

v.3:1-6 And he entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man there which had a withered hand. And they watched him, whether he would heal him on the sabbath day; that they might accuse him. And he saith unto the man which had the withered hand, Stand forth. And he saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill? But they held their peace. And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched [it] out: and his hand was restored whole as the other. And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him.

Mark begins chapter 3 relating yet another story of confrontation between Jesus and the religious leadership. This incident, however, shows that the leadership had indeed become His enemies as they lie in wait to trap Him. Their jealousy had conceived hatred. Their minds were already made-up unlike the previous incidents where they questioned Him subsequent to the act.

- a) *Luke tells us that this incident is not related to the one at the close of chapter 2, but took place on "another Sabbath." (Luke 6:6) Matthew tells us that the leadership actually set-up Jesus and tried to veil their plot with the question, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?" However, their minds were already made-up as they were virtually daring Him to break the law in their presence. (Matt. 12:10-12)*
- b) *Even so, Jesus first tries to reason with them, that is, to get them to think. As we read in Matthew's account, Jesus gives them the simple illustration of one of their sheep falling into a pit on the Sabbath. Every one of them knew in their heart that they would save the sheep. Jesus then compares the value of a sheep to that of a man.*
- c) *Jesus throws the question back at them, but knowing their hearts adds the contrast of good to evil and saving to killing. It was the Sabbath and He was about to do good, while they were plotting evil. He was seeking to save life, while they sought to destroy Him*
- d) *Having explained to them that doing good on the Sabbath was true to the spirit of the Sabbath and having exposed to them their evil thoughts and intentions, He looks around at all of them. Jesus is filled with the righteous anger of a God who is reaching out to His creatures, but who's advances are being rejected. He was grieved or greatly saddened because their hearts were hardened. They had convinced themselves that strict adherence to their ritualism was more important than reaching out and comforting a fellow man.*
- e) *In spite of their opinions Jesus must do good and honor the intent of the Sabbath. He commands the man with the withered hand to stretch it out. The man obeys and is healed. The healing is immediate and complete as the hand is just like the other one.*
- f) *True to Jesus' assessment of their hearts they immediately leave and ally themselves with the*

Herodians who were the political leaders. As Henriksen put it, "A strange coalition between the sanctimonious and the sacrilegious." Both groups saw Jesus as winning over the people, and so, as one who must be destroyed.

v.3:7-12 But Jesus withdrew himself with his disciples to the sea: and a great multitude from Galilee followed him, and from Judaea, And from Jerusalem, and from Idumaea, and [from] beyond Jordan; and they about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they had heard what great things he did, came unto him. And he spake to his disciples, that a small ship should wait on him because of the multitude, lest they should throng him. For he had healed many; insomuch that they pressed upon him for to touch him, as many as had plagues. And unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God. And he straitly charged them that they should not make him known.

After the latest confrontation Jesus and His disciples went to the seashore. Implied is that this destination afforded them some protection from those who were now plotting against Him. It was not yet time for His enemies to lay hold on Him, and so, He withdrew.

- a) *His popularity with the people was growing. As word spread of the great things He did people came from all over to seek Him out. People were now traveling great distances to obtain a healing or simply to hear Him teach.*
- b) *Many, if not most of the healings, were not the personal one on one stories presented to us, but simply people touching or being touched by Jesus. Those with evil spirits fell down before Him and in fear professed Him to be the Son of God.*
- c) *The impression is given that at times it was a frenzied chaos around Him. It was necessary for some of His disciples to stay in a boat offshore, so that when necessary He could retreat into the boat so as not to be crushed by the crowd.*

v.3:13-19 And he goeth up into a mountain, and calleth [unto him] whom he would: and they came unto him. And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, And to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils: And Simon he surnamed Peter; And James the [son] of Zebedee, and John the brother of James; and he surnamed them Boanerges, which is, The sons of thunder: And Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the [son] of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Canaanite, And Judas Iscariot, which also betrayed him: and they went into an house.

