

Be Careful How You Listen

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Mark / Mark 4:21–25

INTRODUCTION

1. We come now to the gospel of Mark in our study of the Word of God
2. Please take your Bibles and turn with me to Mark chapter 4
3. We are looking today at that portion of Scripture that is found in verses 21-25
4. Some refer to this as the parable of the lamp
5. Others see this not as parables but as proverbial sayings or “brief proverbial utterances” (Hiebert)
6. As we look at this section this morning, we will see the importance of hearing and understanding the Word of God
7. We will also see that those who receive and apply God’s truth will be given more, while those who reject it will lose even what they have
 - › [Listen to Mark 4:21-25 as I read them...](#)
8. These sayings are also found in [Luke 8:16–18](#), “16 “Now no one after lighting a lamp covers it with a container or puts it under a bed, but he puts it on a lampstand, so that those who come in may see the light. 17 “For nothing is hidden that will not become evident, nor anything secret that will not be known and come to light. 18 “So beware how you listen, for whoever has, to him more shall be given; and whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has shall be taken away from him.””
9. Both passages in Mark and Luke are saying the same thing
10. Jesus’ teaching were meant to be revealed and made known to everyone
11. They were meant to be assimilated into one’s life
12. They pointed to the reality of Jesus’ divine identity and the need to embrace Him for salvation
13. But not everyone receives His message
14. We saw that last time as we looked at the parable of the soils in verses 1-20
15. The seed, which is the gospel, fell on different kinds of hearts
16. But only one revealed true salvation

17. It was the one that understood and bore fruit
18. In our study today, Jesus tells His followers to be careful how they listen
19. Because what He has to say is essential to their ministry going forward
20. It's also essential to ours
21. It may be that the reason why we don't always reach people with the gospel is because we don't put enough effort in it
22. There are two points I want you to see this morning as we look at verses 21-25

· The first is found in verses 21-22

· Jesus is telling His followers...

I. Do Not Hide the Message (vv.21-22)

· Look at verses 21-22: “And He was saying to them, “Is a lamp brought to be put under a basket or under a bed? Is it not to be put on the lampstand? “For nothing is hidden, except to be revealed; nor has anything been secret, but that it would come to light.”

a. It is Meant to Be Heard (v.21)

› Three times Jesus calls for them to “hear”

1. He said in verse 3, “Listen to this!”
2. He said it again in verse 9, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear”
3. And then in verse 23, “If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear”
4. Jesus is calling for “hyper hearing”
5. This is hearing with obedience
6. Last time we heard what **R.C. Sproul** said regarding this command
7. He said, “There's hearing and then there's hyper-hearing. That's what Jesus was calling for here—the kind of hearing that goes beyond the eardrum and affects the heart, prompting obedience.”
8. Each of the three references to “hear” are commands
9. Jesus is commanding you to “listen” and “hear” and “obey”
10. So you're listening for the purpose of obeying
11. This is to be our constant activity

› So the gospel message is to be heard but...

b. It is also to Be Seen (v.21)

> Jesus describes it...

1. It's like a "lamp"
2. This was a very small clay bowl made with a spout to hold a wick and containing a few ounces of oil that served as the fuel
3. The "lampstand" was a shelf that protruded from the wall
4. Wealthier homes had decorative stands to hold the lamp
5. Notice verse 21 says its "a lamp" but in Greek the definite article is used
6. It is not just "a lamp" but it is "the Lamp"
7. What is "the lamp"? More properly we should ask, "who" is that lamp?
8. In biblical categories, God Himself (and particularly His law) is referred to as the lamp
9. But Jesus is speaking here about Himself
10. He is the Lamp
11. He said in [John 8:12](#), "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will never walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life."
12. So in this picture He is saying He came here as a lamp that is to be set on a lampstand so that the light that He brings may burst forth and manifest itself clearly to all who dwell in darkness (Sproul)
13. He did not come to be covered with a basket or hidden under a bed
14. He came to shine forth (Sproul)
15. So in verse 21, He tells His followers that the purpose of a lamp is to give light
16. It is meant to be seen
17. You don't put it under a basket or bed
18. You put it on a lamp stand

> Applying that imagery we understand that...

c. **Jesus' Teachings were Not Meant to Be Concealed (v.22)**

1. They were meant to be revealed
2. They were meant to be shared
3. They were meant to be taught to His church
4. And they were meant to be taught to the world

5. Jesus said in verse 22, “For nothing is hidden, except to be revealed; nor has anything been secret, but that it would come to light.”
6. The NIV translates this: “For whatever is hidden is meant to be disclosed, and whatever is concealed is meant to be brought out into the open.”
7. The purpose in keeping something hidden is so that one day it can be revealed (MacArthur)
8. **D. Edmond Hiebert** said, “The underlying law is that when things are hidden, the intention is that in due time they will be revealed. Things that are precious are hidden in order that they may not be abused or misappropriated by those who do not recognize their true nature or function. But they are hidden in order that at the proper time they may be brought forth; for things that are never seen again are lost, not hidden. Prudently the parabolic method now hid the mystery of the kingdom from those without, but the intention was that it was to be made known by His enlightened disciples. They must not think that He intended the revelation to them to remain secret. The kingdom of God, as embodied in Jesus’ Person and ministry, was now a veiled revelation to those without, but He intended that later it should receive a glorious manifestation through the ministry of His followers. The full content of this revelation could only be known and understood after His death and resurrection.”

