

Why Don't More People Follow Jesus ?

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Preacher: Pastor Cal Morrison

[0 : 00] Well done. Okay, we're going to delve into Mark chapter 4.! We ask that you would work in our hearts, that we might be able to receive your word, that you would work in our ears, that we might be able to hear your word, and that you would work on us by your Spirit, that we would know your word, be transformed by it, and have the confidence to pass it on.

We ask that you would be glorified now, in Jesus' name, amen. Amen. In considering this passage, and all that we've led up to in Mark's gospel already, and perhaps a million other reasons, why don't more people follow Jesus?

If you know what you know about Jesus, why don't more people follow him? Now, this question was likely on the minds of his disciples at this very point in our passage, and it was likely on the minds of Mark's first readers, and perhaps many times it's on your mind too.

Why don't more people follow Jesus? If Jesus is who he is, why don't more people believe and follow him? Particularly at this point in the gospel, particularly in Jesus' earthly ministry, when he was right there before your eyes, his words are in their ears, his actions are before their eyes.

The things they saw and heard were extraordinary. John 7 says, the officer said, no one, no one ever spoke like this man.

[2 : 17] John 9, the man born blind who Jesus healed, said, never since the world began has there been anyone that it's heard of open the eyes of a man born blind.

That's just two examples of his speaking and his action. No one said and did what Jesus said and did. Extraordinary, especially for the people that were right there in front of him.

Jesus did things that no one else could ever do, and he spoke in ways that no one has ever heard. There is no one like Jesus.

No one. Never was before, never has been since. Just like the song says, you have no rival. You have no equal. The name of Jesus is powerful.

It is beautiful, and it is above every other name in this age and the age to come. Now, so you would think that more people would believe. You would think that more people would follow such an extraordinary person like Jesus, especially in the days that they saw these things happen and they heard for themselves.

[3 : 26] Why don't more people follow Jesus? I think if you were one of the disciples at the time there, you would be screaming that question. How can you not follow Jesus?

Jesus. So far in Mark, we have seen that Jesus actually drew huge crowds, huge crowds. In chapter 1, after casting out a demon in the synagogue, it says his fame spread everywhere throughout the whole surrounding region of Galilee.

And then it later says that at Peter's house, the whole city was gathered at the door. Have you ever had the whole city gathered at your door? At the end of chapter 1, it says that because of all this, Jesus couldn't move freely in the towns.

And even in the wilderness, people were coming to him from every quarter. Then in chapter 2, people broke through the roof because they couldn't get through the crowd.

Later, Jesus goes out by the sea and all the crowd was coming to him. And then in chapter 3, we read about a great crowd coming from all over the place, from Galilee and Judea, Jerusalem, Edomia, beyond the Jordan and from around Tyre and Sidon.

[4 : 36] Crowds are coming from everywhere to see Jesus. And because there were so many, he had a boat on standby, lest they crush him. So many people going out to see Jesus that he was in danger of being crushed.

And now at the beginning of chapter 4, it says a very large crowd gathered about him. So that he got into a boat and sat in it on the sea and the whole crowd was beside the sea on the land.

And he was on this boat. It was the only way that he could speak to them without getting crushed. A very, very, very, very, very large crowd. So if such a great many people saw countless miracles and heard unparalleled teaching, why on earth did more people not follow Jesus?

And notice all these examples that I've spoken about of the crowds are all before he starts speaking in parables. So before that, he's teaching directly, clearly, and yet there's so few disciples.

But his introduction of teaching in parables is not because he's trying to attempt to get more of the crowd to follow him by trying to be more relevant or relatable.

[5 : 54] It's not like he's suddenly thought to himself, my teaching's not hitting the mark. I need to change it up and tell wee stories. That's not why he does that. He didn't begin using parables to try and win more people.

If anything, it was to show this fact that receptivity should not be assumed. Just because you hear something doesn't mean you receive it.