By this time Jesus had many disciples or followers, but the time had come to appoint twelve men to the office of apostle. Mark tells us that Jesus went up into a mountain, however, Luke adds that Jesus spent the entire night in prayer before He made His selections. (Luke 6:12-16)

- a) Jesus "calleth unto him whom he would." The choice was made by Jesus in concert with the will of the Father with whom He communed in prayer. They were appointed apostles by the sovereign will of God. (John 15:16)
- b) These men would be the first to carry on His work. They would be with Him. They would observe Him closely and be instructed by Him. Their minds would eventually be enlightened to the significance of all that He said and did. They would be the first to be empowered with the Holy Spirit.
- c) They would be the first preachers, proclaiming the gospel of their Master. Entrusted with the truth and commissioned to make it known to all men, He would send them out from this very mountain. (Matt. 28:16-20)
- d) As Apostles they were given special power, to heal and to cast out demons as did their Master. It was the power of God bearing witness to their words. (Heb. 2:3-4)
- e) Of the twelve men chosen, the scriptures give the accounts of the initial calling of only seven of the men. In this group is Peter, Andrew, James, John, Phillip, Bartholomew (Nathanael) and Matthew. Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Canaanite and Judas Iscariot complete the group.
- f) Luke tells us that after these men were ordained, Jesus delivered what has come to be called the sermon on the mount to them and to all of His followers. Mark, being the "gospel of action" skips the discourse and moves on.

v.3:20-21 *And the multitude cometh together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread. And when his friends heard [of it], they went out to lay hold on him: for they said, He is beside himself.*

In these two short verses, there is nothing in the wording that provides a definite chronological link. It happened sometime after Jesus returned to what has been His "home base" in Capernaum. The idea seems to be that after a brief time with His disciples the crowds again return.

- a) The crowds became so large and so demanding that Jesus and His apostles could not even get a moment to eat. As discussed earlier it was no longer only the locals, but people came from near and far to hear Him and to be healed.
- b) When His friends hear and witness what is going on they came to physically take Jesus away. The idea is probably in concern for His welfare that they come to rescue Him. The word interpreted 'friends' can mean family, relatives or close acquaintances. Who exactly these individuals were we do not know.

- c) The phrase “he is beside himself” probably should not be taken too harshly. Today we may not exactly agree with a course of action that a friend is taking and exclaim, “They’re crazy!” Seeing the demands He put upon Himself to the point of not having time to eat caused them to think that He had taken this too far and took it upon themselves to “snap Him out of it” or to rescue Him from the crowds.

v.3:22-30 And the scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils. And he called them [unto him], and said unto them in parables, How can Satan cast out Satan? And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand. And if Satan rise up against himself, and be divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end. No man can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house. Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation: Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit.

Mark abruptly goes into another story which he joins in progress. Jesus had just healed a man that was both dumb and blind. The ailment in this instance happened to be the result of demon possession and the healing occurred when the demon was cast out. (Matt. 12:22-24) Mark, desiring to continue to illustrate the opposition against Jesus concentrates on the objections of the Jewish leaders.

- a) It is important to note that these scribes or teachers are from Jerusalem. They are the experts and the authority when it comes to religious matters. When these “backwoods” people from Galilee suggest that this might be the Messiah, the so-called experts counter by suggesting the very opposite, namely, that the power Jesus wields is satanic in origin.
- b) They call Jesus, Beelzebub, which is interpreted as the prince of devils or Satan himself. The phrase “he hath” means that Jesus is possessed or indwelt by and therefore in league with, Satan. This serious charge is probably made out of jealousy and envy. The leadership was losing ground to Jesus and this was one way to explain the miracles without acknowledging that He was God.
- c) These accusations were probably made behind His back, so Jesus calls these cowards before Him and addresses them. He uses parables, that is, He describes Satan’s domain first as a kingdom and then as a household.
- d) As usual, Jesus provides a simple common sense answer which proves their claim to be ridiculous. If a kingdom or a household is not in harmony, but divided; if its members hurt

and destroy each other, then that kingdom or household will not stand or further its influence, but will come to a quick end.

