

Mark 4:30-32 (NIV)

- 1) Of course, the idea in this parable is that the kingdom has very small beginnings.
- 2) If we look at actual mustard seed, it is between 1 to 2 mm (0.029 to 0.079 in.) in diameter. It is a little smaller than a bee-bee.
- 3) The plant when fully grown can be as much as 9 to 20 feet tall depending on the species.
- 4) Obviously, a tremendous difference in size – seed to plant fully grown.
- 5) I think we first have to consider the context carefully here to get the impact of the parable.
- 6) Jesus is talking to his disciples who he will soon send out – they are the mustard seeds.
 - a) Personally, I think each one might be construed to be a mustard seed.
- 7) These men were:
 - a) Not part of the religious elite.
 - b) In fact, they were far from being religious leaders of any kind.
 - c) They will be shown to be fearful, slow to believe, and spiritually weak at times.
 - d) Unbelieving and slow to understand even who Jesus really was (we will see this vividly in verses 35 to 41 of this chapter).
 - e) Even later on when Jesus is arrested, they will show their weakness by fleeing.
 - f) And yet, here we are – this is God’s chosen way to bring his church (kingdom) into existence.
 - g) This is the mustard seed from which His Kingdom will emerge!
- 8) This idea is perfectly in keeping with what Jesus has been teaching them to this point.
 - a) It lets them know again how important what they are going to do is.
 - b) It also shows them, when combining this parable with the last regarding the farmer that God will supply the huge increase.
- 9) Bonnie made a truly valid point last time regarding the fact that we and the disciples are truly farmers planting seeds.
- 10) However, the Kingdom is made up of people – souls – and in that regard, we are mustard seeds as well.
- 11) God gives knowledge of His word to pass on to others.
- 12) Putting these parables together, again, we gain that knowledge thru study – having ears to hear.
- 13) Thru passing that knowledge to others we are in essence a small part of building the Kingdom.
- 14) My point was that considering a seed vs. plant we would should truly be the seed – always passing the knowledge on to others.

Gospel of Mark – NOTES

Mark 4:33-34 (NIV)

- 1) There are varying opinions regarding the meaning of what Mark says here.
- 2) MacArthur comments that “the unbelief of the crowds was judged by Jesus as He obscured the truth and taught them only unexplained riddles.”
- 3) However, others (myself included) believe that this was simply method of teaching and there was no intent to obscure.
 - a) For some who were, as we discussed earlier, only listening to him for curiosity or were part of the crowd for healings and miracles their hearts were hardened,
 - i) They would not expend the effort to hear and understand.
 - b) Obviously, we have the religious leaders who were definitely not going to listen – hearts were totally hardened!
 - c) Others would.
 - d) Again, looking back at verse 11 of this chapter:

11 He told them, "The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables 12 so that,

"they may be ever seeing but never perceiving, and ever hearing but never understanding; otherwise they might turn and be forgiven!"

- e) Those who were not inclined to listen would not perceive the true message – the disciples must!
- f) Again, being on the “outside” requires a hardened heart and an unwillingness to listen.
- g) When considering this we must always look back at Jesus’ own words in verses 21-23,

Mark 4:21-23 (NIV)

- 4) The word for hear in this case is ακουω in both places.
 - a) It has meanings of hear, learn, obey, or understand.
 - b) Interestingly, in the second instance it is an imperative.
 - i) Could be translated “if this is you, LISTEN UP!!!”

5) In the parallel passage Matthew, quotes the prophet Asaph in Psalm 78:2

Matt 13:34-35 (NIV)

6) If we look at the next few verses in the Psalm, I think the prophet backs up the position that Jesus would not be obscuring things intentionally as he taught.

Ps 78:2-4 (NIV)

7) Mark concludes by saying:

“But when he was alone with his own disciples, he explained everything.”

Gospel of Mark – NOTES

- 8) To me, given what we know, this was to be expected.
- 9) Jesus had to assure that the disciples understood the meaning of what He was teaching since they were the ones with the responsibility of carrying the message forward.

