
a *Grace Notes* course

The Gospel of Mark

an expositional Bible study

by Dr. Daniel Hill, Pastor

Southwood Bible Church

Tulsa, Oklahoma

Lesson 4

Mark 4:1-41

Grace Notes

1705 Aggie Lane, Austin, Texas 78757

Email: wdoud@bga.com

The Gospel of Mark

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Instructions for Completing the Lessons

There are sixteen (16) lessons in the MARK course curriculum, one lesson for each chapter.. There will be questions in the Quiz for each lesson on the topics that are named here.

Begin each study session with prayer. It is the Holy Spirit who makes spiritual things discernable to Christians, so it is essential to be in fellowship with the Lord during Bible study.

Instructions

Read the introduction to the study of Mark.

Study the Mark chapter for this lesson, by reading the verses and studying the notes. Be sure to read any other Bible passages that are called out in the notes.

Before taking the Quiz, **Review** all of the notes in the Mark lesson.

Go to the Quiz page and follow the instructions to complete all the questions on the quiz. The quiz is "open book". You may refer to all the notes and to the Bible when you take the test. But you should not get help from another person.

When you have completed the Quiz, be sure to SAVE your file. If your quiz file is lost, and that can happen at Grace Notes as well, you will want to be able to reproduce your work.

To send the Quiz back to Grace Notes, follow the instructions on the Quiz page.

Grace Notes
Warren Doud
1705 Aggie Lane
Austin, Texas 78757 USA
Telephone: 512-458-8923
Email address: <wdoud@bga.com>

Chapter 4

Aaron Burr, the third Vice President of the United States, was reared in a godly home and admonished to accept Christ by his grandfather Jonathan Edwards. But he refused to listen. Instead, he declared that he wanted nothing to do with God and said he wished the Lord would leave him alone. He did achieve a measure of political success in spite of repeated disappointments. But he was also involved in continuous strife, and when he was 48 years old, he killed Alexander Hamilton in a duel. He lived for 32 more years, but through all this time he was unhappy and unproductive. It was during this sad chapter in his life that he declared to a group of friends, *Sixty years ago I told God that if He would let me alone, I would let Him alone, and God has not bothered about me since.* Aaron Burr got what he wanted.

At this point in our study, Mark jumps over a large period of time in the ministry of the Savior, a period of time that is included in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. In those other books we see that Jesus, after selecting the twelve disciples, gives the famous sermon on the Mount.

That message, found in great detail in Matthew 5 through 7, outlines the law of the kingdom of God offered to Israel. But the religious leaders rejected it, and the people were distracted - they wanted miracles not messages, and even his family thought him unable to care for himself.

In Luke 7 we are introduced to three heroes of faith, a Roman Centurion who has great faith, a widow who is blessed by the Lord, and a harlot, Mary of Bethany, who anoints Christ's feet.

We are told of these three because as we see large scale rejection and distraction to those who do not understand who will not even listen to the message of the Lord. But there are those individuals, Gentiles, widows in the pain of loss, and even harlots who lives will be changed forever through faith in Christ.

And while individuals are believing in Christ, the Lord also speaks of condemnation on those cities where he has ministered and yet they have not heard nor understood nor believed in Him.

There is a shift from the spectacular which was a distraction to the specific which will deliberately serve to bring truth to those who have ears to hear.

The first of these parables is the Parable of the Seed and the Sower (the parable of the Soils), it is not only given to the people but also later explained to the disciples and close followers of Christ.

We are going to study the nature of the parables and some of our Lord's comments regarding the purpose of parables. Later we will examine the parable itself.

Mark 4:1

He began to teach again by the sea. And such a very large crowd gathered to Him that He got into a boat in the sea and sat down; and the whole crowd was by the sea on the land.

Two important words are used to introduce this section:

AGAIN is the word PALIN _which means the repetition of an act for a specific purpose or goal in mind.

Mark 1:38 states the Lord's purpose: He came to proclaim. That was his mission and all that he is doing is being done to fulfill that mission.

The word TEACH is the word DIDASKW _which is one of five words found in the NEW TESTAMENT. for communicating the truth of God:

- 1) PAIDEUW: To train or instruct one younger or under authority.
- 2) LALEW: To speak in a conversational manner
- 3) KERUSSE: To herald in advance (John's ministry)
- 4) EVANGELIZW: To proclaim the Gospel
- 5) DIDASKW: To preach, teach a crowd of people

In our passage, Jesus is DIDASKW, preaching, teaching, instructing a large crowd.

And there assembled to him a very large crowd, so that embarking into a ship he sat in the sea. And the crowd was toward the sea on the land.

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The crowd pressed upon him so much that he took refuge in a small ship and taught them from the ship.

Remember back in Mark 3:9 the crowd who sought after his miracles became so unruly that he told his disciples to have a small boat standing by.

Principle: That Jesus had to go into a ship to avoid the press of the crowd shows us that the crowd had no concern for the person of Christ nor his safety. In Mark 3:20 they would not even give him enough time to eat.

Mark 4:2

And He was teaching them many things in parables, and was saying to them in His teaching,

Now here is the shift from miracles to parables:

1. PARABLE: The Greek word PARA + BOLEI which means to throw alongside.

Truth is thrown alongside life and life then interprets truth. It requires concentration, listening, thinking.

2. The miracles were a display of God's power but also distracted the people. They became more involved with the miracles than the message.

3. There are three times in the Lord's ministry when parables were the method of communication. Each time was a time to separate the ones willing to hear from the ones wanting to be entertained.

4. Jesus' mission was not to amass a huge following but to reveal the truth of God. As various groups reject the message the message was hid in the parable.

5. This shift sets up a pattern for both the CHURCH AGE and the believer.

The first century of the church is marked by miracles and signs, but with the completion of the canon (the Bible) the shift is to truth. From the spectacular to the specific revelation of God.

