majority vote).
And then 2 types of monarchies: **Constitutional Monarchies** (where the monarch's powers are *limited*); **Absolute Monarchies** (where the monarch's *word is law*).¹
 - a) The Kingdom of God is an *absolute monarchy*.
 - 2. In any monarchy, the virtues of **honor & loyalty to the throne** are exceedingly important. Even more so in **God's kingdom**.
 - a) Yet the fundamental **sin** of the human race is grounded in our **refusal to honor God as God** and in our **disloyalty to the King of Kings**.
 - b) Rom.1:21 NLT **Yes, they knew God, but they wouldn't worship him as God or even give him thanks. And they began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. As a result, their minds became dark and confused.**
 - 3. **Kingdom of God** is a thread that runs through both OT & NT.
 - a) Its theme highlights **God's reign over His people**.
 - b) His *coming Messiah* is announced as **God's anointed King**.
 - c) **The OT** points to the kingdom as **coming in the future**.

¹ R.C.Sproul, Essential Truths of the Christian Faith, pg.277

- d) **The NT** speaks about the kingdom being both **present** & **future** (an *already* & a *not yet*).
- e) **The NT** opens w/the announcement of **John the Baptist** that, “*the Kingdom of heaven is at hand.*” It was God’s kingdom breaking through into history that heralded the NT gospel. [his message of “the King is coming” signaled the urgency of the times]
- (1) Then Jesus’ own preaching declared the kingdom *had come* with power & was *in the midst* of His people (*w/in their grasp*; not w/in you like in your heart). He tells His disciples at His ascension to witnesses to **His reign** as *King of Kings*.
 - (2) Jesus **inaugurated** the kingdom of God. He’s already been enthroned in heaven. **But** it is though He is a **King in exile** with few loyal subjects. *At His return He will fully consummate His reign.*
 - (3) Jesus’ current status as cosmic king is **invisible**.
 - (4) It is the task of **the church** to give *visible witness* to the **invisible kingdom**.

III. Slide#6 **LIGHT SHINING (21-25)** *Parable of the Lamp*

- A. **Big Idea:** The Good News that Jesus brought us is not to be kept to **ourselves**, **but** to be shared w/**others**.
- B. **Slide#7** *The River Jordan* supplies two large lakes. *Sea of Galilee* (full of fish/plant life) & the *Dead Sea* (nothing living in it at all - It’s stagnant & lifeless).
1. Both lakes have the **same source**, **but** only the Sea of Galilee has **an outlet**.
 2. *In other words*, it *passes on what it has received*..the Dead Sea does **not**!
 3. **That is the challenge of this passage**, *the message* that Jesus has brought is not to be **kept to ourselves** but it is to be **passed on to others**.
- C. **Slide#8** (21) *Explain lamp/oil/wick*.
1. Its purpose is to illuminate the whole room.
- D. (22) *He who has been enlightened must in turn enlighten others*.
1. The message of His Kingdom/His Coming should be **shared as widely as possible**.
- E. **Slide#9a** (24) *Hear it & use it*
1. Only as the disciples **share the light they have received** will they be able to **receive more light** from their Lord.
 - a) Maybe this is the reason for the **ignorance** of the church.
 - b) Sounds like Jesus is saying, “*I’m not giving you anymore till you share what I just shared with you to others,...no matter how many studies you go to.*”
 - c) You weren't made to be **reservoirs** **but** **conduits!** [Conduits for Christ]
 - (1) **Share what you have so far!**
- F. **Slide#9b** (25) *Use it or lose it*

1. Those who **have** spiritual truth will receive **more**; **but** the one who has *failed to listen & profit by what he hears*, will soon be **deprived** of what little he possesses!
2. **Other examples? Our physical muscles** must be **used** else we **lose** them (atrophy) **In banking** the more you have in the bank the more you will earn. If you have **nothing in savings**, in the end, they'll even **take your account away**.

G. **Slide#9c** In order for a lamp to give light:

1. The lamp had to "*use itself up*" (i.e. the oil).
2. Be refreshed often with more oil (H.S.)
 - a) You can't **give out** until you **take in**.
3. **If it was covered**, the flame would be extinguished, **&** it would be no good to those around it.

H. **Slide#9d** Hide it under a bushel...**NO!** - ***Share what you learned!**

1. **Why are we often tempted to hide our light, rather than let it shine? Why is this?**

I. **So, how will people respond to their/our message?**

1. As we learned last week from the **Parable of the Soils** there will be **many indifferent or hostile** to this message.
2. So Jesus gives them **two more Parables** to encourage them/us, **that** the going will be **rough at times** **but** there will be an **exiting harvest**.

IV. **Slide#10 SEED GROWING (26-29) Parable of the Growing Seed**

- A. **Big Idea:** We learn a number of things about the **growth** of God's word in people's lives.
- B. This parable picks up where *the Parable of the Soils* left off.
 1. He is drawing **parallels** between the way things are **in nature** **&** how they are **in the kingdom of God!**
- C. This is Mark's only unique parable.
- D. This is an important parable for those who **sow the Word of God**.
- E. **Note:** **Sowing** (26) **Growing** (27,28) **&** **Harvesting** (29).
- F. **We learn 3 other things from this also:**²
 1. **Slide#11 It has Mysterious Growth** – Sharing the gospel is never a matter of **formulas & techniques**. There is always another dimension...the mysterious working of **God!**
 2. **Slide#12 It has Gradual Growth** – The Sower needs **patience**. You can't **plant** today **&** **pick** tomorrow! The seed needs to germinate **&** grow.

