

# Are you Listening?

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, if we could, this morning with the Lord's help, turn back to the Gospel of Mark. Mark chapter 4. Mark chapter 4, and if we read again, at verse 13.

Mark 4, at verse 13. Jesus said to them, Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables?

How then will you understand all the parables? As a parent, or as a grandparent, what is the most common question that you will ask your children, or your grandchildren?

What one question do you find yourself repeating, repeatedly asking again and again and again? And you're asking it in order that your children or your grandchildren will pay attention to what you're saying.

Well, I don't know about you, but I always find myself asking my children again and again the same question. Are you listening? Are you listening? But it seems to me that most of the time, if not all of the time, the question falls on deaf ears.

[ 1 : 31 ] As Finlay and David do the exact opposite of what they're being told to do. And all day, every day, they're being asked to do one thing, but they seem to be doing another.

And when orders are given, it's followed by the question, are you listening? And they say yes, or they nod or smile, but they aren't listening.

And I don't think it would matter how much you raised your voice at them, or how often you ask them that same question. The response which is often given is that cheeky little smile, and then they toddle off and ignore exactly what you've just said.

Nevertheless, as parents or as grandparents, we persist in asking those little people in our lives the question, are you listening?

Are you listening? And that's the question which Jesus is asking the multitudes which came to him. Are you listening?

[ 2 : 34 ] Are you listening? Because, as we saw last week, there were multitudes of people who heard about Jesus, and who came to see Jesus. And as they came in all their droves, Mark tells us that Jesus began to address the crowds.

And this is the first time that Jesus addressed the crowds. Because in the previous chapters, which we've looked at, when the multitudes came to him, he healed their diseases and cast out demons. But now, in chapter 4, Jesus wants to take this opportunity to tell the multitudes about the message of the kingdom of God. And the setting for the occasion in which Jesus addresses the multitudes was on the shore of the Sea of Galilee.

Because there was this large number of people who had gathered there, and Jesus then, well, because the number was coming closer and closer, he used a boat as this sort of floating pulpit in order to address his congregation.

And when Jesus spoke, he spoke to the crowds using parables. And Mark tells us that Jesus didn't speak to the crowds without using a parable.

[ 3 : 47 ] And as we said last week, we're not to be tempted into thinking that the parables of Jesus were just sermon illustrations or little stories in order to entertain his crowd, in order to keep their attention.

Instead, the purpose of the parables was to get the listener deeply involved and see that they are being portrayed in the parables. So that the parable will compel them to make a personal decision about the kingdom of God.

And Jesus, he often used pictures and illustrations from things which were very familiar to those around him. And there were things which his listeners were seeing day by day that they could easily relate to.

But even though the crowds could relate to the parables quite easily, the parables were actually being used to both conceal the truth and to reveal it.

They were being used to conceal the truth and to reveal it. Which is why the disciples asked Jesus, Why do you speak to them in parables?

[ 4 : 57 ] And Jesus explains to them, To you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of heaven. But to those who are still outside the kingdom, Everything comes in parables.

And so the purpose of the parables of Jesus Was that they were to be the test of all his hearers. And the test was to see if the individuals of the congregation before Jesus Were careful listeners or careless listeners.

Were they careful listeners or careless listeners? Because a careless listener would listen to the parable. But they'd only hear the story.

It's only a story to them. They wouldn't understand what it's actually about. And the result is that their life would still be under the judgment of God. And it's not that they weren't told.

It's that they refused to listen. But a careful listener, A careful listener, Would listen intently to God's truth. In which they would ponder the parable.

[ 6 : 01 ] And think about what the parable is saying. And see their life being mirrored in the parable. And even though they might confess their lack of understanding of the parable.

In doing so, They would submit their lives to the Lord. And seek to understand the spiritual lessons Which Jesus is trying to teach. And so the purpose of the parables of Jesus Is that they were to be the test.

The test of all his hearers. Were they careless with their hearing? Or were they careful with their hearing? And hearing is what's key to this chapter.

Because hearing is important. In fact, the word to hear is used 13 times in this chapter alone. It's repeated again and again.

And near the end of the chapter, Mark points out to us that Jesus used all these parables In order to preach the word to his congregation. As they were able to hear it.

[ 7 : 05 ] As they were able to hear it. And so as Jesus sets before us these three parables this morning. A parable about a lamp.