And in our lives we may go through a period of the spectacular as God is caring for us as a Father would care for a helpless infant, but then we grow up and begin to concentrate, listen, and think on the Word of God.

6. Now Jesus will continue to heal and continue with miracles but they will lessen and be more for those who have put their faith in him than for the crowds of hangers-on.

Mark 4:3-9

Listen to this! Behold, the sower went out to sow;

as he was sowing, some seed fell beside the road, and the birds came and ate it up.

Other seed fell on the rocky ground where it did not have much soil; and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of soil.

And after the sun had risen, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away.

Other seed fell among the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked it, and it yielded no crop.

Other seeds fell into the good soil, and as they grew up and increased, they yielded a crop and produced thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold.

And He was saying, He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

As Jesus begins this parable he places heavy emphasis on listening, paying attention, concentration: Three times the Lord commanded the people (and us) to hear:

Two commands: Hear ye, behold -

The word HEAR is present active, to keep on hearing what is being said in the message. The Active Voice is the voice of discipline, disciplining yourself to keep on hearing. No mind wandering, no thinking about other things, concentrating on the message.

"Who has ears to hear, let him hear." Again a command to keep on hearing that which is taught.

This is really a command to everyone, do you have ears, do you hear? Then listen to the Word of God.

In verse 23 there is the same challenge: If you have ears, hear.

Principle: As the Lord begins this ministry of parables he includes commands and challenges to concentrate.

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Dr. Thomas R. Edgar, professor of NEW TESTAMENT. at Capital Bible Seminary makes this observation: The NEW TESTAMENT. church was not characterized by power - it was characterized by problems addressed in the epistles.

Man's problems and God solutions takes precedent over miracles of power, and we must listen, think, and apply the Word of God to deal with problems and solutions.

Mark 4:10

As soon as He was alone, His followers, along with the twelve, began asking Him about the parables.

And when he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve asked him the meaning of the parable.

Anyone who has ever communicated anything, to a class, a church, to your kids, can take comfort in this verse.

Jesus had given the parable, but only later, when the twelve and the few others were alone with the Lord, did they ask: what are you talking about?

Mark 4:11

And He was saying to them, To you has been given the mystery of the kingdom of God, but those who are outside get everything in parables,

Jesus separated those who followed him into two groups. The ones on the inside and the ones on the outside. The criteria was their attitude towards the Word of God that Jesus spoke.

If they were positive to the Word, learning, thinking, applying, they would know the mysteries of God.

MYSTERY is the word MUSTEIRION and referred to the things known by members of ancient Greek societies. Things unknown by those who were on the outside.

Principle: Those positive to the Word, learning, thinking, applying doctrine know these things.

Later on Paul would write in I Cor 2:10 That God hath revealed them [these mysteries] unto us by

his Spirit: for the Spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of God.

But the ones outside are the crowds who follow after Jesus for the miracles, the family who does not understand the mission, the religious leaders who attribute his power to Satan.

For them everything is a parable, they understand the story of the parable but do not see through to its spiritual truth.

Mark 4:12,13

so that while seeing, they may see and not perceive, and while hearing, they may hear and not understand, otherwise they might return and be forgiven.

And He said to them, Do you not understand this parable? How will you understand all the parables?

One of those difficult passages:

In order that seeing they may see and not perceive and hearing they may hear and not understand, lest they should turn and it should be forgiven them.

This is a paraphrased quote from Isaiah 6:10.

Render the hearts of the people insensitive, Their ears dull, and their eyes dim, Lest they see with their eyes, Hear with their ears, understand with their heart, and be converted.

The passage in Isaiah looks at the prophets ministry of communicating the Word to the people so that they are without excuse. The Hebrews could never say that they did not have the Word taught in their midst. God even made the Word available to them when they had already shut their eyes, their ears, and their hearts.

Now what Jesus did was quote a paraphrase of that passage from the Targum of Hillel, this Hebrew work translated the Old Testament into Aramaic. By quoting this paraphrase it becomes the Word inspired by God while not replacing the Isaiah passage.

It does have a different thrust than Isaiah and can be clarified with an improved translation of one word:

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LEST the Greek word MEIPOTE followed by two subjunctive mood verbs, they should turn and it should be forgiven them.

The subjunctive mood is a mood of potential, so we go back to the word LEST and translate it as a potential:

Unless they should turn and it (Their rejection of Christ) be forgiven them.

So right here the lord gives us the secret for understanding the parables.

And the principle for understanding the Bible, and what we must do to know what God is revealed to us.

- we must be with those on the inside.

You are either on the inside or the outside. If you are on the outside you might listen, but you will not hear, you might see but you will not understand.

I Corinthians 2:9-10 Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of God.

If you are not a Christian, you are on the outside:

You must move to the inside, in Christ and Christ in you by believing in Christ as your Savior.

If you are a Christian you can still be on the outside, out of fellowship with your Savior. And unless you turn and are forgiven this message of truth will be a riddle, a parable to you.

And you come into fellowship with Christ by confession of known sins.

I John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Matthew 11:28 Jesus Christ has said to us: Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

And when you come unto Christ, he and the Father are there to come unto you -

John 14:23 Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and

my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

William Ward: It is not enough to own a Bible, we must read it. It is not enough to read the Bible, we must learn it. It is not enough to learn it, we must believe it. It is not enough to believe it, we must live it.

It is very appropriate that the parable ministry of our Lord begins with a parable about the Word and how it is received. We are the subject of the parable of the seed and the sower because this parable is really about the soil in which the seed is sown. We can see in this parable how we will receive the Word of God: if we will learn it, think it, and apply it.

We have examined Jesus' purpose, the problem, and the procedure he adopted to solve the problem.

HIS PURPOSES: Mark 1:38 He came to proclaim the Truth

THE PROBLEM: Mark 3:35 Not all are willing to do the Will of God.

THE PROCEDURE FOR PROBLEM SOLVING: Mark 4:11-12 The communication of the Truth in parables.

