



Sermon, Sunday January 9, 2022

“A life that imitates the Lord”

SCRIPTURE: Mark 4:26-34 ²⁶ He also said, “The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, ²⁷ and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. ²⁸ The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. ²⁹ But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come.” ³⁰ He also said, “With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? ³¹ It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; ³² yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.” ³³ With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it; ³⁴ he did not speak to them except in parables, but he explained everything in private to his disciples.

Introduction: The Bible as the Word of God's Revelation

Today is the first week after Epiphany on the church calendar. Epiphany is a day to commemorate the wise men from eastern lands worshipping the birth of Jesus. The name Epiphany comes from the Greek *epiphaneia*, meaning “appearance” or “manifestation,” and refers to the manifestation of Jesus Christ to the world.

In last week's message, we talked about three ways to walk with the Lord in 2022; about practicing a more intimate prayer time with the Lord in our daily life.; how we should try to fill our prayers with the fulfillment of the Lord's will rather than our wishes and desires; and how we should walk the path of the cross that the Lord walked. The way of the cross that the Lord took is the way to save the world through His devotion and love. Christians are those who have been called by the Lord to go that way.

In order to walk well with the Lord in 2022, we must listen to, read, and put into practice the Lord's words in addition to prayer. I hope that through today's message, we can learn the life of the Lord well and practice it.

Body: The Life and Ministry of Jesus

After being baptized by John the Baptist, Jesus overcomes trials in the wilderness, continues to preach the kingdom of God, cares for the poor, and heals the sick. Because of this, the popularity of Jesus among the people increases. (Mark 1:45 & 2:2)

But as the popularity of Jesus grows, so does the resistance to Him. The Jewish religious leaders, the Pharisees, and the scribes oppose Jesus. (Mark 3:6)

The Four Gospels, including the Gospel of Mark, show that as Jesus' popularity grew, resistance to Jesus grew. But, how did Jesus respond to this situation?

1. Jesus continues what he has been doing.

Even in difficult circumstances, Jesus does not stop doing what he has been doing. Jesus prays to God every day and heals the sick. Also, he teaches the word of God to his disciples and crowds and becomes a friend to sinners. Jesus goes on with what he is doing regardless of the location or the distractions of people.



But, why does Jesus keep working like this? **First, because the works Jesus does is good.** People say that it is not right to work on the Sabbath based on the law. But Jesus says the Sabbath is for doing good works, saving lives, and for man. **Second, because Jesus cannot give up on people who are wandering like sheep but without a shepherd.** Because the Lord came to the world to heal and to save sinners. **Third, because Jesus is the Sovereign of all things in the world.**

The Lord said of Himself, "**So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.**" If Jesus does not do good works, sick people cannot be healed, and sinners cannot be saved. So Jesus continues to do what he has to do, no matter what the circumstances.

2. Jesus calls and trains His disciples.

Second, what Jesus did was to call and train the twelve disciples. **Look at Mark 3:13-15. "Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. He appointed twelve--designating them apostles--that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons."**

Jesus called his 12 disciples, and we call them Apostles. Apostles only refer to those who were chosen by Jesus and those who shared His public life. Jesus called twelve Apostles because they were to represent the twelve tribes of Israel. Jesus trained His disciples and explained to them the kingdom of God separately. The disciples learn the work of Jesus and participate in the work of expanding the kingdom of God.

3. Jesus taught people through parables.

Finally, Jesus taught people about the 'Kingdom of God' through parables. Let's look at today's text **Mark 4:33-34. "With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it; he did not speak to them except in parables, but he explained everything in private to his disciples."**

The parable is itself a message. The parable is an easy-to-understand explanation of the core of the kingdom of God that Jesus wants to convey by using what we are familiar with. In Mark 4, there are three parables about the kingdom of God. All are related to seeds.

1) The parable of the Farmer Scattering Seed: It means that when we listen to the Lord's word and accept it, we will bear the fruit of life.

2) Parable of the Growing Seed: The kingdom of God grows without us even knowing it. It speaks of the providence of the Lord governing and guiding the world. The Lord Himself evangelizes and carries out His missions.

3) The parable of the Mustard Seed: It is said that if a grain is planted in the ground, it will grow bigger than all the grass. This is a word about the promises and expectations of the kingdom of God.

However, when we hear the words of these parables related to seed, we need to be careful.

Let's look at **Mark 4:24-25. "Consider carefully what you hear, He continued. With the measure you use, it will be measured to you--and even more. Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him."**

This verse advises us not to think that we can achieve great fruit only with our own strength and effort from living in the world. The way to obtain abundant fruit is to listen, understand, and put into practice the word of the Lord. Jesus leads us through the Word to the depths of wisdom. But those who listen to the world's shrewd advice will be robbed of everything they have.

So, what can we learn from the life and work of Jesus?



Conclusion: Become a Christian who imitates the life of the Lord

Now let's summarize today's sermon. **First, like Jesus, let's keep going the way the Lord went.** There are difficulties among the tasks we have to bear, and even if there are negative comments, we must carry out well the mission given to us. **Second, let's live with the hope that the kingdom of God will bear fruit in our lives.** All the injustices of the world will one day be exposed. The kingdom of God is growing without us even knowing it. The Lord is building the kingdom of God among us. I hope we have that confidence. **Lastly, let's listen to Jesus' words with humility and thanksgiving and put them into practice.** The fruit of the gospel is produced through devotion and love. The life of the Lord shows it to us. Jesus went that way, and He has called us to go that way. I hope that in 2022, we will imitate and practice the ministry and life of Jesus.

