

Handout 1: Mark Lesson 4

1. Parable of the Cloth and Wineskins (Mk 2:21-22)
2. Parable of the Strong Man (Mk 3:23-27)
3. Parable of the Sower (Mk 4:3-8)
4. Parable of the Lamp (Mk 4:21-25)
5. Parable of the Seed that Grows Itself (Mk 4:26-29; only in Mark)
6. Parable of the Mustard Seed (Mk 4:30-32)
7. Parable of Clean and Unclean (Mk 7:14-23)
8. Parable of Salt (Mk 9:49-50)
9. Parable of the Tenants (Mk 12:1-9)
10. Parable of the Fig Tree (Mk 13:28-31)

Symbolism in the Parable of the Seed and the Sower	
The seed	The word of God
The sower	Jesus
Different soil conditions	Four kinds of responses by people who hear the word

Symbolism in the four kinds of soil where the seed is sown	
1. Seed sown on the path	This person hears the word of the kingdom without making any effort to understand and embrace the truth. Since he has failed to understand, Satan is able to separate him from the truth and from his place in the Kingdom.
2. Seed sown on rocky ground	This person receives the word of God with joy, but he has not applied the word to his life; he has no internal stability (“roots”). In a time of hardship, he abandons his faith in God.
3. Seed sown among the thorns	This person hears the word but does not love God above all else; the secular world pulls him away from faith and he bears no good fruit/works.
4. Seed sown on rich soil	This person hears the word, understands it, and applies it to his “heart”/life and bears the fruit/works of faith in abundance.

Jesus attributes the failure to produce the good fruit of repentance and conversion to:

1. The activity of Satan (4:15)
2. Personal shallowness (4:16-17)
3. The ambition for worldly pleasures and wealth (4:18-19)

Symbolism in the Parable of the Lamp (see Jn 8:12; 12:36, 46)	
The light	Jesus Christ and His Gospel of salvation
The darkness	Sin
Lamp under a bushel basket or bed	Professed Christians or Christian communities that do not share the “light” of Christ and His Gospel of salvation
Lamp on a lampstand that gives light	Christians who actively share the “light” of Christ and His message of salvation

Handout 2: Mark Lesson 4

Symbolism in the Seed that Grows Itself	
The land	The kingdom of God (the Church)
The seed	The word planted in the fertile hearts of the children of “light”/children of the Kingdom
The fruit of the seed	The good works of Christians that develops and bears “fruit” through the process of spiritual growth and maturity
The harvest	The gathering in of souls in the Last Judgment
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The growth of the Kingdom of God is a divine act that defies human understanding. St. Paul will refer to this supernatural phenomenon when he writes: *I planted, Apollos watered, but God caused the growth. Therefore, neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who causes the growth* (1 Cor 3:6-7).

Symbolism in the Parable of the Mustard Seed	
The tiny mustard seed	The small beginnings of the Kingdom (Church) of Jesus Christ
The mustard seed that is planted in the earth	Jesus plants the seed of the Gospel in the hearts of all who accept His message
The great growth of the mustard plant	The tremendous growth of the Church that is nurtured by the Holy Spirit
The large branches and the creatures that dwell in its shade	The spread of the Church across the face of the earth, calling all men and women of every ethnicity to salvation in Christ Jesus
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Jairus' Daughter	The Bleeding Woman	Israel
The official calls her his “daughter” (Mk 5:23).	Jesus calls the woman “daughter” (Mk 5:34).	Both the girl and the woman are “daughters” of Israel.
The official's daughter is 12 years old (Mk 5:42).	The woman bled for 12 years (Mk 5:25).	12 is the number of Israel, originally composed of 12 tribes that are the descendants of the 12 sons of Jacob/Israel.
Jesus raised the daughter of Jairus from the dead and restored her to her family (Mk 5:42).	Jesus healed the bleeding woman and restored her to her community (Mk 5:34).	Jesus came to heal and restore Israel and to raise the faithful remnant of the new Israel from bondage to death and to new life in Christ Jesus.
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