Mark 4:21-34

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).
         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:
   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.

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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) [mote: 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.