- e) *Satan's kingdom was not divided and his household remained strong. The fact was that with His incarnation Jesus had entered into Satan's domain or household. He was binding Satan in his own house by forbidding demons to speak and casting them out. Exercising His authority, the protests of the demons fell on deaf ears as Jesus was spoiling Satan's goods which were the souls of men.*

"It is plain, Christ's design is to enter into the strong man's house, to take possession of the interest he has in the world, and to spoil his goods, and convert them into his own service; and therefore it is natural to suppose that he will bind the strongman, will forbid him to speak when he would, and thus show that he has gained a victory over him." Matthew Henry

"The Lord is casting out Beelzebub's servants, the demons, and is restoring that which through their agency Satan has been doing to men's souls and bodies. Jesus is doing all this because by means of His incarnation, his victory over the devil in the desert of temptation, his words of authority addressed to the demons, his entire activity, he has begun to bind Beelzebub, a process of binding or curtailment of power that was going to be further strengthened by means of his victory over Satan on the cross, and in the resurrection, ascension, and coronation." William Hendriksen

- f) *Jesus leaves these men with a warning. The phrase "verily I say" in the original language signals a solemn truth. What Jesus is going to tell them they had better take to heart for ignoring His words will lead to their destruction.*
- g) *Jesus tells them that all of the sins of man will be subject to forgiveness, even insolent language directed against God or of defaming God can be forgiven. Through the work of Christ, Peter would find forgiveness after denying his Lord to the point of cursing and swearing. Paul would find mercy after putting to death the people of God thinking them evil. All manner of men who have committed all manner of sins have found forgiveness*
- h) *But, by attributing the work He was doing to Satan, that is, attributing the work of the Holy Ghost to Satan and considering it an evil thing, they were in great danger.*
- i) *The Holy Ghost is the convicting force, the influence of God upon a man that leads to repentance. As Matthew Henry puts it, "it would be a sin against the last remedy, and consequently unpardonable." It would be hardening one's heart to the only remedy for sin provided, and so, spell certain doom to those who would persist in this state of unbelief.*

v.3:31-35 There came then his brethren and his mother, and, standing without, sent unto him, calling him. And the multitude sat about him, and they said unto him, Behold, thy mother and

thy brethren without seek for thee. And he answered them, saying, Who is my mother, or my brethren? And he looked round about on them which sat about him, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.

Unfortunately the chronology is again vague. It is possible that this is a continuation of verse 21, however, it could also be a separate incident. If it is a continuation then “friends” includes His family, and so, a small party of individuals including His family come to “rescue” Him. If it is a separate incident, then His friends being unsuccessful, His family now shows up to reason with Him.

- a) *As discussed earlier, they probably showed up in concern for His welfare. Another possibility is that His family was now being pressured by the leadership. Jesus and the Pharisees were now at odds and possibly His family was being threatened with expulsion from the synagogue.*
- b) *At any rate, Jesus is again preaching to a massive crowd. Matthew tells us He was preaching in a house and that His family could not get to Him because of the crowd. So a message is sent to Jesus, probably person to person, that His family is outside and desires to speak with Him.*
- c) *Jesus uses the occasion to show them the unimportance of physical ties to Him. The bond He seeks with all men is a spiritual bond. Those who love God and seek to do His will are of one mind with Jesus and are the closest to Him. (Luke 11:27-28) So those related to Him on this earth had no special privileges. All must come to Him on the same terms.*
- d) *Jesus would not be distracted in His work or mission. If He did meet with His family it was after He was done teaching. The fact that scripture does not give us the conclusion of this story emphasizes the point being made.*