By teaching in parables the antagonist will understand the story but not the doctrine. They will have no point of contention. The believers will understand both the story and the doctrine.

As we study the life of Christ we see problems and solutions. Indeed the story of the early church is not a story of power but of problems and problems solved.

I talk a lot about problems, they are common to us all. And I talk a lot about problem solving because there is not problem that does not have a biblical solution.

As we continue to study any portion of the Bible we will be elaborating on the problem solving doctrines.

Now with this first parable the Lord gives the parable and then later, the disciples and close followers of the Lord ask Him what the parable meant.

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The ones who were not believers probably thought Jesus was giving a lesson in how to plant seed, that he may have been the minister of agriculture for Galilee. But the believers knew there was something more.

Mark 4:14

The sower sows the word.

Since Jesus' stated purpose is to proclaim the Word, the sower is Jesus, the one who communicates the Word.

This parable presumes the presence of communication which demands a communicator. Paul would elaborate on this need of a communicator in:

Romans 10:14 How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?

The Seed is the Word of God and it is sown on all kinds of terrain or soil. There is no exclusivity in the sowing of the Word, it is to go to all.

Principle: The communication of the Word of God, especially in a local church, must be made available to all who wish to come and hear the word. No special groups of key people, you are all key people in the plan of God.

The Lord then describes four types of soil on which the Word is sown and what happens in each case.

Mark 4:15

These are the ones who are beside the road where the word is sown; and when they hear, immediately Satan comes and takes away the word which has been sown in them.

These are the ones who have some momentary interest with the Word but that is it. They hear (aorist tense) and they have some cognizance of what was said but that is it.

The word HEART does not occur in the passage, the Word never gets to the heart, just the NOUS the mind.

Satan works on this type to keep the Word which is heard from ever becoming personal.

Historically, especially in the U.S., there have been preachers who had a certain popularity based upon their ability to communicate. Many people would come to hear them but the Word never got to the personal stage with them.

They would hear, they listen, but the gospel of Salvation in Christ never becomes personal, never becomes something that involves them.

Satan, the evil one, the devil, takes away the Word. the word for TAKES AWAY means to take by force.

Satan will stop at nothing to keep the unbeliever an unbeliever.

Principle: The word may be entertaining but its purpose is not to entertain.

John summed up the purpose of the Gospel this way:

John 21:31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

The unbelievers by the wayside are left by the wayside, never believing in Jesus Christ.

The other three types of terrain or soils all refer to believers.

Mark 4:16,17

In a similar way these are the ones on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy; and they have no firm root in themselves, but are only temporary; then, when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately they fall away.

They receive the word of God and respond with appreciation or joy.

RECEIVE is present tense, keep on receiving

JOY is XAPAS from the same root as GRACE and it is a response to what God has given them.

But they have no root. There is no depth of doctrine in their souls. Their understanding is

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superficial like so many believers today who have a lot of talk and enthusiasm but no daily walk in the Word. They never get past the Christian platitudes and bumper sticker type of theology.

So when affliction or persecution comes on account of the Word, because of their position as a believer, they fall apart.

Affliction refers to the problems of life that come as test of the depth of doctrine. Persecution is opposition from others because of the Word in you.

Both of these categories of problems can be great opportunities for the application of doctrine but these Stony ground believers give up when the going gets rough.

Because doctrine is not in the thinking it is not going to be applied. Instead they are at the mercy of human viewpoint and become offended which is a word meaning to be displeased, indignant, resentful.

The problems they face can even turn them against the Word they had learned.

This, then, is the believer who is distracted by problems and persecutions.

Mark 4:18,19

And others are the ones on whom seed was sown among the thorns; these are the ones who have heard the word, but the worries of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.

Here is the believer who doesn't have his priorities straight. Instead of having a passionate desire for the Word, his life lusts after other things.

He is all wrapped up worrying about the present age. The believer who worries rather than trust that God His heavenly Father is in control.

Now WORRY is a sin, it is an expression of our lack of faith. We may have certain cares and fears in life but we must make sure they are the right ones.

We should fear that we let any promise of the Word go unclaimed.

We should care that we might miss out on some precept of Divine truth.

Do you care for the wrong things, do you worry rather than take every opportunity to build your faith through the hearing, learning, thinking, and applying of the Word of God?

These thorn believers are also deceived by the deceitfulness of wealth. They are seeking wealth thinking that it can solve their worry problem.

These believers also have a passionate desire for other things, things other than money, in which they seek pleasure and happiness.

Man is a passionate being, and we have to decide where our passion is going to be directed.

And we must have a passion for the things of God. You never sustain fulfillment apart from God's gifts to you. He can make you happier than you have ever believed possible.

What is the most important thing in life to you? As you learn, think, and apply the Word of God I can tell you what it will be - the most important thing in life will be the Word because it will reveal to you the most important person in your life, Jesus Christ.

Misdirected priorities are said to come in and choke off the Word.

We have a passive participle which puts the thorn believer in a passive position of being intruded upon by worry, caring about the wrong things, wealth, and a wrongly applied passion.

This is not a position of any strength whatsoever, the passive verb see these wrong priorities enslaving the believer who does not seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and allow God to add all things to him.

The result of failing the priority test is that the word becomes unfruitful.

Now if you had a orchard and you have trees that did not bear any fruit, you would cut them down and use them for fire wood.

WHEN YOUR PRIORITIES ARE misaligned you bear no fruit for yourself and none for others.

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Mark 4:20

And those are the ones on whom seed was sown on the good soil; and they hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold.

THE GOOD GROUND BELIEVER:

These believers WELCOME the Word. The word is a compound of the word for receiving.

The prefix PARA means ALONGSIDE so the word is received or welcomed alongside of you as a trusted companion.

In the ancient world, and even in the Near East today, you never let someone you do not trust alongside of you. So here the Word is trusted to come alongside.

ALSO the word "welcome" is middle voice indicating that the good ground believer welcomes the Word because he knows it will be of value to him, that it will benefit him.

