

LENT DEVOTIONAL MARCH 19, 2014

SCRIPTURE

Mark 4:1-20

1 Again he began to teach beside the sea. Such a very large crowd gathered around him that he got into a boat on the sea and sat there, while the whole crowd was beside the sea on the land. 2 He began to teach them many things in parables, and in his teaching he said to them: 3 "Listen! A sower went out to sow. 4 And as he sowed, some seed fell on the path, and the birds came and ate it up. 5 Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil, and it sprang up quickly, 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 Other seed fell into good soil and brought forth grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirty and sixty and a hundredfold." 9 And he said, "Let anyone with ears to hear listen!"

10 When he was alone, those who were around him along with the twelve asked him about the parables. 11 And he said to them, "To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside, everything comes in parables; 12 in order that 'they may indeed look, but not perceive, and may indeed listen, but not understand; so that they may not turn again and be forgiven.'"

13 And he said to them, "Do you not understand this parable? Then how will you understand all the parables? 14 The sower sows the word. 15 These are the ones on the path where the word is sown: when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them. 16 And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: when they hear the word, they immediately receive it with joy. 17 But they have no root, and endure only for a while; then, when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away. 18 And others are those sown among the thorns: these are the ones who hear the word, 19 but the cares of the world, and the lure of wealth, and the desire for other things come in and choke the word, and it yields nothing. 20 And these are the ones sown on the good soil: they hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirty and sixty and a hundredfold."

DEVOTIONAL

Jesus returns to the sea here, and once more is only safe in the sea itself. He stays on a boat, allowing the often chaotic forces of nature to protect him as he preaches.

The parable he tells is another story beloved by children and adults alike. One of the things that I've always loved about this story is the way the sower works. Some of the seeds grow, and some do not, yet that doesn't stop the sower from casting the seeds. There is a boldness, almost stubborn determination from a sower who plants amongst thorns, rocks and roads.

There's a sense of abundance in a sower who scatters seeds even where they aren't likely to grow. Then we are given a framework to interpret the parable, and we find that the sense of growth and abundance carries over to the interpretation as well as the parable. There is something about Jesus that calls us to participate in this bold, determined abundance.

*Message provided by the **Miller Summer Youth Institute**.*

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Pittsburgh Theological Seminary
616 North Highland Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15206
Phone: 412-362-5610



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