

Abide Part 7: Growing in the Holy Spirit (10-21-2018)

New Series: Abide - Living in the presence and power of the Holy Spirit

3 Parts: Who is the Holy Spirit, Cultivating our relationship with Him, and then how He flows through us.

Review: Part 2 of the Series: Cultivating our relationship with Him. Last Week: **Hearing the Holy Spirit**

Today: Growing in the Holy Spirit - Mark chapter 4 (Also found in Matthew 13 & Luke 8)

Mark 4:1-9 (ESV)

(1) Again he began to teach beside the sea. And a very large crowd gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat in it on the sea, and the whole crowd was beside the sea on the land. (2) And he was teaching them many things in parables, and in his teaching he said to them: (3) "Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow. (4) And as he sowed, some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured it. (5) Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil, and immediately it sprang up, since it had no depth of soil. (6) And when the sun rose, it was scorched, and since it had no root, it withered away. (7) Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain. (8) And other seeds fell into good soil and produced grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold." (9) And he said, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

Notes: Tell the Francis Chan version of the story. Jesus tells the story, and then leaves them hanging. Why?

Mark 4:10 (ESV)

And when he was alone, those around him with the twelve asked him about the parables.

Notes: His disciples seek Him out for answers. . . **Can you hear & will you hear?**

- **Will you hear?** You have to want to hear. This is no small thing. The masses missed him and they were right there with him!
- **Can you hear?** Purpose to seek him out. We have to decide to be an apprentice of Jesus. Look . . .

Mark 4:11-13 (ESV)

(11) And he said to them, "To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside everything is in parables, (12) so that "they may indeed see but not perceive, and may indeed hear but not understand, lest they should turn and be forgiven." (13) And he said to them, "Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables?"

Notes: Hear. Understand. Turn. Forgiven. This is the pattern of someone living in the kingdom.

- **Most don't hear, because we simply aren't purposing to live in God's Kingdom.**
- **Knowing & Following the King is the way to life in Jesus. That is Abiding.**

The Parable Explained

Now, let's see how Jesus explains this parable. Invite the Holy Spirit, to come speak to you, even now . . .

Mark 4:14 (ESV)

The sower sows the word.

Notes: In Mathew's Gospel – The seed is the word of the kingdom.

- Remember the sower was sowing everywhere!
- God is speaking kingdom words. In all times, in all situations, to everyone.
- The issue isn't whether God is speaking.
- The real issue is under what conditions will His words fall into my life.

What follows are **3 Warnings** and **1 Encouragement** . . .

Mark 4:4, 15 (ESV)

(4) And as he sowed, some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured it. . . (15) And these are the ones along the path, where the word is sown: when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them.

Notes: The Word never lands. It bounces right off. It gets snatched up.

- Too busy, Too distracted, and so we don't Hear!
- Hard heart – Busy going your own way, and walking your own path
- We should consider another story: the Wide & Narrow gates and take warning!
- Most walk the wide path.
- Busyness is a mentality and a physical behavior.
- It takes Patience & Humility to slow down.

Story: Dad at the Steel Plant . . . slowed down, walked away, and prayed. Then came back with a decision.

1st Warning: Slow down & don't miss what He is saying! It will get robbed from you.

Mark 4:5-6, 16-17 (ESV)

(5) Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil, and immediately it sprang up, since it had no depth of soil. (6) And when the sun rose, it was scorched, and since it had no root, it withered away. . . (16) And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: the ones who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy. (17) And they have no root in themselves, but endure for a while; then, when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away.

Notes:

- Following Emotions instead of cultivating relationship
 - Notice it wasn't immediately obvious that this was bad
 - In fact it was the opposite – it looked good at first!
- Chasing the miracle instead of the miracle worker
 - Watch out – this leads to chasing every new thing
 - And trusting how I feel before, during, and after an experience

Beware when you hear God, and say yes, but then the outcome wasn't what you wanted or thought it would be.

This leads to questioning if I heard right, or questioning his goodness, and ultimately my faith withers, either in my ability to hear him and follow, or in His goodness & trustworthiness.

- **2 issues:** No Root & No Moisture (Luke's Gospel – no moisture)
 - Depth, Growth, & Stability are the goal. Long-term health.
 - Not a quick fix.
 - Not God's immediate response to a situation.
 - Not the immediate results of following Him

Remember we are trees, not flowers or grass . . .

Isaiah 40:6-8 (ESV)

(6) A voice says, "Cry!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All flesh is grass, and all its beauty is like the flower of the field. (7) The grass withers, the flower fades when the breath of the LORD blows on it; surely the people are grass. (8) The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.

Notes: Let's be rooted in the Word of God, and be come like trees who are planted by the water. We'll have root & moisture that lasts!

2nd Warning: Beware of emotional, quick responses to his word. Let your roots go deep. Seek relationship not results.

Mark 4:7, 18-19 (ESV)

(7) Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain. . . (18) And others are the ones sown among thorns. They are those who hear the word, (19) but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it proves unfruitful.

Notes:

- **Stress/Anxiety: Cares of this world** – seems reasonable, but chokes the life out of you
 - This feels responsible, but it is prideful. Got to learn to let go & trust Him.
- **Control: Deceitfulness of riches**– pursuing the pleasure you can arrange for
 - Notice it is the deceitfulness of riches. No one thinks this is them!
- **Lust: Desires for other things** – those who hunger & thirst for righteousness will be filled!
 - Lust hungers, but is never satisfied. Watch out for boredom with God & His Word. If you feel like you “know all of this” it’s a dangerous place to be.

This is what Paul is warning about in 2 Timothy 3: selfish living that destroys . . .

2 Timothy 3:7 (ESV)

always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth.

Notes: Be careful not to use the Holy Spirit to “rubber stamp” you own desires. Don’t hear what you want to hear. Instead hear what He wants to say, and then purpose to follow Him, even if its stretches you and runs counter to your desires.

2 ways to help prevent this . . .

1) Listen for His voice, and then . . . Whose life are you living – Yours or His?

2) Compare what you hear with: His Word & Wise Counsel

Listen to (and seek out) the wise counsel of others, especially those who know you best.

3rd Warning: Don’t let the cares of your life, choke out the life of Jesus in you!

Final Encouragement . . .

Mark 4:8, 20 (ESV)

(8) And other seeds fell into good soil and produced grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold." . . . (20) But those that were sown on the good soil are the ones who hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold."

Notes: Hear his Word, Accept it into your life, and it will produce fruit.

Conclusion: This week – spend time in the following 3 Stories for Application.

This is your Homework (Life groups & On your own):

- Pray.
- Invite the Holy Spirit to speak.
- Read the Word.
- Then listen to Him & each other, and see what comes!

Mark 4:21-25 (ESV)

(21) And he said to them, "Is a lamp brought in to be put under a basket, or under a bed, and not on a stand? (22) For nothing is hidden except to be made manifest; nor is anything secret except to come to light. (23) If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear." (24) And he said to them, "Pay attention to what you hear: with the measure you use, it will be measured to you, and still more will be added to you. (25) For to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away."

Mark 4:26-29 (ESV)

(26) And he said, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground. (27) He sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows; he knows not how. (28) The earth produces by itself, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. (29) But when the grain is ripe, at once he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come."

Mark 4:30-34 (ESV)

(30) And he said, "With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable shall we use for it? (31) It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when sown on the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth, (32) yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants and puts out large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade." (33) With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it. (34) He did not speak to them without a parable, but privately to his own disciples he explained everything.