The result is bearing fruit and this is the application of the Word.

The best way to keep the Word is to give it away. As you apply it to God and your attitude towards Him, to self, and to others you increase momentum and build inner strength.

The momentum of application is seen in the increasing number of yields, first thirty, then sixty, then one hundred fold. In that day a yield of 10 to 1 was considered good and here the Lord jumps right to a 30 to 1 yield.

Principle: The more you get involved in the cycle of learning, thinking, and applying doctrine the more you get out of the doctrine you learn.

More fruit will generate from even the smallest seeds of truth.

Lessons learned from this parable:

1. The unbeliever is being pushed around by Satan. He is at the whim and will of the evil one. He does not have the dimension of Divine control in His life.
2. Some believers are pushed around by problems and people. They have enthusiasm but no depth of doctrine so even as believers they lack the

dynamics of day by day Divine control in their lives.

3. Other believers are pushed around by wrong priorities. They worry and care about the wrong things. they think money can make them happy, they have misdirected passion. They are living from a position of weakness rather than divine strength.

4. But others are seeking the manifold fruit of the Word in their lives. And this is a reality because they welcome the Word to their side as a companion and they know the Word will change their lives.

Our Lord in Luke 18:27 told his disciples:

The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.

We have our orders - all things are possible.

In the three short parables that follow the parable of the Seed, the Sower, and the Soils; the Lord encourages the positive believer to continue to press the advance to maturity in Christ.

In the parable of the soils there were four types who received the Word.

1. The ones by the way side – the unbeliever.
2. The rocky ground believers who were superficial in their learning of doctrine and easily distracted by problems.
3. The thorn believers who never got around to setting proper priorities of the Lord and His Word first.
4. The good ground believer who welcomed the Word as a companion and accepted the changes that would occur when the Word was established deep in the soul.

For this positive believer who is welcoming the Word, the Lord then gives three short parables that encourage and gives them, and us our orders to press the advance to growth in Christ.

Mark 4:21-24

And He was saying to them, A lamp is not brought to be put under a basket, is it, or under a bed? Is it not brought to be put on the lampstand?

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For nothing is hidden, except to be revealed; nor has anything been secret, but that it would come to light.

If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear."

And He was saying to them, Take care what you listen to. By your standard of measure it will be measured to you; and more will be given you besides.

The Parable of the Lamp

In these five verses we have the parable, the meaning, the challenge, the conditions, and the promise. Let's see how this unfolds.

The parable itself is very simple. The lamp does not exist, does it, in order that it may be placed under a bushel or under the couch? Does it not exist in order that it may be placed on a lampstand?

The Lord uses some very common items to explain a divine truth. It is very evident that you do not light a candle or oil lamp and set it under a bushel basket. Nor do you put it under a couch. Under the basket it would suffer from lack of oxygen and go out. Under the couch it could catch the couch on fire.

The statement given in this verse is better translated:

Things are hidden so that they can be manifested.

If a lamp is hidden away you bring it out into the room so it can give off its light.

Now in Matthew 5:16 which is a parallel account of this parable, Matthew includes the Lord saying:

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

The LIGHT the Lord speaks of is the Word that is now welcomed by the positive believer and is hidden or covered in the soul. JUST AS THE good-ground believer yields fruit thirty, sixty, a hundred fold. The light is hidden in you - in order that it may come unto the open.

Welcoming the word as described in v 20 includes learning and thinking Bible Doctrine. The yield of the word and the manifesting or uncovering of the light is the application of the Word. What you hear, what you learn, what you think on will

determine what you apply in life. Here the Lord sows the seed, the Lord lights the lamp, that is His job and fulfills his purpose: He came to proclaim.

Our job then is to think on the Word and apply it. Let it shine forth.

In Matthew 5:16 we are told to let it shine before men and in doing so we bring glory to God. The threefold application of doctrine includes:

To God: In Appreciation and Adoration

To Others: In Service and Sacrifice

To Self: In Determination, Desire, Destiny

Therefore, the reason the Word is given is so that you and I will learn it, think it, and apply it.

Here is the Challenge

If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.

This statement is a challenge to just about everyone. the Lord uses a very common denominator - do you have ears? The word TO HEAR is an infinitive. The ear is designed to hear, that is its purpose. Not to see or smell but hear.

So then the command, "Let him hear," which is saying that we have what is required to hear, so hear the Word.

That is what the ears were designed for - the hearing of the Word of God. So the Lord tells us to use the ears to hear Doctrine. But what we hear is also critical in the process:

This verse includes a command, a principle, and a promise:

The Command: Take heed, or be on the look out, as to what you hear. In our current information age there is a lot of things to hear. We need to be discriminatory, especially when it comes to hearing the Word as to what we hear. We need to use some simple sense in deciding what we are going to hear. Is it from the Bible or from a news magazine, is it divine viewpoint or simply some of man's better ideas. Is it giving you doctrine with which to press the advance or is it just entertainment.

Principle: With whatever measure ye measure, it will be measured to you. We have both the noun and verb of METRON where we get the English word METRIC.

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First the noun: With whatever measure. Measure here, is a standard. A learned basis for future decisions. The Greek philosophers used this word to describe that which can measure all things. Plato was the first to identify the absolute measure as being God himself.

In Romans 12:3 it is a measure from God by which to measure self.

In Ephesians 4:13 it is the measure of the fullness of the stature of Christ.

Therefore, the measure we should learn should be the absolute standard of God.

But there are other more basic and human viewpoint standards or measures.

The first verb form of METRON - Ye measure out.

Here is the application of the measure or standard that you have learned. You learn a certain principle and then you use it.

The second verb form of METRON looks at the results: And it will be measured to you.

This is a future, passive, indicative and looks at the outcome of the doctrine you have learned and its future application. The passive voice brings in the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the application of Doctrine to Experience.

Principle: You can not successfully apply a false standard or measure. If you have been listening to and learning the wrong information, when it comes to applying it you will not have success. God the Holy Spirit will not use that which is not accurate, correct, and learned from the Word.