The evidence in the scriptures points to the fact that Jesus had brothers and sisters in the true sense. (Matt. 1:25; Mark 6:3; John 2:12; Acts 1:14) John makes it clear that His family didn't believe in Him (John 7:3-5)

v.4:1-2 *And he began again to teach by the sea side: and there was gathered unto him a great multitude, so that he entered into a ship, and sat in the sea; and the whole multitude was by the sea on the land. And he taught them many things by parables, and said unto them in his doctrine,*

From the house where He had been teaching, Jesus again retreats to the Sea of Galilee. Matthew tells us it was the same day. (Matt. 13:1) The crowd that now gathered was so great that He got into the boat His disciples had ready and from the boat He taught the crowd. (v.3:9)

- a) *The seashore is a noisy place, and yet, a great multitude gathered on the shore were being taught by a man in a boat. Was the miracle in the voice of Jesus or in the hearing of the multitude? He taught them in parables which William Hendriksen describes as “earthly stories with heavenly meanings.”*

v.4:3-9 *Hearken; Behold, there went out a sower to sow: And it came to pass, as he sowed, some fell by the way side, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up. And some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth; and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth: But when the sun was up, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit. And other fell on good ground, and did yield fruit that sprang up and increased; and brought forth, some thirty, and some sixty, and some an hundred. And he said unto them, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.*

One can only imagine the silence that must have come over the crowd when the Son of Man shouted the word, “listen.” Did the waves become quiet? Did the wind cease? Did the birds become silent? With words equivalent to our “once upon a time,” Jesus begins to tell them a story.

- a) *The story centers around an act they were all familiar with, that is, the sowing of seed. The sower would have a pouch of seed attached to himself. In planting grains such as wheat and barley, the sower would reach into the pouch, grab a handful of seed, and simply throw it out over the earth as he walked the field.*
- b) *His audience probably had always simply thought of the act of sowing and the resulting crop that it produced, however, Jesus leads them to contemplate the fate of each individual seed. The crop produced was only a small percentage of the seed sown. He gets them to focus on the seeds that did not yield fruit.*
- c) *The seed that fell on the wayside could not penetrate the soil and was easy pickings for the birds. The seed that mingled with the soil on stony ground could not develop a root and was quickly burned by the sun. The seed that fell on weed infested soil quickly got crowded out being in competition with the faster growing thorns. Even the seed that fell upon good ground in this parable is differentiated by differing yields.*

- d) *Jesus concludes by giving the admonition to take His words to heart, that is, to ponder them, to seek their meaning, and not be quick to dismiss them.*

v.4:10-12 *And when he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve asked of him the parable. And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all [these] things are done in parables: That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and [their] sins should be forgiven them.*

We see that Jesus had a group of disciples who followed Him in addition to the twelve apostles. This unnumbered contingent asks Jesus the meaning of the parable, and, as we find out in Matthew's expanded account, why He addresses the people in parables at all. (Matt. 13:10-17)

- a) *The mystery or the hidden truths of the kingdom of God which they were given to know was basically that this kingdom had arrived, that repentance or a change in life and belief was necessary, and that Jesus was the source of information concerning the kingdom. (v.1:14-15) They were privileged to believe that Jesus was God.*
- b) *Those that are without can be defined as the unbelievers. They followed Jesus to gain something or out of curiosity. They were not convinced that He was from God or that He worked the works of God. They missed the deeper meaning of His miracles and of His teachings.*

"He preached by parables, because thereby the things of God were made more plain and easy to them who were willing to be taught, and at the same time more difficult and obscure to those who were willingly ignorant; and thus the gospel would be a savour of life to some and of death to others. A parable, like the pillar of cloud and fire, turns a dark side towards Egyptians, which confounds them, but a light side towards Israelites, which comforts them, and so answers a double intention. The same light directs the eyes of some, but dazzles the eyes of others." Matthew Henry

- c) *These disciples hung around and inquired as to the meaning of the parables. They wanted to know and had a desire to learn. They recognized Jesus as being from God. Seeing the wonders wrought at this man's hands, they believed and desired understanding of the words He spoke.*

Can this be why scriptures themselves are not always written clearly? Why are we admonished to "study to show ourselves approved?" God places emphasis on belief and desire on the part of His children. He rewards us in our diligence to acquire wisdom and understanding, while taking back from those who don't seem to care.