Wives all over the country say amen. I've been telling my husband for... This parable in particular is called the parable of parables because it explains why there are different levels of receptivity in people.

This parable shows why there aren't more followers of Jesus. And the fact that we have this parable explained in more direct words proves that receptivity shouldn't be assumed.

And the reason why the explanation of the parable proves that receptivity shouldn't be assumed is because anyone since the time of this gospel could read that and still not get it.

[7 : 04] Thousands of years later, we still have people who can read quite easily. They read these words and still don't get it. And it proves Jesus' point in the parable.

So, being direct didn't guarantee that people would receive it. And neither is changing method an attempt to gain more followers with clever, pithy parables.

He isn't actually trying to reach farmers. You've maybe seen that. He says this to reach the plumbers and this to reach the farmers. And I don't know if he ever said anything to reach plasterers or whatever your profession might be.

Piano players. I just think of that comment that you got when you were younger, Alan. I'll not repeat it. He isn't trying to reach farmers with these parables. That's not what he's trying to do.

These stories are relatable, but without explaining the point, which is the parallel, who would understand what the point is? And one of the reasons why I know that Jesus' teaching in parables isn't a teaching aid is because he doesn't actually teach the point.

[8 : 12] I don't know if you noticed that. With the parable, with the great crowd, he doesn't actually teach the point. He just finishes this story by saying, He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

And everyone's like, wait, what? That's it? What do you mean? And so imagine you had just the first part of this. Imagine that's all we had. All the words of Jesus were just this one parable about a farmer sowing seed.

And then you're like, oh, yeah, yeah. He's getting at something here. And then he says, He who has ears to hear, let him hear. And that's it. And he disperses the crowd. And you're like, well, what was that all about? Now, if you've been here for a while, I often try to use illustrations at the start of sermons as a teaching aid.

It might not always hit the mark, but I actually do that to try and help us understand the point. But imagine if I got up and told you a story as my opening illustration, and then I just said, He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

And then I sat down. Some of you would think, finally, a short sermon. We can go home early. But I imagine most of you would think, well, what was that all about?

[9 : 27] What is the point? Tell us the point. If it were not for the explanation of this parable, I don't know if anyone would understand what Jesus meant.

And it's very interesting. I don't know if you've noticed this, but it took me far too long to notice this. But there's no comment about the very large crowd. Such a large crowd.

And it doesn't seem like anyone is asking what the point is. A very large crowd. And Jesus tells that parable and finishes it that way.

And they all just seem happy to go home with a wee story. And Mark, the gospel writer, is showing us in his account that following this parable, vastly more people go away not understanding and not asking.

Content with just a wee nice farming story, they can now say that they've heard the famous Jesus teaching. Vastly more people go away not understanding and not asking.

[10 : 35] Not even wanting to understand. And yet, that is what the whole parable is about. The whole parable is about what just happened. All these people hearing, but not really hearing.

And only when he's alone with the twelve and a small number of others, those around him with the twelve asked about the parables. So Jesus begins to explain the parable, but first he says that they have been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside, everything is in parables.

Note that there is a secret that some are on the inside of, and others are on the outside. Those on the inside, they get the secret. And those on the outside, they only get parables.

And then Jesus said that they get parables. The reason why they get parables is so that they may see but not perceive, that they may hear but not understand, lest they should turn and be forgiven.

Not only does he give those on the inside the secret, but these parables for those on the outside don't always make things clearer for them.

[11 : 47] So for those who are actually interested in the light, the parables invite them further in. But for those who love the darkness, the parables keep them in the dark.

They see but they do not perceive. They hear but they do not understand. And this shift that Jesus makes to teaching in parables has a very specific context, which we can see from the chapter and verse just before this.

And so if you've been around for chapter 3, you'll remember some of the stuff that was there. When Jesus was teaching more directly, the authorities already began to plan to destroy him.

Chapter 3, verse 6. And his family, Jesus is teaching directly, and his family are saying that he's out of his mind. And the religious leaders are saying that he is possessed by the devil.