A parable about a harvest. And a parable about mustard seed. In these three parables, Jesus is speaking about hearing, growing and spreading.

Hearing, growing and spreading. But all the time Jesus wants to ask us, Are you listening? Are you listening?

So we look firstly at hearing. Hearing. He says in verse 21, When he speaks about the first parable. He said to them, Is a lamp brought to be put under a basket or under a bed?

And not on a lamp stand? For there is nothing hidden except to be made manifest. Nor is anything secret except to come to light. If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.

[ 8 : 05 ] And he said to them, Pay attention to what you hear. With the measure you use it, It will be measured to you. And still more will be added to you. For to the one who has, more will be given.

And from the one who has not, Even what he has will be taken away. And so this first parable of Jesus is a parable about a lamp.

And it seeks to emphasize the importance of hearing. But what's interesting is that this parable is employed in order to enforce what Jesus had said in the parable of the sower.

Because you'll remember last week when we considered the first parable which Jesus told. He told the parable of the sower. And in that parable Jesus was asking us the question, How's your heart? How's your heart? What condition is your heart in? What condition is your heart in in relation to God's word? And Jesus asked us, Is it a hardened heart which ignores the word?

[ 9 : 05 ] Is it a shallow heart which undermines the word? Is it a strangled heart which overcrowds the word? Is it an open heart which accepts the word?

A hardened heart, a shallow heart, a strangled heart, or an open heart? And Jesus was asking us the question, How's your heart? But the reason why Jesus was asking how the condition of our heart is, Is because the condition of our heart will determine our response to the message of the good news of Jesus Christ.

Our response to the gospel all depends upon the condition of our heart. But what was unique to the parable of the sower, Is that Jesus gave to us a clear explanation of the parable.

But prior to his explanation which we read in verse 13, Jesus asks, Do you not understand the parable? How then will you understand all the parables?

How then will you understand all the parables? And the reason Jesus asked that question, Is because the only way to understand all the parables, Is to hear them.

[10:21] It's to hear them. The only way to understand what Jesus is talking about. The only way to understand the message of all the parables, Is to listen to what he's saying.

And so Jesus is saying, We need to be a careful listener. We need to hear with understanding. And as we said, Jesus used parables in order to preach the word to his congregation, As they were able to hear it.

And that's what these parables are all about. They are all about hearing. They're all about hearing. But what we must understand is that, To the ear of a Jew, Which was the majority of people in front of Jesus, To the ear of a Jew, They knew what it meant when they heard the call to hear.

Because the confession of faith of a Jew, Was the Shema. And the Shema was a verse in Deuteronomy 6, Which a Jew would repeat both morning and evening.

Hear, O Israel, The Lord our God, The Lord is one. Hear, O Israel, The Lord our God, The Lord is one. And so, a Jew knew exactly what it meant, When they heard the call to hear.

[11:42] Because the call to hear, Was not only a call to listen, To what is being said. But the call to hear, Was to hear with understanding.

To hear with understanding, And respond accordingly. Because the implication of hearing, Is the response, Or the responsibility of obedience.

Obedience is required, On the basis of what is heard. And is that not how Jesus began, His whole discourse in these parables. He began telling the parable of the sower, And he began with the call, Listen.

Listen. Listen, he says. Listen. Behold, a sower went out to sow. And what Jesus was saying is, Hear.

Hear and respond. Hear and respond. And when Jesus concluded the parable of the sower, He does so with another call to hear.

[12:46] Because he says, He who has ears to hear, Let him hear. He who has ears to hear, Let him hear. And what you'll have noticed, Is that Jesus, Repeats that call to hear, In the parable about the lamp.

Because he says in verse 23, If anyone has ears to hear, Let him hear. And the reason Jesus calls us, To hear in the parable about the lamp, Is because all shall be revealed.

All is going to be revealed. And Jesus initiates this parable, About the lamp, By asking a question. Is a lamp, Is it brought to be put under a basket, Or under a bed? And then Jesus answers his own question, By saying, Is it not to be set on a lampstand?

And by using the simple, Everyday household item of a lamp, Jesus asks, What is the purpose of a lamp? What's it for?

[13:56] And Jesus is asking his congregation, What do you do in your own home? What do you do when you buy a lamp? Do you just light the lamp, And then hide it under a basket, Or under your bed?