We have a similar statement in our technological society - Garbage in -Garbage out.

The Lord just said it with a bit more flare.

The Promise: And it will be added to you.

The word "added" implies that the reward of correct learning, thinking, and applying of doctrine will be out of proportion to what is heard. This promise is amplified with the next verse.

Mark 4:25

For whoever has, to him more shall be given; and whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him.

The believer who "has" is the one who has done the work of verses 20 through 24. He has welcomed the Word. He has manifested or applied the Word to God, others, and self. He has heard with his ears. He has learned and is thinking according to the standard of divine viewpoint. As a result, God will make available to him more doctrine.

The more you learn, think, and apply, the more "understanding" you will have. This divine addition will be out of proportion to what is learned. You may learn a very simple principle of doctrine or promise of the Word that can save your life at a future time. For the believer who has little, his learning of doctrine is a matter of convenience apart from diligence. And without diligence in thinking there is little understanding. Since the doctrine he has is not a consistent part of his thinking or applying, the little he has is soon lost.

Application: If you have two sons, and you give them both gifts and one disdains the gift, abuses it, neglects it - while the other uses, cherishes, and honors the gift - to which son would you be more likely to give even more?

God our heavenly Father gives to the believer who had the most, and gives more and more. Because that believer will use all the doctrine that is given

So these verses and this parable look at a process that begins with the teaching of the word and ends up with its application to life.

STAGE #1: The Communication or Sowing: God's provision includes the Local Church, Gifted communicators (The Pastor-Teacher), the Filling of the Holy Spirit, and the process of teaching.

STAGE #2: The Perception or Hearing: Getting the doctrine that is taught in a local church into the Mind. Perception requires a common language, paying attention, taking heed to what you hear. This doesn't imply agreement or disagreement, only perception.

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STAGE #3: The Faith Stage: Here is the transfer of doctrine to the human spirit by faith and the work of the Holy Spirit. This is where the Holy Spirit takes truth and makes it an intricate part of the soul. Here is where you apply faith to the process.

STAGE #4: The Application Stage, measuring out doctrine: At this stage you are pursuing opportunities to apply the doctrine you have in your soul.

I Peter 3:15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

At the application stage doctrine is now a part of you, you are thinking divine viewpoint rather than human and when the opportunity arises to apply - you apply, measure out the Word.

At the application stage God the Holy Spirit will also bring up to the memory center the specific doctrines you need to apply to life.

Principle: Through this whole process God causes the doctrine you are learning, thinking on, and applying to grow, to increase, and will always provide you with more.

A scientist recently observed that if a single grain of wheat was allowed to produce and reproduce unhindered in any way for eight years that it would provide enough grain to feed the whole world for one year.

I do not think that we as Christians yet know what God could do with even one seed of doctrine allowed to bear fruit, one beam of light allowed to manifest forth the truth in the life of the believer.

There was a time Napoleon Bonaparte was on a ship crossing the Mediterranean Sea. He was joined on deck one starlit evening by a group of scientists who began discussing the different theories of the origin of the world. Most of them denied that the cosmos was the creative work of an all-powerful God in heaven.

Napoleon listened intently, and at first made no comment. Finally, singling out one scientist who was vehemently denying the existence of God, the little General pointed to the heavens and exclaimed, "And who made those stars? Natural

science? Or did they make themselves? Gentlemen, I don't agree with you at all-not at all!"

I do not believe that Napoleon knew the intricacies of space and relativity nor did he even know the vast greatness of the heavens, but he knew and had faith in the one who set the stars into the night sky.

Last week we saw in the parable of the lamp four issues:

1. We must be sure that what we hear is sound biblical truth. v 24 Take heed what you hear -
2. We must not only hear but learn Bible doctrine. That is to be our measure for life.
3. We must think on what we have learned. This is the thinking that makes doctrine a priority in our lives
4. And then we must apply the Word: This is the meeting out of the measure mentioned in v 24.

When such men as Hus, Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin realized that salvation was by faith alone, they changed the course of Christian history. It was nearly 500 years ago that they took their stand against current religious thinking of their day and at peril of life proclaimed "believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shall be saved."

And it has taken nearly 500 years to answer the next important question:

AFTER SALVATION - WHAT?

What are we who are saved by faith to do when it comes to living the Christ Centered Life?

If we are saved by faith - we must also live by faith!

And it is that living by faith that Jesus addresses in these next two short parables. v 26 And He said, this is the kingdom of God -

The word KINGDOM and the phrase KINGDOM OF GOD is a source of confusion for many believers.

Mark uses this phrase nearly 20 times, Luke nearly 40.

The confusion with this term has occurred with people trying to put more into it than the Holy Spirit intended.

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The terms Kingdom of God, Kingdom of Christ, Kingdom of Heaven all refer to the rule of God and His divine authority.

God's rule, God's sovereign right, God's power and authority are all included in these kingdom terms.

For us the Kingdom begins at salvation, is sought after in the Christian way of life and is our eternal abode face to face with Christ - as God's children we are under God's rule.

So in this Parable Jesus is going to explain how the Christian way of Life, the Christ Centered Life works. And it works by faith.

The three short parables we find in verse 21 through 32:

1. The Parable of the Lamp: How the Christian way of life works: hear, learn, think, apply. The Process.
2. The Parable of the Sower: The Perseverance in the process and the life of faith.
3. The Mustard Seed Parable: The power of the life of faith.

Mark 4:26

And He was saying, The kingdom of God is like a man who casts seed upon the soil;

This is the kingdom of God [by analogy], if a man might cast the seed on the ground.

We have already noted in the parable of the sower that the seed is the Word of God (verse 14).

The sower here, however, is not the Lord, but the believer who takes in Doctrine and plants it in the fertile ground of his own positive soul.

So Jesus is talking about us, the Christian who welcomes the Word, who is learning, thinking, and applying doctrine.

