

sMark 4:21-29
Faith Unveils God's Nature and Ways
2/27/22

ILL: Once upon a time, a **Psychologist**, an **Engineer**, and a **Theologian** were hunting in the mountains, and they found a **cabin** far away from town. Now, b/c people who live in the wilderness practice **hospitality**, the hunters knocked on the door, hoping that the owner would let them **rest** inside. No one answered, but the door was unlocked, so they went in.

The cabin was very simple. It had **2** rooms and a little furniture. But, it had a large **pot-bellied stove** hung from the rafters w/ wires. So, the Psychologist said, **"Fascinating, it's obvious that this lonely trapper, isolated from humanity, has elevated his stove, so he can curl up under it and vicariously experience a return to the womb."**

But, the Engineer said, **"Nonsense! The man is simply applying the laws of thermodynamics. By elevating his stove, he has discovered a way to distribute heat more evenly throughout the cabin."** Then the Theologian interrupted, **"W/ all due respect, I'm sure that this hanging stove has a religious meaning. Fire lifted up has been a religious symbol for centuries."**

Now, the **3** debated their views for hours until the **Trapper** finally returned. They immediately asked him why he'd hung his heavy pot-bellied stove from the rafters w/ wires. And, he said: **"We had plenty of wire, just not much stove pipe!"**

RN: What unlocks the Truth guesses or **facts**? When we look at life, is our viewpoint necessarily the Truth, even if we defend it **passionately**? If we think that we've unlocked some mystery, how can we **be sure** that we've found the Truth?

AN: God is **The Revealer** of life's mysteries, and passionate Faith in His revelations should convince us that we've found the Truth about Him, His ways, and real-life.

BI: Faith unlocks the life-changing power of God's Truth, so Faith can unlock the mystery of God's nature, His ways, and His expectations. **Please turn in your Bibles to Mk 4:21-29.**

- I. Today, we'll see what God intends to **bring us to** the Light
- II. And, we'll see how we can **open up more** of God's Truth.
- III. Finally, we'll see why only God can generate Kingdom **abundance**.

Faith unveils God's nature and ways. **[PRAY]**

In this section, Jesus speaks again to the Crowd. And, Mark uses these Parables to stress the fact that Jesus tells them that they need to believe in Him and His teaching.

(TRN) In (21-23), Jesus says that God intends to bring the Truth to light.

Mark 4:21–23 (NASB95) ²¹ *And He was saying to them, "A lamp is not brought to be put under a basket, is it, or under a bed? Is it not [brought] to be put on the lampstand?"* ²² *"For nothing is hidden, except to be revealed; nor has [anything] been secret, but that it would come to light."* ²³ *"If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear."*

(21-23) Jesus says that some Truths are obvious and practical. For example, it's obvious that you don't put a lit oil lamp under a measuring bow or under a couch.

A. You obviously put the lamp where it can give off the most light and do the most good. You put it in the center of the room, s/t its light can fill the room.

B. **But, here's a fascinating fact:** The way Jesus puts this sentence together in **Greek** shows that He's speaking more about a Person than a lamp.

1. In Greek, Jesus is literally saying, **"Does The lamp come in order that it might be placed under the bowl or under the bed?"**

C. Now, this usage of the phrase **"The lamp"** is really important, b/c in the **OT**, the phrase **"The lamp"** often stands for God or **the** Christ.

1. **2 Kings 8:19 (NASB95)** ¹⁹ *However, the LORD was not willing to destroy Judah, for the sake of David His servant, since He had promised him to give a lamp to him through his sons always.* IOW, God will give **King David** a descendant Who will fulfill God's promise to King David eternally.

D. So, this is no ordinary lamp, this is the **Divine Light of the World**, Who has come to show us the way back to God (**Jn 1:5; 8:12**). IOW, Jesus is saying that God intends to show us the way back to Him.

1. And, even though these **way-showing** Truths may be **hidden** in **Parables**, and even though Jesus' Divine nature may be hidden in His human nature, Faith in Jesus is the **key** that unlocks the reality about Jesus and the Gospel for us.

2. So, Jesus designs His Parable to **whet** His listener's appetites for God's Truth just like God designs salt to make them thirsty for refreshing water.

3. And, just as cool water satisfies a burning thirst, Faith in Jesus and the Gospel satisfies soul w/ a burning thirst for the Truth.

4. Faith makes God's reasons the most reasonable. Faith makes God's virtues the most virtuous. And Faith makes God's Light the most illuminating.

E. Now, God's Light illuminates the most when Jesus is the dazzling Light in our hearts. IOW, Jesus must outshine every other light the way the sun outshines a match.