And this is the context to the shift. And also the last verse of chapter 3, Jesus introduces this idea of those who are on the inside and those who are on the outside.

[12 : 54] He's basically saying you cannot assume that you're on the inside just because you're religious. And you know the scriptures. Like the scribes and Pharisees. Or you can't even assume that you're on the inside just because you're part of Jesus' family.

Just because you're a relative. And so Mark hints that the family are literally on the outside. They're outside calling on Jesus. And Jesus says, well, who is my family?

Who are the kingdom people? And he looks round about them and he says, you. You are my brothers and sisters and mother. Those who do the will of God. And so at this point, what is that?

What is the will of God? What should they do? Well, like at the end of chapter 3, those who sit at Jesus' feet, who actually want to listen. It's like the old Hebrew word, shema.

The Hebrew word shema was a literal command which means hear. Hear, O Israel, hear. Listen. But hear they did not. And so you don't need to understand right away.

[13 : 58] You just need to keep listening. Keep listening. Listen. And so in our passage, there's a very, very large crowd. Yet there are only a few, along with the 12, who actually ask Jesus about the parable.

And they are the ones who are listening. They are the ones who are at Jesus' feet. They are the ones who are doing the will of God. They are the ones who are on the inside. They don't understand everything, but they want to.

They ask. They listen. Just before he explains the parable, he says, do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables?

Because this parable is all about how to listen, and understanding this parable will help them understand all the parables. And then he explains the parable. So, why don't more people follow Jesus?

Well, as the parable goes on to say, there is a problem with people's receptivity. You cannot assume receptivity.

[15 : 01] And so, let's look at the four different categories of ground, the soils, which represent the human heart. Firstly, we have the path. Some people will be like the hard, well-trodden dirt path.

John MacArthur says, the fields weren't fenced, and neither is the human heart. It lies unprotected, open for all the evil stomping of all comers.

People might hear the gospel over and over, but they disregard it. Not willing to hear it. Not even willing to listen. You know people like that. Maybe you were once like that yourself, but you know people like that.

People who just, they don't care. They don't want to hear it. They make it very obvious that they don't want to hear it. They disregard it like a well-trodden dirt path. Satan will not let God's word sit dormant on hard ground.

Just like a hungry bird, he will take away the seed that was sown on the path. Now, I don't know if you've ever watched the birds out in a field before. They're not unaware.

[16 : 09] Like, birds are not stupid. They are not unaware. Like, they're flying about in their own wee world, and suddenly they catch a glimpse of food in the ground. What do birds do? They watch, and they wait, and they're ready.

They look at the farmer. They wait. Is he going to drop any for me? I'm going to go down there. That's why we need things called scarecrows. Birds watch and wait, ready to swoop down and devour anything that's left sitting for any length of time.

And what Jesus is saying is, Satan, you better believe that he is waiting and watching. He's waiting and watching, and he's ready to come down and take any seeds of God's word that do not penetrate into your heart.

He'll take them away. He won't let them sit for a rainy day because he doesn't want the truth to penetrate your heart. Satan does not want you to receive the truth. And so, an initial disregard for the word can end up causing that life-giving opportunity to be taken away.

It is given by God, it is rejected by man, and it is taken away by Satan. See that? And that's what the path is like.

[17 : 26] We know people like that. Maybe you were there once yourself. Then you've got the rocky ground. Some will be like rocky ground. And this ground isn't soil that's kind of full of stones.

You've all experienced that in your garden, perhaps. This isn't just soil that's got loads of wee stones and rocks in it. This is a kind of soil that you would find in Israel where it's got this kind of limestone bedrock not too deep under the surface.

And so it's got a little bit of soil. The plough would get through all the stones, but the plough couldn't reach the bedrock. And so there was some soil that sat on top, but there was not enough room for any seed to take root.