² David Hewit, Mark, pg.71

- a) James 5:7,8 **Therefore be patient**, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer **waits** for the precious fruit of the earth, **waiting patiently** for it until it receives the early and latter rain. **You also be patient**. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.
 - b) When you **sow**...give it time to **grow**.
 - (1) **Never expect a full crop of Christian graces immediately** from them.
 - (a) **But**, you can water it with your **tears & prayers!**
 - i) Ps.126:5 **Those who sow in tears Shall reap in joy.**
 - c) It **germinates, sprouts, grows &** he **did not know how nor** could he **explain it**.
 - (1) **Meaning it was w/o human intervention. It's "Miracle Grow!"** [God Grow]
3. **Slide#13 It has Certain Growth** – The seed's growth is inherent in the seed.
- a) Note **by itself** in (vs.28). Try to guess the Greek meaning **αὐτόματος**.
 - (1) Used 1 other time in NT, in Acts12:10 when the prison gate opened **by itself** automatically.
 - b) **When the word of God is faithfully sown it will grow...there will be a harvest!**
 - (1) **For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes.** Rom.1:16
 - c) **"The world has more winnable people than ever before...but it is possible to come out of a ripe field empty-handed."**

V. **Slide#14 TREE EXPANDING (30-32) Parable of the Mustard Seed**

- A. **Big Idea:** This last parable underlines what he just said about a **certain & successful harvest!**
 - 1. From the **tiny mustard seed** a **large plant grows!**
 - 2. From **insignificant beginnings** a **great movement develops!**
 - 3. Remember **the manger in Bethlehem** a helpless infant **now known all over the globe**
 - a) **Slide#15 Zech.4:10 For who has despised the day of small things?**
- B. (31) Actually, the mustard seed is **not** the smallest seed known to botanist.
 - 1. Evidently it was the smallest in common use **among the Jews**. It was proverbial.
- C. **Some see this as the growth of the church during this age.**
 - 1. Our Lord started with 12; grew to 70; at Pentecost 3000; then 5000; it was carried to other nations(Africa, Asia, Europe)...it will go to **ALL nations! And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.**
 - 2. Don't be put off by the **outward appearance** of things or **apparent lack of response**.
 - a) There is no doubt in Jesus' mind that **when the seed is sown** a process begins that **will bear fruit** in God's time.

D. Slide#16 Birds?

1. May indicate just the surprising size of the result.
2. Represent the Gentiles incorporated into God's kingdom program.
 - a) Slide#17 Ezek.17:22 On the mountain height of Israel I will plant it; and it will bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, and be a majestic cedar. **Under** it will dwell **birds of every sort**; in the shadow of its branches they (Gentiles) will dwell.
3. Perhaps they represent evil forces(vs.4).
 - a) Jesus just used it that way(vs.4), same day, same teaching time!
 - b) Small beginnings, large growth, & not without it attacks!
 - (1) **Already in the 12**, a Judas bird flew. **In the Jerusalem church**, Ananias & Sapphira roosted. **Simon Magus** was perched in the church in Samaria.
 - c) The bigger the net, the greater the possibility of catching both good & bad fish!

VI. Slide#18 **USE OF PARABLES (33,34)** [note: cutest lil girl in Jesus lap in pic]

- A. He explains the principle that He operated by.
 1. Jn.16:12 I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.
 2. Jesus was fully aware of the capacity of His listeners.
 3. He reserved detailed explanations for the disciples.
 4. **Parables** gave the crowd **time to think** & prevented them coming to **premature & probably mistaken conclusions** about who He **was** & what He had **come to do**.
- B. Mark's selection of *Parables* is followed by a series of **Miracles**.
- C. **What Jesus said** (His parables/words) was **authenticated** by what he **did** (miracles/works).
- D. Slide#19 3 Take aways:
 1. **Share** what you've learned
 2. Don't be discouraged, **growth** is mysterious/gradual/but certain
 3. God uses **Humble beginnings** then grows them into **something great**
- E. Slide#20blank
- F. Starting Spiritual Conversations:
 1. Don't **dump** the gospel on someone, because no one likes to **get dumped on**.
 2. They should not feel like someone's **project**, but a **person** that is loved.
 - a) Develop authentic relationships.
 - b) Does my life reflect only **religious activity** or does it bear the mark of profound love?
 3. Evangelism is **a way of life** not a **program**.

4. Evangelism training is simply calling believers to **live as true Christians**.
When we **live** as we are called to **be**, evangelism can't help *but happen*.
5. **Our message is not** that we have it all together, but that we know **One** who does!
Our message is not *behave*, then ***believe***, then you can ***belong!***
6. Penetrate their mask. We all wear one.
7. See anyone's sin_(even most vile) as them simply trying to **fill** their God-shaped vacuum.