We are to sow the Word into our souls.

The verb here, as are four of the next six verbs, is a subjunctive mood. THAT MEANS a mood of potential or possibility.

The reason the Lord chose that mood in which to give this parable is because we have free will.

He provides the Word, that is His sovereign decision. But what we do with the Word is up to us.

We make decisions every day to plant the Word, to wait for the Word to have its perfect work in us, and to apply the Word.

Not all believers are willing to do this. Not all believers are positive. Some live a fragmented Christian life going from distraction to distraction.

One principle that this parable bring out is Patience. Patience in letting the Word planted in your souls grow in you and bring about the change in you that conforms you to the image of Christ.

James 1:4 But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be mature and complete, wanting nothing.

Mark 4:27

and he goes to bed at night and gets up by day, and the seed sprouts and grows, how, he himself does not know.

The patience of letting the Word grow in you is described inverse 27:

And might sleep and might rise, night and day, and the seed sprouts and lengthens, and how it does this he knows not.

1. The patience and the endurance of routine. The one sowing the seed doesn't plant it, then every day run to the field to see if it sprouts. He is patient. In the same way we may learn a principle of truth, some promise or doctrine. Do we look everyday to see if it sprouts? No!

2. But while we are exercising patience, God the Holy Spirit who sustains all things both in the world and in our souls, is at work.

One of the many ministries of God the Holy Spirit to the child of God is taking the Word and making it work within the believer's soul.

The Spirit transfers the seed of biblical knowledge to the human spirit, there is goes from being just the facts to the full knowledge of the promise or the principle.

3. This work of the Spirit is what Jesus referred to when he spoke of the sower not knowing how the

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seed grows. We know that the Spirit is at work, but exactly how the Spirit does this work we do not know.

In like manner we know when we plant a seed and we add patience we can expect the seed to sprout. lengthen, grow.

As believers we are often told in the Scripture that we are to know with a confident understanding the many things that God has for us. But there are certain things we cannot know, we cannot understand.

1. Job 12:9 tells us that we will never understand the intricate working of the divine plan in nature.

We do not know how the swallows know to return to Capistrano every year on the same day but they do, and we know they do.

2. In Eccl 8:7 we are told we cannot know the future, but we know there is a future.

3. Eccl 9:7 reminds us that we do not know the time of our death but we all know we will die.

4. And in Matthew 24:36 and Mark 13:32 we are told we do not know when the Lord will return but we live with that as a blessed assurance that our Lord will return.

In the same way we do not know how the Spirit takes a spoken word of truth and makes it a reality, an applicable truth in our souls - but he does and we live the Christ-centered life by that fact.

Mark 4:28

The soil produces crops by itself; first the blade, then the head, then the mature grain in the head.

This shows us the that the process of truth working in us is an automatic process of the Spirit.

For of its own accord the earth bears fruit, first grass, then an ear, and then the full grain in the ear.

Of its own accord is AUTOMATEI " • where we get the word, automatic.

The process is automatic because it is a process worked by the Holy Spirit.

Our part is very simple: We hear the Word, We learn the Word, and then we are patience as the Spirit works the Word in us.

The Word grows in us just like the seed grows to an ear of grain.

Mark 4:29

But when the crop permits, he immediately puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come.

When the Word is grown in us, we harvest it in application and use.

But when the fruit permits, immediately the sower sends forth the sickle, because the harvest has come.

Application:

The harvesting of the grain is the applying of what the Holy Spirit has cultivated in your soul.

Based upon this Parable we have three questions and answers:

1. How will sitting in Bible class learning the Word change my life? - I don't know.

2. How will reading my Bible strengthen the inner man? .I don't know.

3. How will learning specific principles and promises of doctrine result in having divine truth to apply? Don't know.

But what I do know is that the Holy Spirit will work this work in you as surely as the grass grows and the grain comes to harvest - Of that we can be sure.

Paul describes this process and this work of God as a renewing of the mind:

Romans 12:1,2, I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

In these parables of Christ we see the part we play and the part God plays in the renewing of our minds that conforms us to the image of Christ.

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1. We attend to the learning of the Word. We go to Bible class we hear the Word, we concentrate and are taught Divine truth.
2. We apply patience in letting the word have its perfect work in our inner man.
3. We also take the offensive, press the advance as we apply the Word to self, to others, and our relationship with God. Through this process God the Holy Spirit is working in us to bring about God's desired results.

Our part then functions by FAITH and God's part functions by GRACE.

We combine faith and grace and the result is a full harvest of truth that we can use to live every day.

So the answer to the question AFTER SALVATION, WHAT? is really the same answer that is given for Salvation.

We hear, We learn, and we live by faith -

And that life of faith and the power of faith is exactly what the next parable describes:

Mark 4:30-32

And He said, How shall we picture the kingdom of God, or by what parable shall we present it?

It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the soil, though it is smaller than all the seeds that are upon the soil, yet when it is sown, it grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants and forms large branches; so that the birds of the air can nest under its shade.

One small seed of truth when combined with faith can grown into a tremendous application of doctrine that spreads out and brings benefit to self and to many.

So then our life is a life of faith, we learn by faith, we live by faith, and we grow by faith.

Now it seems that there is considerable confusion about faith today. I have heard people say that they don't live by faith but by facts, that they wish they had faith, but they do not, some people even try to crank up faith thinking that doing something apart from common sense is a leap or step of faith.

But faith is something that is a part of everyone of us.

We learn facts by which we live, by faith.

2 + 2 = 4 NOW HOW do we know that? By faith in someone who told us that there is a number 2 and a number 4 and that the +sign means add, on and on.

Everyone one of you exercised faith in the chairs in which you are sitting when you sat down. That takes faith.

You see, the value and substance of faith is only as good as what you put your faith in.

Frank Clark stated: Troubles and problems are what give a fellow his chance to discover his strengths, or his weaknesses.

And Reese Howells said: You do not know what faith you have until it is tested.