Far enough below the plough, but not far enough for roots to form. And so notice the direction as well. Jesus said, it sprang up. If you're into horticulture, is that what it's called?

Do you know which direction seeds grow? I mean, they do grow up, but what are they supposed to do? They're supposed to grow down to get roots.

[18 : 36] And so Jesus says, immediately it sprang up. It's got nowhere else to go. So it springs up since it had no depth. If the farmer, in this context, if the farmer suddenly noticed part of his field springing up really quickly, it wasn't a good sign.

It was a sign that the soil wasn't good. It meant that there wasn't any time spent on roots growing down. And you need to put roots down, don't you? Some people are like that.

They have a surface level receptivity. It looks promising, but it can be all enthusiasm and no roots. People might hear, people might happily listen when the conditions make it easy to accept God's word.

But then persecution comes on account of the word. Conditions change, and they will fall away. How long this takes might vary. I'm sure most of us have seen this.

Perhaps there have been people that have shocked us. They've been there for years. Seems like they got it and suddenly they're gone. But perhaps, in hindsight, we notice a pattern.

[19 : 47] Perhaps they never really did put roots down. Perhaps there was never really a real depth to their faith. And without depth, there can be no roots. And then we've got the weedy, thorny soil.

And some will be like soil with many weeds. Oh, if you've got a garden, you know what I'm talking about. How problematic are weeds? In such a short space of time, in the past couple of months, there have just been what seems like a million more dandelions crop up in our garden.

And when you're a child, dandelions are brilliant. You get to blow them and all that kind of stuff. And the other day, Levi picked one up and blew it all over his brother.

He was covered in them all. And me and Jen are like, don't let any of those seeds hit the ground. There'll be weeds everywhere, sprouting up all over the place. And they're not the only weeds.

And so, you know what this is like? People might hear and listen for a while, but if their heart is after the cares of the world and the false promises of riches and the desire for things, for other things, then the word will be choked and become fruitless.

[21 : 01] The other day, we had a picnic blanket out on the garden, and Jen began picking at a weed. Don't do it. And so, now we have a big grassless patch in the garden.

But it illustrates not only that weeds are relentless, but weeds choke out what's supposed to be there. When she started pulling that up, the weed had taken over where the grass was supposed to be.

And that's what weeds do. They don't just become relentless and growing, they choke everything else out. And so, even for the person who does want to listen, if their heart is taken up by the cares of the world, then any of God's word that might have taken place will be choked by the cares of this world.

It will be choked by the false promises of riches, and it will be choked by the desire for other things, and it will prove fruitless. And then finally, we've got the good soil. Some people will hear God's word, and they will accept it, and they will bear fruit.

And the fruit that they will bear will be immense, 30-fold, 60-fold, 100-fold. And so, thinking about the other examples in this parable, the good soil must mean that God's word won't sit on the surface.

[22 : 21] They will actually take it in. There's not going to be an opportunity for Satan to take it away. So, it won't sit on the surface, they'll take it in. It must also mean that not only will they take it in, but there will be a depth for them to put roots down.

And not only do they put roots down, but there will be a refreshing lack of weeds. People who receive and accept God's word and bear fruit are those whose hearts are not gone after the cares of this world or the promise of riches or desire for other things.

And if you've spent any time in nature or in a garden, you know that this is not natural. Soil like this is not natural. You need to work at it, you need to cultivate good, pure soil, deep soil, no hard path, no rocks, no weeds, just good, deep, rockless, weedless soil.

Where can you find it? I want to know from a garden. This is not natural. This screams out that it's been cultivated. It's like the difference between the wild and the garden of Eden.

It's been cultivated. And so people must have been cultivated, the people who are the good soil in this parable. They must have been cultivated by someone.

[23 : 42] And who else can cultivate a human heart but God, the great gardener. And so when you see someone responding like good soil, enduring, bearing fruit, it's got all the signs that God has been there first.