1. **Remember this:** Jesus says, **John 14:6 (NASB95)** ⁶ ***"I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me."*** So, there can't be any other legitimate rivals.

2. IOW, at the end of the day, the Divine Light of Jesus' life is the only Light that counts, b/c He's the Only One Who can show us the Truthful way back to God

3. **READ THAT** people can't make Jesus a lesser light guiding their lives and expect God to let them get away w/ it. In fact, God expects quite the opposite.

F. Practically speaking, we must put Jesus' Divine Light in the center of our hearts where He can reveal what's hidden in the darkness.

1. IOW, His Divine Light must spotlight what's keeping us from God; s/t God can get rid of it and help us **listen to, think about, trust in,** and then **do** Jesus' teaching.

2. Jesus and the Gospel show us what's **real** about God, and what we're **obligated** to do about it. But, repositioning His Divine Light in us has another grander result, too.

G. When His **Fiery Divine Light** burns in our hearts, He can use us to reveal what's hidden in the World's darkness around us.

1. IOW, through us, His Divine Light can shine a laser beam on what's separating the World around us from God, s/t God can break up the log jam.

2. And then through us, He can help others **listen to, think about, trust in,** and then **do** Jesus' teaching. So, Jesus says, and rightly so, ***"You better pay attention."***

H. ILL: In 1787, our founding fathers called a convention to revise the existing **Articles of Confederation**. For weeks, the delegates searched for insights as they reviewed ancient history and analyzed the governments of contemporary **Europe**. But, nothing seemed to suit the circumstances of our infant nation.

Finally, **Benjamin Franklin** addressed the group. Referring to their lack of progress, he said, ***"In this situation of this assembly, groping as it were in the dark to find political truth, and scarce able to distinguish it when it is presented to us, how has it happened, Sir, that we have not hitherto once thought of humbly applying to the Father of Lights to illuminate our understandings?"***

Franklin then made this motion: ***"[I move] that henceforth prayers, employing the assistance of Heaven and its blessings on our deliberations, be held in this assembly every morning before we proceed to business; and that***

one or more of the clergy of this city be requested to officiate in that service".

I. APPL: Franklin saw that God's Divine Light can even show what's separating nations from Him, s/t He and we can break up walls. So, through us, God can help others **listen to, think about, believe in,** and then **do** His will

God can use us to **enlighten** others; b/c Faith unveils God's nature and ways.

(TRN) In (24-25), Jesus says that Faith and Obedience open up more Truth.

Mark 4:24–25 (NASB95) ²⁴ *And He was saying to them, "Take care what you listen to. By your standard of measure, it will be measured to you; and more will be given you besides. 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."*

(24-25) Jesus says that we must be incredibly careful about paying attention to His Truth. B/c, the more we listen to, think about, trust in, and do His Truth, the more we'll see His Truth.

A. IOW, the more of Jesus' Truth that we want to learn to trust and obey, the more Truth He's willing to give us. **READ THAT** we get caught in a **benevolent circle**.

1. The more that we trust and obey, the more we get know God. So, the more we know God the more we trust and obey, etc., etc., etc.

B. And as a result, when the KOG comes in its fullness, Jesus will give us infinitely more. He'll give us infinite rewards for our Faith and Obedience.

1. **READ THAT** Faith and Obedience open up greater insight in God's nature and ways. And, ultimately, Faith and Obedience prompt God to shower us w/ His eternal approval.

C. But, if a person walks farther and farther into the Darkness away from the Light of Jesus and His Truth, more and more of Jesus and His Truth will be taken from him.

1. And, when the KOG comes in its fullness, the person who turns a blind eye to Jesus and His Truth will have nothing left, and God will sever all ties w/ him for eternity.

2. IOW, God will order His wrath to swallow up and torment this person in Darkness and isolation forever.

D. ILL: Several years ago, an **Italian** sailing team went to **Australia** to participate in the **America's Cup Race**. To show his support, **Gucci**, the famous Italian designer,

had outfitted them w/ all the latest sportswear fashions before they left for Australia. After they arrived, the men had some time to kill, so they rented a car and drove out into the bush. They wanted to see some kangaroos. But, they not only saw one; they also literally **drove over** one.

After the collision, they jumped out of the rented **Land Rover** and ran to the kangaroo. It was just lying there on the roadway w/out moving. So, they took some pictures. Then, one of the team members had an idea that it would be funny if he put his expensive Gucci jacket on the animal and took its picture. Now, just after he got the coat on the **limp** kangaroo and stepped back to take a picture, the creature woke up and hopped away so fast that he couldn't catch it. Today somewhere in the Australian outback is a fashionably dressed kangaroo. He wears a Gucci jacket, and in the pocket are the **keys** to a Land Rover and the Italian sailing team's **credit card**ⁱⁱⁱ.

