**WHAT THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS LIKE**

Mark 4:21-34

Key Verse 26

He also said, “This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground

**Introduction**



Mark 4:11 reads, “He told them, “The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you.” Thanks to Jesus’ calling, His disciples were privileged to have the secret of the kingdom of God. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables. With the measure you use, it will be measured to you, and even more. The more we pay attention to Jesus’ teachings, the more we are capable of understanding the kingdom of God. May the Lord help us to grow as Bible teachers so that we may be productive for God’s glory with life giving power in the word of God.

1. Read verses 21-25. Where should we put a lamp? (21) What does the lamp represent? What does it mean that whatever is hidden shall be disclosed? (22) Why should we consider what we hear carefully? (23-25)

1-1, Read verses 21-25.

He said to them, “Do you bring in a lamp to put it under a bowl or a bed? Instead, don’t you put it on its stand? **22** For whatever is hidden is meant to be disclosed, and whatever is concealed is meant to be brought out into the open. **23** If anyone has ears to hear, let them hear.”

**24** “Consider carefully what you hear,” he continued. “With the measure you use, it will be measured to you—and even more. **25** Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them.”

1-2, Where should we put a lamp? (21)

***He said to them, “Do you bring in a lamp to put it under a bowl or a bed? Instead, don’t you put it on its stand?***

* We should put a lamp on its stand, not under a bowl or a bed. When Jesus taught the people in parables, He did not mean to hide it as a lamp was put in under a bowl or a bed. Rather Jesus wanted to shine light to dispel the darkness from them.
* Without God and His truthful words, the world is dark. Those who are in the darkness can not know the meaning and purpose of life and wander without knowing the direction for their lives.
* Those who are in the darkness commit sins and do not realize what is going on in their lives, because they are spiritually blind. So they need light the most.

1-3, What does the lamp represent?

* Psalm 119:105 says, “Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.” God’s word is a lamp. With God’s word, we can realize where we came from and where are going back to. Also we will find the meaning and purpose of our lives.
* Jesus says, “I am the light of the world.Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” (John 8:12) When we accept Jesus, we will receive power to fight the darkness(sins) in our hearts.

1-4, What does it mean that whatever is hidden shall be disclosed? (22)

***For whatever is hidden is meant to be disclosed, and whatever is concealed is meant to be brought out into the open.***

* This verse is the truth. There are many secrets and evil deeds in the world. But at due time nothing is hidden or concealed before Jesus’ eyes who will come as the Judge.
* Also the treasure of the gospel message were not supposed to be hidden but were finally exposed when Jesus came to this world.
* Now to him who is able to establish you in accordance with my gospel, the message I proclaim about Jesus Christ, in keeping with the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, 26 but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all the Gentiles might come to the obedience that comes from faith (Romans 16:25-26)

1-5, Why should we consider what we hear carefully? (23-25)

***23 If anyone has ears to hear, let them hear.” 24 “Consider carefully what you hear,” he continued. “With the measure you use, it will be measured to you—and even more. 25 Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them.”***

* Although the gospel message is not hidden any longer, still it is only available to those who have ears to hear. Those who have spiritual desires and humble attitude about Jesus’ words can hear and understand it.
* Consider carefully what you hear. With the measure you use, it will be measured to you-and even more. Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them.
* So nothing is more important than meditating the word of God. Jesus’ teaching was not to force us to know the meaning, but to prompt us to think and meditate on the meaning of His words. Jesus waits for us to have a sense of problem and to ask about the meaning like His disciples.
* Jesus trained His disciples to know how to think and meditate the word of God. It is like a father who teaches his children how to catch fish instead of giving them a fish always.
* In our coming Bible conference, we would like to grow as Bible teachers by learning how to study the Bible independently. May the Lord help us to prepare ourselves accordingly to be a reliable Bible teachers.
* He said to them, “Therefore every teacher of the law who has become a disciple in the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old.” (Matthew 13:52)

2. Read verses 26-29. What is the kingdom of God like? (26) How does the seed grow and produces grain? (27, 28) What happens when the grain is ripe? (29) What can we learn about the kingdom of God?

2-1, Read verses 26-29.

### The Parable of the Growing Seed

**26** He also said, “This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. **27** Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. **28** All by itself the soil produces grain—first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. **29** As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come.”

2-2, What is the kingdom of God like? (26)

### ***The Parable of the Growing Seed***

***26 He also said, “This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground.***

* After explaining what kind of attitude his disciples should take, Jesus told two more parables to describe what the kingdom of God is like.
* People assume that the kingdom of God comes all at once, dropping from heaven miraculously.
* Actually, when Jesus was near to Jerusalem, many Jewish people and even disciples supposed that the kingdom of God was to appear immediately (Luke 19:11).
* They expected the mighty messianic kingdom immediately would destroy the enemies and establish the visible glorious nation.
* But Jesus kingdom comes only through preaching the seed of God’s words, and God advances his kingdom through those who scatter the seed of God’s words.