Cultivating, working on that heart, preparing the heart to receive the word. Shouldn't that give us confidence when we share the word with someone? When we share the word? If they're going to respond, God has been there first.

He's been preparing their heart for this very word. So just give them it. Don't worry about it. It's so good. If we know that natural gardening is difficult, relentless work, what must spiritual gardening be like?

But God knows how to do it. And that's the thing about these parables and the things that Jesus taught. Jesus wasn't just very clever at coming up with analogies and illustrations.

Actually, he knows that there's a correspondence between the natural realm and the spiritual realm. Because all things were made through him and by him and he designed our world with these truths woven into the fabric of creation.

[24 : 53] Spiritual truths woven into nature. He's teaching us and pointing us towards a truer reality by the very creation that surrounds us.

And so, this parable, it seems like a stark reality. I don't know if you have noticed your maths that only one out of four, three out of four fall away.

Only one out of four will bear fruit. Does that not sound quite stark? Only three out of four, three out of four will not last when they hear the word.

Now, just look around you. Imagine that was in here. Only a quarter of the people in here will last. Now, I'm not saying that's the reality. Maybe it just so happens that that last category are all in the one place.

But generally speaking, this is the variety of the human heart. Three out of four won't last. Receptivity can't be assumed. And enduring faithful, fruitful faith seems rare.

[26 : 01] Even Jesus' own family thought that he was out of his mind. And the most religious people of the day thought that Jesus was possessed by the devil. And so we cannot think like they thought, maybe assume that because they're relatives or assume that because they're in the temple doing religious stuff that they're on the inside.

We cannot think that simply by going to church that that will guarantee that someone will receive the word. Or that someone will have an enduring and fruitful faith. Perhaps three out of four people in here will not last.

And so even church people, even church people can disregard the word. Even church people cannot take it in and just let it sit there only to be taken away when you leave.

Even church people can have a surface level faith with an underlying hardness that doesn't allow real faith to take root. Even church people who seem to have faith can have their hearts going after the cares of the world and end up having that faith choked.

Is that not true? You've probably known people, seen people in church. This is just the human heart. But this parable is not just about the church.

[27 : 18] There is a reality about people in general that we cannot assume that they will be receptive to the word. We cannot assume that even an initial response to the word will last or be fruitful.

But the main point of this parable, the main point of Jesus teaching here, is that even if the Son of God should come down from heaven, walk among men, speak in amazing ways, and do things that they've never seen before, it doesn't mean people will believe and follow.

Even if that were to happen, it doesn't mean people will believe and follow. And again, it seems like a stark reality that only one out of four people who see and hear Jesus will actually follow him.

Seems stark, but here's the amazing thing. The amazing and unlikely thing is that there would be any cultivated soil at all. That anyone would actually receive the word, and more than that, that they would be able to bear an incredible amount of fruit.

An incredible amount of fruit that outdoes all the ones that don't listen. Thirtyfold, sixtyfold, a hundredfold from one person. And to illustrate that, let me point to the fact that Jesus had a very large crowd who then went away and he had twelve disciples who he changed the world with.

[28 : 44] Jesus wasn't interested in big crowds. He poured everything into twelve receptive vessels and a few more and a few less if you count Judas.

Good soil can produce a great amount of fruit. And so the fruitfulness of the seed, the power of the seed in cultivated soil is incredible because the seed is powerful, not the soil, because the seed is powerful.

It just needs the right soil. It needs the right conditions. And God prepares human hearts to be the right conditions to receive his powerful, life-giving, transforming word.

And so the problem's not with the farmer. The problem's not with the seed. The problem's not with the sower. Jesus scattered far and wide, and through these twelve apostles he scattered the seed to the ends of the earth so that we could hear today.

And so it's not a problem with God's word. There is nothing wrong with God's word. Like seed, God's word has huge life-giving power and potential. It just needs the right kind of soil.