What do you do with it? Well of course says Jesus, You put it on a lampstand. You put the lamp on a lampstand, In the middle of your house, In order that the darkness, Can be dispelled by the light. But whatever you do, You don't conceal the light, And hide it away, Because a hidden and concealed lamp, Is useless. It's useless.

No, no, you reveal it, Says Jesus. You make sure that everyone in your home, Benefits from this lamp. You make sure that the darkness, Is turned to light, And dispelled for everyone to see.

You make sure that everyone experiences, The vision and revelation, Of this light. But what is the light? What is the lamp he's talking about? What's going to be revealed?

[15:01] Because Jesus says, There's nothing hidden, Which shall not be revealed. Nor has anything been kept secret, But that it should come to light. What's Jesus talking about?

He's talking about himself. He's talking about himself. Because he is the true light, Which came into the world.

He's the light which shined in the darkness. He's the light of the world, Who calls people to follow him. And those who follow him, He says, Shall not walk in darkness, But shall have the light of life.

And what Jesus is saying is that, He is the revelation of God. He is God revealed to us, In the person of Jesus Christ. He is the gospel of Jesus Christ, The son of God.

He is the word made flesh, To dwell among us. And Mark tells us that, Jesus used parables, In order to preach the word, As they were able to hear it.

[16:05] Jesus preached the word, He preached about himself, And the arrival of the kingdom of God. And all the time, Jesus is asking, Are you listening?

Are you listening? Are you listening to this? If anyone has ears to hear, Let him hear. Because, You need to take heed, To what you hear.

You need to be a careful listener. You need to respond, To all that you've heard. You need to pay attention. You need to pay attention. He's saying, Take heed, With what you hear.

Take heed, With what you hear. And for many of us, When it comes to the gospel, We have heard a lot.

We have heard, So much. We have heard so much. And in this parable, Jesus is reminding us, That when the light shines, And when all is finally revealed, When we, When everything is finally revealed, On the last day, We will have to give an account, Of all that we have heard.

[17:22] Because Jesus says, He says, We will be measured. We will be measured. Literally, That means, We will be judged, According to a standard. And that standard, This book.

That's the standard. The standard is this book. And we'll be judged, According to all that has been, Preached from this book. We'll be judged, According to all, That we've read, From this book.

We'll be judged, According to all, That has been taught, From this book. We'll be judged, According to all, That we have heard, From this book. And some of you in here, Have heard an awful lot.

You have heard, An awful lot. Because when you begin, To think about it, How much you've heard, How much you've heard, Does it not frighten you?

The amount that you've heard. Think about the years, That you have spent, Coming to church.

Think about the hours, That you have spent, In this building, Or in other buildings, Under the preaching, Of God's word.

[18:29] Think about the years, That you've been here, Under sermons, That you've heard. Think about, How many times, Your parents may have spoken to you, About the gospel. Think about, The times you went to Sunday school, All those years ago.

Think about, All the Christians, You may have worked with, Throughout your years. Think about, Your neighbours, Who have maybe witnessed to you, About the life, And testimony of saving grace. My friend, Think about all that you've heard. And Jesus is asking us, What have you done, With it? What have you done with it?

What have you done, With this Jesus? This light, Which has been, Heralded and presented, To you, All these years. What have you done, With this Jesus? What have you done with him?

What have you done, With all your opportunities? What have you done, With all that you've heard, And witnessed? What have you done, With this great message, Of salvation? What have you done, With the gospel?

[19:28] What have you done, With a message, About life and death? What have you done, With the promise, Of eternal life, Through, In heaven, Through Jesus Christ? What have you done, With the promise, Of eternal death, In hell, Because you reject, Jesus Christ?

What have you done, With it? What have you done, With it? For what frightens me, Is that you've done, Nothing. All these years, You've done nothing, Done nothing with it.

But the solemn, Solemn warning, Of this book, Is that to whom, Much is given, Much will be required, Of them.

Much will be required, Of them. That's why Jesus, Says in verse 25, Whoever has, To more will be given, Whoever does not have, Even what he has, Will be taken from him.

And what Jesus, Is talking about, Is the need for understanding, By hearing God's word. Because whoever has, Understanding, More will be given. But whoever does not, Have understanding, Even what little, Understanding they have, Will be taken from them.

[20:52] And what Jesus, Is saying is that, When all is revealed, When everyone's measured, According to this book, And if we are found, Wanting because, We weren't listening, It will make, It will make hell, All the worse for us, To have been told, The way of life, And yet, Turned a deaf ear, To it.