As Jesus and his disciples set out to cross the Sea of Galilee we will see a problem that is a test of faith.

In the parables that precede this event, the Lord has taught the disciples that the life of the Believer is to be a life of faith.

As salvation is faith in Christ, the Christian Life is faith in the written Jesus, the Word of God.

In this miracle of the stilling of the storm we are going to see:

1. The revelation of the Word of God
2. The attitude in which faith is lacking
3. And an attitude and action of faith

In the previous parable we found just how much faith it takes to live the Christian life - not much. A mere mustard seed of faith joined with the absolute truth of the Word of God grows in the fertile soil of the believer's soul.

Now the real issue in the life of faith is not how much faith you have, but in what are you placing the faith you have?

FAITH needs direction and the direction of faith must be sure, absolute, and sound. And the only place to find that is the Word of God, the Bible.

Nothing else is worthy of the life of faith.

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Faith is not a leap into a nothingness that may or may not be there.

Faith is the substance or reality of things that are established by God's promise and therefore our sure hope and faith is proof of things that are invisible because we see that faith works (Hebrews 11:1).

So here in Mark 4:35 through 41 we have an opportunity to apply faith:

Mark 4:33-35

With many such parables He was speaking the word to them, so far as they were able to hear it;

and He did not speak to them without a parable; but He was explaining everything privately to His own disciples.

On that day, when evening came, He said to them, Let us go over to the other side.

In Matthew 8:18 (the parallel account) we read that the impetus to sail to the other side of the sea of Galilee was the multitude that continued to follow Jesus wanting to see miracles rather than hear the Word.

In Matthew 8:18 the force of the Lord's statement is made stronger as he Gave a commandment that they pass over to the other side of the sea.

Mark 4:36

Leaving the crowd, they took Him along with them in the boat, just as He was; and other boats were with Him.

This event occurs at the end of a long day of public teaching and giving of parables and their interpretation. The mob was there to see miracles but Jesus taught the positive ones parables.

The fact that they left behind a great multitude, the fact that many of the people in other ships attempted to follow them, and the fact that once in the ship he fell asleep shows us three very important things:

1. His mission orientation: Jesus was fulfilling his ministry of proclaiming the truth. When volition was negative or misplaced on the miracles rather

than the teaching of God's truth, he would leave and minister elsewhere.

He was not to be distracted from his mission. Not even by those things that seem close to what his mission might be. How many pastors today would turn their back on the large crowds?

We must be mission oriented: We all have a common mission and that is to grow in Christ, but we also have individual missions which require the application of the doctrine we have learned.

2. Secondly, when we see that the Lord fell asleep we know that he was fatigued after a long day of public ministry.

This action of fatigue and sleep remind us that we are seeing the humanity of Christ.

Deity doesn't get tired, deity doesn't sleep. Here we see the humanity of Christ in this ship and we see Him in His humanity testing doctrine and faith and power that is now available to every believer.

It is often difficult for us to relate to our Lord's earthly ministry because we keep remembering that he is the God-man. But here we behold Jesus in His humanity, tired yet fulfilling his mission to proclaim the truth.

3. Also we see that the Lord needed to get away, alone with his disciples. The people in the other ships would be driven away by the storm. He needed to be in the ship with his disciples because the disciples are now going to be tested regarding the truth they learned that day.

The test will answer the question: Do they have even a mustard seed of faith?

Mark 4:37

And there arose a fierce gale of wind, and the waves were breaking over the boat so much that the boat was already filling up.

Great storm is MEGALEI AVEMOU

We get the word MEGA, big, huge from MEGALEI

It means a storm of hurricane proportions. The Sea of Galilee is below sea level and the sun heats it up by day. The surrounding mountains bring cooler air sweeping downward and then when

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they hit the rarefied air over the Sea of Galilee, intense storms develop. What was a tornado on land, became a hurricane over the water.

So while a storm of this intensity was not unusual, this storm is unique. This storm was sent by God as a test, an opportunity for the disciples to have faith in the Lord, to trust in His Words.

Mark 4:38

Jesus Himself was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke Him and said to Him, Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?

The contrast of faith and fear:

And He was in the stern sleeping on the pillow.

The oarsmen and rudder men used a leather pillow as a cushion in these large fishing boats. The Lord was in the stern [rear] of the ship sound asleep.

And they [the disciple] awakened him and said to him: Teacher, does it not matter to you that we are perishing?

The storm is raging and Jesus is sleeping: Why? Because he has faith in the Father that He is not going to die for the sins of the world by being drowned in the Sea of Galilee.

In His humanity, Jesus had faith in the Father's destiny for Him, faith in His plan.

His sleep was a sleep of faith but he was not the first to sleep in a ship during a storm.

In Jonah 1:4 ff we have the sleep of Apathy

A different sea and a different set of circumstances. Jonah is running away from the Lord's mission for him.

Jonah is so apathetic he is pathetic

He is asleep during a storm but asleep for all the wrong reasons. This is no sleep of faith.

He even wishes himself dead, throw me over the side. But God had other plans for Jonah.

The humanity of Christ, asleep during the storm, is for us a picture of faith-rest.

And for those twelve disciples in the ship with the Lord, it should have been an example of faith -

But instead it became a motive of panic.

Here is where the disciples do something we do all the time, they failed the test.

Matthew included a fuller account in which they wake Jesus and say:

Lord, we are perishing, save us.

Now many of the disciples were experienced sailors, and they had tried everything their profession had taught them to bring the ship under control, but nothing had worked.

So they called upon the Lord, just as many of us who after trying everything call upon the Lord for Salvation. He is the only one who can save.

And even as believers we so often go our own way, trying everything and then realize that only the Lord can keep us from perishing.

Too often when the storms of life hit we fail the tests by not realizing that our Savior is greater than any of the storms we may face.

Also in this test we see a test of the Word:

What did Jesus say to the disciples? Did he say Let's go out into the middle of the sea and drown? Or did he say: Let us pass over to the other side?