[29 : 58] It just needs a human heart that can receive it and accept it and keep it. And so the problem is the condition of the human heart, the soil. It's the condition of the human heart that's the barrier.

barrier. And so like a farmer, you can sow the seed far and wide. And I wonder if you think that sounds reckless. Why would the farmer waste seed on the path and rocky ground and all that kind of thing?

But the idea that we should see is not that the farmer's careless, but actually that every single part of the field is given the seed. Every part of the field is given the seed.

There's not a part of the field that's overlooked. If you think about God's word going out into all the earth, there's not a part of the field that's overlooked. Not a person who doesn't have the opportunity.

God will give everyone the same opportunity to hear and receive his word. Everyone given a gracious opportunity and everyone accountable. And so Jesus did enough to give everyone in his day an opportunity to see and hear the truth of the kingdom of God.

[31 : 07] And that's why in chapter one he said, let's go on to the next towns that I might preach there also, for that's why I came out. And that's why he's teaching in the synagogues. He's teaching in houses.

He's teaching in the fields. He's teaching by the sea. He's scattering the seed of God's word far and wide. And then in chapter three, what does he do?

He chooses twelve men who he appoints to be with him so that they can hear and listen and learn the secret of the kingdom of God so that he can send them out to do what?

To scatter the seed. To where? To the ends of the earth. So that he can send them out to scatter God's word to the ends of the earth. And so this parable is important to these twelve because he tells them what they can expect.

You need to know what to expect when you go out there. Maybe one out of four will respond. You need to know what to expect when only a few people respond. You need to know that there's nothing wrong with God's word.

[32 : 10] You need to know that it's not the problem with God's word. And you need to know that you don't want to tamper with God's word to make it more receptive. It's not going to work. They need to know what to expect so that they don't try and change the seed.

Or so they don't think there's anything wrong with the seed. Or so they don't try and sugarcoat the seed. Or change the method of scattering it and try and look for only the good soil. And pick and choose who they give it to.

Jesus is saying scatter far and wide guys. And leave it up to God. And so this added parable at the end. Look at this little last bit at the end about light and about measurement.

It draws on this idea that they have been given the secret of the kingdom of God. God. This term secret is not that Jesus is trying to whisper into his disciples ears and keep everything cloak and dagger like a secret society.

It's talking about a secret in the Old Testament that was always there but it wasn't clear. It had to be revealed. It had to be made manifest. And Jesus is revealing that secret.

[33 : 21] He's making it clear. It's a secret in the sense that it's always been there but it had to be revealed. And the secret is the nature of the kingdom of God and the person and nature of the king Jesus.

And so when Jesus says they have been given the secret he's saying that God has chosen these people and cultivated their hearts so that they can receive Jesus and see who he is.

He can see who he is. And they don't see everything. Clearly they don't. Do we? Do we see everything about Jesus? No we don't. But if you keep listening.

If you keep hearing. Keep pressing in. He's revealing the secret of who Jesus is and the nature of his kingdom. And from them will come magnificent.

Immense fruit. of which we today are living witnesses. Living examples. And so this little parable at the end about the lamp is about the secret being made known to them.

[34 : 27] When you bring a light in you don't hide it under a bed. And so Jesus is saying I've brought this secret to light for you. Are you going to hide this light? Or are you going to pass it on?

Are you going to let it shine? And so the disciples have not to keep this secret hidden. God's not trying to hide himself. He's trying to make himself known. And so do you see Jesus use this term secret again?

He used it when he said you've been given the secret. And then he says at this little last parable. He says nothing is hidden except to be made manifest. Nor is anything secret except to come to light.

Everything secret will come to light. Everything. All the truth about Jesus. Every single person. Living or dead. Will eventually one day see. The truth about Jesus.

And every sin that anyone has ever done will all come to light. Everything will come to light. And so. The secret from of old about Jesus and his kingdom.

[35 : 30] Has been made known. And if it's been made known to you then he's shown that light in your heart. Says Paul in. Corinthians. Corinthians. The secret is coming to light.