To have been told, How to be saved, And yet, Ignored, What you were being told. And that's why, Jesus is asking us today, Are you listening?

Are you listening? Are you listening? Hear it. Hear it. But in the second parable, We see it growing. Growing. Look at verse 26. He said, The kingdom of God, Is as if a man, Should scatter seed, On the ground.

He sleeps and rises, Night and day, And the seed, Sprouts and grows. He knows not how. The earth produces by itself, First the blade, Then the ear, Then the full grain in the ear.

[ 22 : 14 ] But when the grain is ripe, At once he puts in the sickle, Because the harvest has come. What we see is that, Jesus introduces this parable, With a comparison, Because he compares, The kingdom of God, To a man, Who scattered seed, On the ground.

And this is the first time, In Mark's gospel, That Jesus mentions, The kingdom of God, In one of his parables. But what's interesting, Is that, This parable, Is not, Is only recorded, In Mark's gospel. The parable of the sower, Is recorded in all four, Of the gospels. Matthew, Mark, Luke, And John. But this parable, It's a unique parable, And it's unique, Not only in the sense, That it's unique to Mark, But it's unique, Because it presents to us, The work of God's grace, In the heart. It presents the work, Of God's grace, In the heart. Because what Jesus, Is talking about here, In this parable, Is the experience, Of entering into the kingdom, By faith.

He's describing, The careful listener, Who hears, And understands God's word, And responds accordingly. But Jesus says, That there is a process, And the process, For entering into the kingdom of God, Begins, With a sower.

[ 23 : 37 ] There must be a sower, There must be a farmer, Who is willing, To scatter seed, Upon the ground. And as we said, In the parable of the sower, As the sower, Would walk out, Into the middle of his field, At the beginning of, His working day, He would walk out, And he would put his hand, Into his bucket, And as he carries this seed, And he would, Begin to scatter the seed, Scattering it, As best as he can.

And this seed, It's precious to the sower, But he's scattering it, As best as he can. And like the parable of the sower, The seed is the word of God.

The seed is the word of God. And what Jesus is emphasizing to us, Is that, He is the only way, For a heart to be transformed.

The only way for someone, To enter into the kingdom of God, Is by this seed. The word of God, Is the only way, Because it's the word of God, Which is the power of God, Unto salvation, To them that believe.

And so a heart, Will never be transformed. A heart will never, Repent and believe, In the gospel. A heart will never, Submit and obey, The call to follow Jesus Christ, Unless they hear.

[ 24 : 55 ] Unless they hear, Unless they hear, The word of God. And you know, I love what Paul says, In Romans chapter 10.

Because it gives me, The greatest comfort, As I step into this pulpit, Week by week. Because Paul reminds us, In Romans 10, He says, Whosoever shall call upon, The name of the Lord, Shall be saved.

But then Paul asks, 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? And how shall they preach, Except they be sent? And Paul goes on to say, Faith comes by hearing, And hearing by the word of God.

And what Jesus is stressing to us, In this parable, Is the importance of the seed, And the importance, Of the preaching, Of God's word.

[ 26 : 00 ] And let's never be tempted, To belittle the preaching, Of God's word. Let's never be tempted, To dilute and substitute, The preaching of God's word.

Let's never be tempted, To change what God has ordained, In order for people, To be saved. Let's never change it, In order to get them through the door, Because my friend, There is nothing wrong with the seed.

There's nothing wrong with this seed, It doesn't need to change. There's nothing wrong with the method, Which is being used, Which is being used in the sowing of the seed. The method doesn't need to change.

Because it's under the preaching, Of the word of God, That we come face to face, With the God of that word. You want to be saved, My friend.

You want to be born again. Be found under the preaching, Of God's word. You want to be converted. Keep coming to church. You want to know more about God, And about Jesus, And about your need for salvation, And how much of a sinner you are, And how much of a saviour you need.

[ 27 : 06 ] You read your Bible. You read your Bible. And you know, Some people, They come to church to read the Bible. It's the only time in the week, That they'll ever read the Bible.

And yet, More often than not, When they come to church, The Bible reads them. And it tells them, Their need of a saviour. But my friend, I tell you, When you read your Bible, It will tell you your need.

It will tell you everything you need to know, About salvation, And about Jesus Christ, And how to be saved. And it will tell you your need to listen. It will tell you your need to listen.