They hear him, they even acted upon his instructions, but when the pressure of the storm was on, they forgot what Jesus had told them.

Before we even get into the stilling of the storm we need to make a few observations:

1. When they left the shore they left with a purpose, but the storm caused them to forget their purpose.
2. The danger of the storm was an opportunity for faith, faith in Christ and faith in His Word.
3. Christ's faith in His Father's plan allowed him to sleep, a picture of faith rest and an example to the disciples and to us.
4. Their cry for help is a cry born out of desperation. But so often it is out of desperation that we will call upon the Lord.

We are too often too strong, too self-reliant, to recognize our need for Jesus.

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5. They had failed the test prior to waking Jesus and now they express a lack of understanding about his care and concern for them.

Does it not matter to you that we are perishing?

In the subjectivity of panic they assumed an attitude on the part of the Lord. An attitude of indifference and a lack of care.

Jesus Christ who came from heaven to earth to give himself as a sacrifice for their sins is now accused of not caring for them.

And here is a problem that we have today. We fail to see how Jesus Christ does care for us.

The fact that he was with them in the midst of this storm shows that he did care.

He cared enough to give them the test of the storm.

Mark 4:39

And He got up and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, Hush, be still. And the wind died down and it became perfectly calm.

And he cares enough to still the storm and then teach them a lesson on faith.

And he arose, he rebuked the wind and said to the sea, be quiet, be muzzled. And the wind ceased and there was a great calm.

The one who created the wind, who made the sea now calms these tremendous forces of nature.

Having rebuked the storm he now turn his attention to the disciples:

Mark 4:40

And He said to them, "Why are you afraid? How is it that you have no faith?"

Why are you so fearful, have you not faith?

Now the word for fear in this verse and the word for fear in the next verse are two different words:

Here we have DEILIA which means cowardice and timidity. Never used in a positive way, always negative.

In the next verse we have FOBOS which means a respectful fear.

Then the charge: Have you not faith?

The Lord had taught them, the Lord was with them, the Lord had said let us go over to the other side.

The object of faith was there, but they chose to not put their faith towards the person and words of Christ.

Mark 4:41

They became very much afraid and said to one another, Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?

And they feared a great fear - FOBOS - Respect and awe

And they said to one another, Who then is this man, that the wind and the sea obey him?

With this they are beginning to get the point, this is not a mere man, this is the God-Man, the unique person of the universe, Jesus Christ.

A FEW PRINCIPLES:

1. Storms will enter our lives. But every storm is an opportunity to apply faith and doctrine
2. Even in the midst of the most violent storms, you can rest the rest of faith. Combine faith with promises and your mission
3. We need never fear being tossed to and fro for the Lord is with us.
4. The choice is ours: Faith or fear. When we have fears we need to take them to the Lord and he will calm us as he calmed the sea.
5. One thousand years before this night on the sea of Galilee the writer of Psalm 107 knew where faith must be placed.

God will always provide the solution to the problem prior to the problem. The solution is there, will you learn it, think it, and apply it?

Read Psalm 107:21-32

This anonymous Psalm provided encouragement for the disciples while they were at sea and for any of us in the midst of storms.

Mark Lesson 4 Quiz

Instructions

The following questions relate to your study of this lesson.

To answer a question, type your response in the space provided after the word "Answer:". A question may be True/False, multiple choice, fill in the blank, or short answer type.

The last question requires you to write one or two paragraphs in "essay" form. Use the space provided; it will expand to accommodate your response.

You have choices about sending the quiz back to Grace Notes.

- If you received an email file containing the quiz, you can use the REPLY feature of your e-mail application to open the quiz. Enter your answers in the reply message. Then SEND the message to Grace Notes.
- You can enter your answers on these pages, then send the whole file back to Grace Notes as a file attachment. This is handy, but these lessons will average 100K to 200K in size. As an alternative,
- After you answer the questions here, copy and paste the whole list of questions into a new MS Word document; then, send the new file to Grace Notes as an attachment. The new file will, of course, be much smaller than this main file.
- Finally, you can print the Quiz pages on your printer and send your response back to Grace Notes in the regular mail. If you do this, send the mail to:

Grace Notes

% Warren Doud

1705 Aggie Lane

Austin, Texas 78757 USA

Whichever transmission method you use, when Grace Notes receives your completed Quiz, the next lesson will be sent to you, by the same means you received this one. EXCEPT: when you have sent in the FINAL QUIZ, we will send your certificate to you, by regular mail.

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Questions on Mark Lesson 4

1. In the parable of the Sower, the seed is _____.

Answer:

2. A parable never has to be explained to the one who hears it. [True/False]

Answer:

3. Unsaved people can understand any Bible truth that a Christian can understand. [True/False]

Answer:

4. What does it take to be "on the inside" in Christian affairs, to be "in Christ?"

Answer:

5. The Bible must be taught to [A. Christians in a local church; B. any unbelievers who will listen; C. everyone who is in the plan of God; D. all of A, B, and C.]

Answer:

6. For those who "hear the Word," but who have no "firm root in themselves," when " _____ or _____ " comes, they fall away.

Answer:

7. What are the thorns that "choke the word?"

Answer:

8. What is the remedy for Christians who lack the dynamics of divine control in their lives?

Answer:

9. Of what value is a lampstand that is kept under a bushel?

Answer:

10. What is the light of a Christian's life?

Answer:

11. In Ephesians 4:11-16, what are the steps that lead to Christian maturity, the ability to be productive growing believers who are assets to the church?

Answer:

12. What are the four stages of application of Bible truth to the life:

Answer:

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13. How do Christians who do not receive a sufficient quantity of quality Bible teaching grow in Christ?

14. In the Parable of the Sower (Mark 4:26), who is the sower?

Answer:

15. Jesus Christ was the Son of God, therefore His human body did not require rest or sleep.

[True/False]

Answer:

End of Quiz