› Remember...

d. This was Directed to His Followers (see v.10)

1. In verse 10, they came to Him privately and asked Him to explain the parable of the soils
2. Jesus responded by telling them the mysteries of the kingdom were given to them and not to those who are outside the kingdom (vv.11-12)
3. And by commanding them to hear, He was also saying they are the only ones who have the ears to hear
4. Unbelievers do not hear or understand
5. Again this is the purpose of the parables to the outsiders
6. He said in verse 12, “so that while seeing, they may see and not perceive, and while hearing, they may hear and not understand, lest they return and be forgiven.””
7. Paul said it this way in [1 Corinthians 2:14](#), “But a natural man does not accept the depths of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually examined.”
8. That’s why he said in [1 Corinthians 1:18](#), “For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God.”
9. Jesus is the light of the world ([John 8:12](#))

10. All followers of Jesus have the “Light of life” ([Jn.8:12](#)) in them
11. That light is seen in two ways: by preaching the gospel and by obeying the gospel
12. [Matthew 5:14](#) says we are “the light of the world”
13. And as such, we are to “let [our] light shine before men in such a way that they may see [our] good works, and glorify [our] Father who is in heaven” ([Mat.5:16](#))
14. [Ephesians 5:8](#), “for you were formerly darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light”
15. [Philippians 2:15](#) says we “shine as lights in the world”
16. Jesus’ teaching was never intended to be just for an inner circle of followers
17. It would be the responsibility of the disciples to communicate the gospel of the kingdom to the world at large (MacArthur)
18. That’s why He told them in [Matthew 28:19–20](#), “19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to keep all that I commanded you; and behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.””
19. They finally understood that
20. And after Jesus’ resurrection and ascension we see them fulfilling this command
21. [Acts 5:42](#) says, “And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ.”
22. Jesus closes with what we already looked at in verse 23, “If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear”
23. This is for all of Jesus’ followers to hear
24. You do not want to hide the gospel
25. You are to speak it and live it

· So, now in verses 24-25 He says to...

II. Be Careful How You Listen (vv.24-25)

“And He was saying to them, “Beware what you listen to. By your standard of measure it will be measured to you, and more will be given you. For whoever has, to him more shall be given; and whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him.”

Verses 24-25 are a call for them to understand that the spiritual results which they would realize would be based on the amount of effort they put forth

- a. **They Would Reap as they had Sown (v.24)**

1. The one who has learned spiritual truth and applied it diligently will receive even more truth to faithfully apply
2. Truth received and carefully assimilated enlarges one's capacity to receive more truth (Hiebert)
3. This is a stewardship
4. So "take care what you listen to"
5. Luke says in [Luke 8:18](#), "So beware how you listen"
6. This was an appeal for spiritual perception
7. Jesus made it their standing duty to give careful attention to what they heard in order that they might truly understand it
8. Superficial hearing must be avoided
9. So "whoever has, to him more shall be given"
10. In [Mark 4:24](#) Jesus is saying "By your standard of measure it will be measured to you; and more will be given you besides"
11. How you assimilate and distribute it will determine if more will be given to you
12. On the other hand the opposite is true

b. **The One who Does Not Use their Ability to Understand the Truth and Assimilate it Gradually Loses that Ability**

1. Jesus says in [Mark 4:25](#), "For whoever has, to him more shall be given; and whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him."
2. The disciples must use their knowledge of the mystery of the kingdom, or their grip on it will diminish until they lose even that which they now possess (Hiebert)
3. This two-sided reality is a challenge to His disciples to comprehend more completely His message about the kingdom of God (Hiebert)
4. This reminds us of the parable of the talents in [Matthew 25:14-30](#) except the one who did nothing with the talent given to him was cast "into outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth"
5. This is not speaking about a true believer in Christ
6. This is a warning to those who hear the gospel and do nothing with it
7. They don't receive it
8. They don't understand it
9. They don't bear fruit as the parable of the soils said

10. But we are stewards of God's truth, of His gospel, and we are to pass it on to others

11. Listen to [Matthew 25:14-30](#).

c. **Closing Summary**

1. In what we have just looked at in verses 21-25, Jesus underscores the critical need to share His teachings openly and apply them diligently in our lives
2. He used the metaphor of a lamp to illustrate that His message is meant to be visible and heard, not hidden away
3. The key truth in this passage is that those who genuinely listen to and understand God's Word will receive even more insight and blessings, whereas those who ignore or reject it will lose even what little they have
4. As we think about these verses, we see a clear call to live out our faith boldly and transparently
5. Jesus' teachings are meant to shine through us, impacting those around us
6. We're encouraged to dive deep into spiritual truths and apply them, knowing that our efforts will lead to greater understanding and spiritual growth
7. Let's commit to hearing, obeying, and sharing the gospel message faithfully
8. Our lives should be a testament to the light of Christ, shining brightly in a world that desperately needs hope and truth

CONCLUSION

1. Have you received Christ?
2. [John 1:12-13](#), "12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God."
3. If you continue to reject it, you will be "cast into outer darkness" where there "will be weeping and gnashing of teeth"
4. If you have received Christ, then you are to share His message
5. You're not to put it under a basket or under a bed
6. You are to let it shine in your life through your words and deeds
7. You are to "make disciples" and "teach them all things whatsoever I have commanded you" ([Mat.28:19-20](#))
8. But first you must repent and be saved
9. Have you turned your life over to Christ?

10. Is He your Lord and Savior?
11. If so, are you witnessing to others about Him?
12. Consider this right now as we pray
13. Let's pray

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