E. APPL: **Assuming** anything is risky business, so Jesus tells us to heed His words, b/c **diligence** grants us God's **approval** while negligence attracts His chastisement.

God prospers our **attentiveness**; b/c Faith unveils God's nature and ways.

(TRN) In (26-29), Jesus says that only God can generate Kingdom **abundance**.

Mark 4:26–29 (NASB95) ²⁶ *And He was saying, "The kingdom of God is like a man who casts seed upon the soil; ²⁷ and he goes to bed at night and gets up by day, and the seed sprouts and grows—how, he himself does not know. ²⁸ "The soil produces crops by itself, first the blade, then the head, then the mature grain in the head. ²⁹ "But when the crop permits, he immediately puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come."*

(26) In this Parable, Jesus gives a **3-stage** outline of the KOG: **Stage 1**, sowing; **Stage 2**, growing; and **Stage 3**, mowing. IOW, He sums up what He's been saying.

A. But, Jesus also stresses the **effects** of the **KOG** on **3** levels: **Historical, Evangelical, and Personal**.

B. So, Jesus says that in Stage **1**, the Farmer goes out and sows the seed. IOW, the Farmer brings the lively little seed and the right growing conditions together.

(27-28) Then, after sowing the seed, the Farmer goes about his normal life day and night, w/out worrying about what's happening b/t the seed and the soil.

A. And, all the while, the seed—**through some mysterious process**—takes root and grows in the ground.

1. But, the Farmer hasn't the foggiest about how these tiny little bit of life turns into a large crop. He just knows that if the conditions are right, it will do so every time.

2. The earth seems to automatically produce—**w/out any visible cause or human effort**—a shoot, a bud, and then a packet of grain.

B. Now, Jesus is hinting that God—**and only God**—causes the life w/i all this growth and richness.

1. God's at work in the lively little seed. He's at work in its well-ordered growth. And, He's at work in its rich crop, too. IOW, only God can generate Kingdom abundance.

(29) When the lively little seed has done its work and has produced a large crop, the Farmer puts his sickle to the grain and mows his harvest down.

A. IOW, when the timing is right, the Farmer gathers in God's provision for himself and others.

B. Now, this Parable illustrates how the KOG grows among the Believers of Jesus' day: He and His Followers are spreading Gospel Truths all over the land.

1. And, God makes His Truth take root in the hearts of men, women, and children through Faith. And as such, there are vast crops of people Trusting in Jesus.

C. Moreover, this Parable captures what happens in real Evangelism: Under God's direction, Christians bring together Gospel Truth w/ the people who need it.

1. And, God causes that lively little seed of Truth to take root and bud in saving Faith. And, when these people believe, there are great crops of souls who glorify God.

D. Finally, this Parable illustrates a Christian's spiritual biography. The life of God takes root in us. And, through Faith, it penetrates every thought, word, and deed.

1. And as such, it produces more and more of Christ's life in us until the exchange of Christ's life for ours is completed at Christ's coming for His Church.

2. And then, as the **Dead in Christ** rise to Glory, and the **Living in Christ** rise to Glory, God will harvest His final and greatest crop to the anthems of saints and angels clothed in the Divine Light of Jesus' life.

E. ILL: Once upon a time, a man w/ a great **imagination** had a strange experience as he walked through an orange grove on a windy day. Coming to a fence that divided the orchard from an adjoining forest, he imagined that he heard the distinct types of trees talking to each other. Now, one bragging **Maple** said to a nearby **Orange** tree, **"Why don't your leaves rustle in the breeze like ours, s/t you can be heard at a distance?"** The Orange tree answered, **"We Orange trees don't waste time**

fluttering our leaves in the wind to draw attention to ourselves. We just let our fruit speak for us^{iv}!

F. APPL: During **Judgment Day's Great Harvest**, God will savor the fruit of Christ's life in us. So, the souls we've won for Christ and our humble Faith in Christ will provide a sweet, fragrant, and rich delight for Him.

We can **delight** God, b/c Faith unveils God's nature and ways.

ⁱ Tom Mullin, *Laughing Out Loud and Other Religious Experiences*.

ⁱⁱ "Prayer and politics," Ibid.

ⁱⁱⁱ Campus Journal, Jul 19, 1996.

^{iv} "The Legend of the Trees," INFOsearch Pro ver 4.3P.

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