God isn't trying to remain hidden. And even when Jesus uses parables. He's only temporarily closing the door on those who have already closed the door. He's given them enough to respond.

And then he will temporarily use parables until his death and resurrection. And then the disciples will make the secret known far and wide. And you see that in the book of Acts. The disciples don't teach in parables.

They scream the truth from the mountaintops. This morning Jen sent me a wee message. Romans 10. It was a verse for the day.

You know who can believe on this name that they don't know. And how can they know a name that can save them unless they're told about it. And how can they be told unless someone preaches.

[36 : 30] And how can someone preach unless they're sent. And so the disciples did this. They were sent. And they didn't keep quiet.

They didn't keep it hidden. They shone the light. They revealed the secret. They preached the word far and wide. And even this morning for myself. I feel the pressure.

Sometimes the temptation to give a more interesting talk. Sugarcoat it maybe. Or tamper with it. But that's not what I have to do. I'm not to try and identify who should get the word and who shouldn't.

I'm not to try and tamper with the seed and make it more acceptable. It's not about clever sermons or great messages. But simply faithful scattering. Faithfully scattering the truth of God's word.

Any one of us can do that. Any one of us. And so notice these repeated words and themes. They've been given a secret. Verse 11. And this light isn't meant to be hidden.

[37 : 32] Verse 21. And the secret isn't meant to remain a secret. Verse 22. And finally. And I'm ending here. Notice how many times Jesus tells us what he wants us to do.

Verse 3. With an exclamation point. Verse 3 says what? Listen. Verse 9. He who has ears, let him hear. Verse 23.

If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear. Verse 24. Pay attention to what you hear. And that's not to mention all the references in the parable about hearing the word.

Hearing the word. Those who heard the word. Who heard the word. Who heard the word. And so I got another message this morning from someone else. Who was obviously prompted by the Spirit to share.

Acts chapter 16. Gave me an encouragement. Many of you know him. John Brand. Dear friend. He shared a little encouragement just to say it's not in your cleverness.

[38 : 34] He was basically saying there's nothing good about you. Just preach the word. Because remember in Acts chapter 16 when there was a lady called Lydia and God opened her heart.

And actually in Acts chapter 16 the wording of that is God opened her heart to pay attention. He didn't open her heart just to dump the seed right in there. because Paul was there about to preach the word and it says God opened her heart to pay attention to what Paul had to say.

And Paul was the one that was tasked with scattering the word. And so with the measure you use it will be measured to you and still more will be added to you.

Do you understand what that means? With the measure of hearing that you use you will either be given more or not at all. And so how much do you pay attention?

How much do you press in? If you don't pay attention at all do you think more will be given to you? The more you pay attention the more will be given to your understanding.

[39 : 40] And so no wonder people who disregard the word don't understand. Because the measure that you use you're hearing and you're listening and you're paying attention will be measured to you and more will be added.

But the one who disregards it even what he has will be taken away. And so to just lean into Jesus' emphasis here what do we have to do? Don't listen to me.

Listen to Jesus. Just keep listening to Jesus. You're not going to understand it all at once. I don't. But keep listening to Jesus. Pay attention to Jesus.

Jesus. And then pray for God to cultivate the hearts of others. And then sow the seed far and wide. Amen. Amen. Lord we thank you so much for your word.

Your word is powerful. Your word you have preserved through thousands of years and through every attempt to put your word away you have preserved your word so that we might hear your word.

[40 : 43] so that we might know your word. We might receive it. We might have the opportunity for your seed in our hearts to grow. We thank you that your son has revealed these things and your son has made known the nature of his kingdom and that he has graciously invited us all into that kingdom by his word.

and we thank you that these first disciples were faithful to scatter this word faithfully far and wide. And we thank you that we can read your word and pay attention to Jesus today.

Please help us to keep listening to Jesus that we might receive more and understand more and know him more and praise him more and see him more to his glory forever and ever.

Amen. Amen. Amen.