2-3, How does the seed grow and produces grain? (27, 28)

***27 Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how.***

* The work that the farmer does is to scatter the seeds and to sleep peacefully and to get up early morning and to pray in the early prayer meeting every day.
* Then the fruit grows by itself automatically without human effort. The farmer does not know “how the seed grows” but knows the one thing that the seed has life in it that will produce the fruits.
* Even in these modern scientific days, the human beings cannot create the life and the source of life, the blood. The life to grow remains in the mystery and authority of God.
* Our task is to plant the seed and to water it, but God has been making it grow. (1 Cor 3:6) Our task is to trust in God who advances his kingdom in any circumstance.

***28 All by itself the soil produces grain—first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head.***

* Our human expectancy is to grow quickly and to bear fruits immediately. But God does not despise or skip the steps of the faith. After God announced the gospel in advance to Abraham, God waited and established his covenants for thousands of years, and finally in his time God fulfilled the gospel through his Son Jesus Christ.
* We just need the perseverance with the process. In Galatians 5:22, Apostle Paul describes the fourth fruit of the Holy Spirit as “perseverance”. Perseverance does not mean to just bear with it, gnashing the teeth, but to follow God’s plan and timetable rather than our own.
* This can be applicable to our spiritual growth and disciple making. Usually we want to grow quickly and to raise disciples instantly like a vending machine, but it does not work that way.
* With just one single 1:1 bible study, we hope the bible student to repent and to make a decision of faith. Because of our impatience how often we draw out the sheep’s head and destroy our spiritual works? May God help us to bear a fruit of perseverance.

2-4, What happens when the grain is ripe? (29)

***29 As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come.”***

* He puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come. It means a couple of ways. First, anyone who meditate the word of the gospel accept it and grow to be a mature man of God who can participate in the kingdom of God at due time.
* Second, it is the very day of final judgement when Jesus comes again. We will participate in the kingdom of God and become co-ruler with our Lord Jesus Christ.

2-5, What can we learn about the kingdom of God?

Personal testimony

3. Read verses 30-34. What else is the kingdom of God like? (30, 31) How big does it grow (32)? How did Jesus teach the word? (33, 34) Why did he use parables with the crowds and explain everything to His own disciples?

3-1, Read verses 30-34.

### The Parable of the Mustard Seed

**30** Again he said, “What shall we say the kingdom of God is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it? **31** It is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds on earth. **32** Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds can perch in its shade.”

**33** With many similar parables Jesus spoke the word to them, as much as they could understand. **34** He did not say anything to them without using a parable. But when he was alone with his own disciples, he explained everything.

3-2, What else is the kingdom of God like? (30, 31)



***30 Again he said, “What shall we say the kingdom of God is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it? 31 It is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds on earth.***

3-3, How big does it grow (32)?

***32 Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds can perch in its shade.”***

* A mustard seed is so small that it is like one dot of a ballpoint pen. But when planted in the ground, it grows and becomes the largest tree as tall as 20 feet, with such big branches that weary birds can perch in the shade.
* Likewise, the kingdom of God begins in a small and unnoticed way, which is different from what was popularly expected. Jesus begins his kingdom ministry by raising his dirty-dozen disciples in Galilee and teaching them the way of the cross and resurrection.
* At that time, compared with the glorious mighty kingdom of Rome, Jesus’ kingdom looked so weak like a mustard seed, like it could be blown off by the wind. But when it was fully grown, the weary whole world rests on Jesus’ cross to get the eternal life and hope of God’s kingdom.
* This parable emphasizes small beginning but enormous potential for growth of God’s kingdom. God’s words and his ministries begin from small and unpromising initiatives, but when God works with them it grows and explodes mightily, because in it there exists God’s wonderful potential.
* Our small mustard seeds of 1:1 Bible studies seem to be invisible and to be in vain, but God now works mightily through our efforts and advances his kingdom continually.
* God’s kingdom begins with our sowing of the seeds of God’s words. “All people are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord endures forever.” (1 Peter 1:24-25)

3-4, How did Jesus teach the word? (33, 34)

***33 With many similar parables Jesus spoke the word to them, as much as they could understand. 34 He did not say anything to them without using a parable. But when he was alone with his own disciples, he explained everything.***

* Matthew’s gospel 13 shows more parables.

3-5, Why did he use parables with the crowds and explain everything to His own disciples?

* Jesus explained everything to His own disciples when he was alone with them. It indicates that Jesus was pleased with their humble learning mind.
* May the Lord help us to grow like his disciples in terms of readiness to accept Jesus and grow as kingdom builders. Amen.

**Conclusion**

With the measure you use, it will be measured to you, and even more. May the Lord help us to pick up great desire to grow as Bible teachers so that we may become reliable Bible teachers for many wandering souls in the darkness. May the Lord help us to shine Jesus’ light continually. Amen.   
  
One word: With the measure you use!