

LENT DEVOTIONAL MARCH 20, 2014

SCRIPTURE

Mark 4:21-34

21 He said to them, "Is a lamp brought in to be put under the bushel basket, or under the bed, and not on the lampstand? 22 For there is nothing hidden, except to be disclosed; nor is anything secret, except to come to light. 23 Let anyone with ears to hear listen!" 24 And he said to them, "Pay attention to what you hear; the measure you give will be the measure you get, and still more will be given you. 25 For to those who have, more will be given; and from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away."

26 He also said, "The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, 27 and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. 28 The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. 29 But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come."

30 He also said, "With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? 31 It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; 32 yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth 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 except in parables, but he explained everything in private to his disciples.

DEVOTIONAL

Parables can be so confusing. They defy our attempts to make them into fables or allegories. They're not systematic. They're word pictures. Poems. Sculptures. They create an impression, a sense, a hunch, an idea, a thought, a feeling.

These parables speak of growth, attention, work, blessing, urgency, life, provision, safety, shelter, productivity, creation. Notice that those who have ears to hear don't automatically hear. They are called to listen, and to pay attention. This calling is helpful for us to bear in mind as we encounter the parables. As much as we want to tie them down to easy interpretations, there is value in simply listening, paying attention, and soaking up the strangeness of the stories.

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

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