- d) *Jesus quotes the prophet Isaiah to describe "them that are without." They observed the miracles He performed, they heard His preaching, but they did not perceive or understand*

Their heart was “waxed gross,” defined by Matthew Henry as being sensual and senseless. They knew better, so they stopped-up their ears and closed their eyes. Isaiah describes a willful blindness and hardness, for if they would have opened their heart they would have been healed. (Is. 6:9)

v.4:13-20 And he said unto them, Know ye not this parable? and how then will ye know all parables? The sower soweth the word. And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts. And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness; And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended. And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful. And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive [it], and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred.

As to the meaning of the parable of the sower Jesus begins with a mild rebuke. They had been His followers for some time now and they knew of the kingdom of God. If they did not understand this particular parable then how would they understand any? He seems to suggest that they possessed the knowledge and ability to understand it, and so, themselves should hone their listening skills.

- a) *The seed is identified as the word of God that Jesus spoke. It was being scattered about upon the soil which represented the hearts of men. The word that “falls on” the hardened hearts of the wayside cannot penetrate and Satan takes it away. This is the unresponsive heart, the callous heart that cooperates with the devil.*
- b) *The word that falls on the stony heart penetrates, but never takes root. Notice the word “immediately.” They immediately accept it, but then later are immediately offended. It is the impulsive heart; the gullible heart that will try anything that is appealing without thought or commitment.*
- c) *The word that falls on the heart infested with weeds penetrates, begins to grow, but is soon choked by the more rapidly growing weeds. These are the preoccupied hearts that are overtaken by the thorns identified as cares, riches, and desires. They love the world more than they love God. They never bear fruit. (1 John 2:16)*
- d) *Finally, the word that falls on the fertile receptive heart not only grows, but produces fruit. These hear the word, understand the word, and believe the word of life. They love the word, are guided by the word, and are totally dependent upon it.*

v.4:21-25 And he said unto them, Is a candle brought to be put under a bushel, or under a bed? and not to be set on a candlestick? For there is nothing hid, which shall not be manifested; neither was any thing kept secret, but that it should come abroad. If any man have ears to hear, let him hear. And he said unto them, Take heed what ye hear: with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear shall more be given. For he that hath, to him shall be given: and he that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath.

In all likelihood these verses are a continuation of the above. Jesus is still addressing the twelve and the accompanying disciples concerning His preaching in parables. These proverbial sayings were used by Jesus several times so their meaning must be derived by the context in which they are used.

- a) *Jesus did not come into the world to hide or to obscure the truth. To do so would be like putting a candle under a basket or under a bed. The parables were meant to be understood and to reveal those truths that had been hidden.*
- b) *There were things that were hid. The mysteries and secrets contained in the law and the prophets, but Jesus now shone the light of understanding upon these things, and all would be revealed and made manifest in His teachings and the teachings of the apostles.*

“There is no treasure of gifts and graces lodged in any but with design to be communicated; nor was the gospel made a secret to the apostles, to be concealed, but that it should come abroad and be divulged to all the world. Though Christ expounded the parables to his disciples privately, yet it was with design to make them the more publicly useful; they were taught that they might teach ...” Matthew Henry

- c) *The admonition is again given to hear His words and to take them to heart. It was given to them to hear, to understand, and to apply and make use of these truths.*
- d) *His admonition to hear and take heed is followed by a warning. Albert Barnes says, “You shall be treated according to the use you make of your opportunities of learning. If you consider it well, and make a good improvement of what you hear, you shall be well rewarded. If not, your reward shall be small.” In other words the desire, effort and diligence you put forth in these things is directly related to the understanding which will be given to you.*
- e) *The conclusion of the matter is those who hear and take heed of the truths revealed will increase more and more in the knowledge of the truth, while those who hear and take it lightly or are inattentive will become more ignorant forgetting even what he had heard.*

v.4:26-29 And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the

full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.

