

Meditation 35

Mark 4: 10-13

"When Jesus 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^[a] 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 hear but not understand;
 so that they may not turn again and be forgiven.' "

¹³ And Jesus said to them, "Do you not understand this parable? Then how will you understand all the parables?"

Have you ever tried to understand something but couldn't?... Maybe it was something at school or in a book. But maybe it was also some behaviour or reaction in yourself or in someone else. Why was it difficult to understand?

Sometimes it's just that our brain needs time, good guidance and instruction. Other times it may just be beyond us and our capacity to focus on certain topics because of their complexity. All brains are not made the same.

But sometimes it is also about resistance in our hearts... What is such resistance about?... Are there certain things we just don't want to understand because that may require change in us? Are there certain things we don't want to understand because we are afraid of what that will mean? Are there certain things we don't want to understand because the other person with whom we are in conflict or disagreement has some right on their side and it would require us to admit wrong, apologize or change our perspective altogether?

How does an openness to understand and to better love even when we are resistant to such love change how we may understand?

The passage of scripture which is the subject of our meditation makes it seem as if parables are a means to confuse people and prevent them from understanding. But what if parables are actually an invitation to go deeper? What if parables are like a gateway separating those who really want to understand and are willing to seek greater guidance, from those who don't want to understand and will simply tune out? Parables are like a test to discern how much people are hungry for some understanding because they are fed up with the way things are. They are ready for change in themselves as much as in their world. Some will seek to go deeper, like the disciples, and some will tune out and walk away.

The quote within the passage (verse 12) is from the prophet Isaiah 6:9-10, and is a moment of judgement within the prophecy. For even as God has sought to turn the people toward divine

love in all their relations, they have been resistant to change beginning with their leaders. It seems to be a pattern. But isn't this so true for so many people in all times and places and even for us at times?

How much do we really want to understand? How much will we trust the journey toward greater understanding if it means growth and deepening of what it means to love as God/Jesus/Holy Spirit love? We all want to love in theory. But when it comes down to particular people and particular situations, loving can be the hardest thing ever. Do we really want to understand what it means? Are we willing to change toward love whatever it takes? Are we willing to give up or let go patterns, behaviours and ways of thinking we've become so comfortable with we don't even notice them?...

The seed needs to be planted and it needs to find an open heart ready to grow rich, deep soil resistant to outside elements that will cause the plant to wither. The seed needs to find an open heart ready to be changed within wherever that will lead. The seed needs to find an open heart with space for deep, rich growth, even against the current.

Is your heart so ready?

PRAYER: We want to be ready, O God... We want to be open and receptive to what you have to tell us... And we know that this also means revealing to us those ways of relating, behaving and thinking that are obstacles to your way and will for us...

You want to grow the seed in us, the seed of your love... You want to root out those ways the seed may be choked or fail to grow deep roots so it can grow strong and produce rich and plentiful fruit in us...

Help us, O God... be merciful with us... Be patient... Don't give up on us even if we need more time... Keep seeking us, O God... keep scattering your seed until some more of it finds some good soil in us ready to receive it in a new way...

In Jesus' name... Amen.