Mark 4:35-41 (NIV)

- 1) RECAP – We have been dealing with one day in Jesus’ ministry which has probably been exhausting.
 - a) It began with the accusation that he was in league with Satan, so he had to deal with the religious leaders.
 - b) Then his family shows up and he had to deal with them – probably at length beyond the brief encounter that was relayed by Mark.
 - c) The requirements of the day were such that they did not have time to eat.
 - d) He had dealt with the crowd that was so large and pressing he had to get into a fishing boat to preach.
 - e) Finally, he spent time explaining the parables he was teaching.
- 2) Given all that, it doesn’t take much for us to see that it would be perfectly normal for Jesus to have fallen asleep on the ride over from Capernaum to the other side.
- 3) As I mentioned sometime back, the remains of a 1st century fishing boat was found in 1986.
 - a) It was 27ft. long, 7.5ft. wide, and at least 4.3ft. deep.
 - b) It is assumed to be a typical fishing boat for that area during that time.
 - c) Obviously, there is no direct connection to Jesus other than the time period and place.
- 4) I say all that to bring a little more perspective to their situation.
- 5) If we assume, that the group that was with Jesus in the boat was the 12, given the size of the boat, you can see that it was comfortably full.
- 6) One might further assume that this boat belonged to Peter and Andrew or James and John.
- 7) That being said, they set sail for the other end of the lake and Jesus falls asleep in stern (back) of the boat.
 - a) The Sea of Galilee is 7 mi. wide and 13 mi long.
 - b) Since Jesus is at the far northwestern tip of the lake, the trip was the longest you could possibly take on the lake.
- 8) Then terrible things happen.
- 9) The sea of Galilee is situated in such a way that it is subject to down draft winds from the surrounding mountains which can cause very violent storms and high waves.
- 10) Waves can reach heights of 10 feet or more during these storms.

Gospel of Mark – NOTES

- 11) It does not take a lot of imagination to see that a fully loaded boat of the size we described would be in a lot of trouble during such a storm.
- 12) These storms usually occur during the day, so this was a reasonably odd occurrence.
- 13) None the less, here we are seriously in trouble.
- 14) Other boats containing other believers and disciples (not the twelve) were also in peril.
 - a) Depending on how far they had gone when the storm occurs, they could be miles from shore in all directions.
- 15) Jesus is asleep through all this.
- 16) Now before you say, “how can that be”, some people are really heavy sleepers.
 - a) My story
- 17) Add to that as we said earlier, Jesus is likely exhausted.
- 18) But here we see the real point of the story – the disciples (probably not any of the fisherman) became distraught and woke Jesus.
- 19) That was not so surprising – however, the surprising thing was the comment!
- 20) The indictment – "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"
- 21) Without uttering a word in response, he got up and commanded the storm to stop.
- 22) This is quite the scene:
 - a) All went quite!!!!
 - b) I can see Jesus standing in the stern of the boat staring at the disciples.
 - c) They are seated holding on for dear life with their mouths hanging open at what they just witnessed.
 - d) In the quite calm that now exists Jesus asks a simple question"Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?"
- 23) These men have seen many miracles performed by Jesus.
 - a) Healings – demon exorcisms.
- 24) They knew His power from that perspective.
- 25) Here, it is a matter of human frailty and frustration that blinded their faith.
- 26) It was beyond their comprehension that Jesus could be so uncaring that he would sleep through their fear of dying!
- 27) Have you ever been frustrated with a loved one or coworker because they did not appear to see a situation with the same seriousness that you did?
- 28) On the other hand, Jesus' frustration was with the fact that their lack of faith allowed them to be afraid in the first place.
- 29) Now, the situation is totally changed!

Gospel of Mark – NOTES

30) Mark says, “They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

31) They are now in a situation far beyond healing miracles.

a) As spectacular as they are, the scale was still conceivable.

32) Here, however, the scale is so immense that in their hearts, they probably started to recognize that they were in the presence of God himself.

33) As with most instances when anyone realized that they were in the presence of God, terror sets in – this is no exception – they were terrified!!

What do you think a better response to the situation might have been on the part of the disciples?

What would have been the absolute BEST response?

How do we deal with our storm situations – do we say “God how could you let this happen OR God, we trust you completely?”