The shortened phrase "and he said" instead of "and he said unto them," probably signals that He is no longer speaking only to His apostles and disciples. This is now another sermon given by Jesus describing the kingdom of God and is related to the above discourse in subject only.

- a) *Again, the illustration is simple involving a common act. A man cast seed upon the ground and his job is basically done. He goes to sleep and rises up, goes to sleep and rises up, paying little attention to the seed. He may water or fertilize, but he cannot make the seed grow.*
- b) *One day he goes to the field and it is green with the tender sprouts that have penetrated the surface of the soil. How it happens is a mystery even to this day. "The earth bringeth forth," that is, without the power of man and even without the man being aware.*
- c) *The growth happens gradually and in stages. The blade, the ear, and finally the fruit. When the cycle is complete and the fruit ripe it is harvested.*
- d) *Jesus said the kingdom of God can be compared to this example. It is like this example or similar to it. The word of God is scattered abroad, but a man cannot make it grow. (1 Cor. 3:5-7) In due time, however, its growth becomes apparent. Men do not know how the seed of the word takes root in a heart and grows, but can simply observe that it does. (John 3:8)*
- e) *The growth of the kingdom would be slow and in stages as ordained by God, but it will be fruitful and ripen. The cycle started will be completed and the people of His kingdom "harvested." As Matthew Henry said, "Nature does nothing abruptly. God carries on his work insensibly and without noise, but insuperably and without fail."*

Although seeding, growing and reaping could be said to take place in every generation of the church age, Jesus seems to be dealing with the "big picture" of the kingdom, that is, the seed that He and the apostles would scatter, the growth of the church as a whole throughout the ages, and finally it being harvested when the last believer comes in.

v.4:30-32 And he said, Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it? [It is] like a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth: But when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches; so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it.

Mark presents another parable of Jesus concerning the kingdom of God, specifically it's growth. Most likely it too is related to the above parables in subject only. It may have been used by Jesus on many occasions.

- a) *Jesus' introduction to the parable is basically an attention getter called an oratorical question. He is not frantically searching His mind for a comparison or at a loss for words, but simply desires the undivided attention of His listeners. He gets them to anticipate His words.*
- b) *He compares the kingdom to a mustard seed. This tiny black seed with which they were all familiar was the smallest of the seeds that they could sow. These seeds would sprout and grow into the largest of the cultivated plants. In this area of the world it would quickly grow to a height of 12 to 15 feet.*
- c) *The main idea is the unbelievable growth that the kingdom would enjoy. This parable takes on a prophetic nature as those to whom He now spoke would not see the tremendous growth and influence of the kingdom throughout the ages.*
- d) *Jesus had ordained twelve apostles and had maybe around 100 other disciples. Already this group was at odds with both the political and religious forces who were becoming more determined to snuff them out. They were men of peace in a violent world that was ruled by power and force. The idea of this group fathering a great kingdom was probably laughable.*
- e) *In the same way, anyone who was not familiar with the mustard seed would find it hard to believe that it would rapidly grow into a 15 foot tree, and so the comparison. This comparison has proved to be trustworthy as this "seed" continues to grow into a multitude that cannot be numbered. (Rev. 7:9)*
- f) *Many believe that the birds lodging or nesting in the shadow of the tree represents the benefit that the kingdom would provide to all the world. John MacArthur states, "The kingdom of heaven would grow from tiny beginnings to a great tree and would ultimately provide shelter, protection and benefit to the entire world."*

v.4:33-34 And with many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to hear [it]. But without a parable spake he not unto them: and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples.

Mark sums up his presentation of the parables by Jesus to his readers indicating that those he had mentioned were but a sample. He often spoke to them in parables "as they were able to hear it," that is, using things familiar to them and which they should have been able to understand.

- a) *It is obvious from the gospel accounts that Jesus did not speak to the people in parables all of the time. It seems that every time He spoke of the kingdom of God He used parables. (v.4:11) This was necessary because of the spiritual nature of His kingdom. He had to employ the physical to explain to them the spiritual.*
- b) *Jesus always explained in greater detail the meaning of the parables to His disciples. Having the proper attitude of mind and heart it was given unto them to understand the mysteries of the kingdom. It was these men who would expound these things to others when all was fulfilled.*

v.4:35-41 And the same day, when the even was come, he saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side. And when they had sent away the multitude, they took him even as he was in the ship. And there were also with him other little ships. And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full. And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish? And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith? And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?

“On the same day” probably takes us back to the evening of the day that Jesus preached the parable of the sower. After a day of preaching and after time spent personally instructing the disciples, Jesus desires to travel across the Sea of Galilee into the country of the Gadarenes.

- a) *The picture painted is that of Jesus being totally spent. He was “preached out.” He had reached the limits of His human body. The disciples sent away the crowd and put Jesus in the back of the boat where He slept.*
- b) *Who were in these other ships? Did those individuals who had boats congregate around Him on the water as He spoke? Could these have been the greater contingent of disciples apart from the twelve? At any rate, a group of boats heads out into the sea as Jesus sleeps.*
- c) *A great storm arises. Mark and Luke use a word that means “whirlwind,” while the word Matthew employs in his account is literally translated “a great shaking.” The waves rise up and fill the boat with water.*
- d) *The Sea of Galilee is relatively small and shallow. It is about 13 miles long and 7½ miles wide. It can very quickly become a dangerous place to be. In our area comparing it to Lake Erie would give us a better understanding as to how quickly the situation could turn deadly.*

- e) *It must be remembered that some of the apostles were fishermen. They were hardened men of the sea who probably did all that they could do in this particular situation. It was not until they were standing in water (so that it was now full) that they turn to the still sleeping Jesus.*
- f) *The three gospel accounts all record a different plea being directed to the Master. They were probably all shouting something different, possibly shaking Him trying to wake Him up.*
- g) *The plea recorded here in Mark was probably one of the last to be uttered as it hints of frustration and borders on being a cruel rebuke. It questions Jesus concern for their well being and shows they had come to the end of their faith.*
- h) *Jesus arose and addressed both the wind and the sea. At His command the wind stopped and the sea became calm. Even if the wind had suddenly stopped the waves would continue for some time, and so, He also commands the sea. Emphasizing the word "calm" with the modifier "great" the picture painted is that the sea immediately became flat. Things were by no means back to normal or ordinary for now there was a stillness or calm that they had never experienced.*
- i) *Matthew's account has Jesus inquiring as to the fear and lack of faith before He rebuked the wind, while Mark has the inquiry after. In all probability it was made twice. Jesus calmly questioning them while the storm raged emphasizes His faith, fearlessness and control of the situation. The apostles still exhibiting great fear after the storm stopped indicates that they now were experiencing no ordinary calm.*

The apostles were literally standing in the water as the ship was barely afloat. These men waited till the last minute before they called out to Jesus. The fact that they turned to Jesus demonstrated their faith in Him, that is, that He could save them, but their faith, however long it held up, finally left them. Since it did not see them through to the end it was as if they had no faith.

- j) *The impression is given that the question of Jesus was open-ended, and so, never answered. The apostles were in awe at this display of power. The word conveys a sense of fear and reverence. Possibly they had gotten used to the healings. They knew little if nothing about disease and medicine, but the sea they knew and respected. This display of man over the uncontrollable forces of nature left them awestruck and dumbfounded.*