So I'm asking you, Are you listening? Are you listening? And so Jesus, He says that once the seed is sown, And the sower has finished his work, And sowing in his field, He would look back at his field, After a hard day's work, And he would see that it's no different, To when he started.

Though results, They weren't instant. Waiting is part of the process. But in the parable of the sower, The growth of the seed, Depended upon the type of soil, That the seed landed on.

[ 28 : 25 ] Whether the seed landed, By the wayside, Or on the stony ground, Or among the thorns, Or on the good soil. But in this parable, Jesus says that the sower, He didn't know how the seed grew.

Because all the sower did was, Scatter the seed on the ground, And wait. He slept by night, He rose by day, In the hope that the seed would sprout, But he didn't know how.

And of course, We could go into the biology of it, And see how seed germinates, And the process of photosynthesis, And all these things. But what Jesus is pointing out to us, Is the mystery of growth. How does, Why and how does seed grow? But what Jesus is really getting at, Is the mystery of salvation. How does the seed of God's word grow?

Why does the seed of God's word, Affect one person, And not another? Even though they have heard, The same message. Why do some people, Accept the gospel, And others reject it?

[ 29 : 29 ] Why do some people, Become Christians, And not others? And, What Jesus is telling us, Is that there is a mystery to salvation. The work of grace, In the hearts, And lives, Of people, Is mysterious, And unsearchable.

Because it's not dependent, Upon the works of men. It's solely depended, Upon the work of God's spirit. The work of grace, In the heart, Doesn't depend upon, How good or bad the sower is.

Doesn't depend upon, The ability, The power, The eloquence, The delivery, Or even the diligence, Of the preacher. Because the work of salvation, Is all of the Lord. It's all of the Lord.

It's not by might, Not by power, Said the prophet. But by my spirit. And the great reminder, Of our dependence, Upon the Lord, Is what the apostle said.

I have planted. Apollos watered. God gave the increase. So then, Neither is he, Plants anything. Neither he, That water.

[ 30 : 40 ] But God, Who gives the increase. God alone, Is the one, Who gives life. And you know, That's the hardest thing, About preaching.

I don't know, What goes on in your heart. I stand before you, Week by week. I don't know, What you're thinking. I don't know, If you understand, What I'm saying to you.

I don't know, If you even care about, What I'm saying to you. But I always come back, And remind myself, That my principal work, Is to sow the seed.

Well I have to sow it, In faith. And as a church, And as a church, And as a congregation, We have to water it, And the rest, We leave to God.

Is that not what Paul said, To his young preacher, Timothy? Preach the word, In season, And out of season, Reprove, Rebuke, Exhort, With all patience, And teaching.

[ 31 : 43 ] Sowing needs to be done, With patience. Because results, Aren't instant. Waiting is part, Of the process, And spiritual growth, Is a gradual process, And that's what, What Jesus is highlighting, For us here.

He says that, When the earth, Brings forth fruit, There is, First the blade, Then the ear, And after that, The full grain, Is in the ear.

But when the fruit, Is brought forth, He says, Immediately, He puts in the sickle, He cuts it down, Because the harvest, Has come. And what Jesus, Is telling us, Is that, There is no harvest, Until the

seed is ripe.

The sown seed, It isn't ready, To be harvested, As soon as, There are signs of life. When the blade comes, It's not ready. Because the seed, Needs to be left, To grow.

And, Keep growing. And what's true, About this parable, Is that the farmer, Never thinks, Of harvesting, The wheat, When it's green.

[ 32 : 51 ] He always waits, Until the sun, And the rain, And the heat, And the cold, Have done their appointed work, And then the golden, Ears of corn, Are hanging down.

And when they're hanging down, Not until then, The farmer puts in the sickle, Cuts down the crop, Gathers it, Into his barn. And you know, That's what it's like, For the child of God.

As they grow, And develop, With the grace of God, In their heart. There are times of sun, Times of rain, Times of heat, Times of cold.

Times, Throughout their experience, And throughout their growth, But the Lord never removes, His people from this world, Until they have, Have ripened, And they're, They're ready to be removed.

The Lord doesn't take away, His people, Until their, Their work on this earth, Is done. They never die, At the wrong time. However sudden, Or mysterious, Their death may seem.

[ 33 : 54 ] Because as the psalmist said, His ways, Are perfect. His growth, Is perfect. His timing, Is perfect. And the greatest comfort, And the most assuring, Truth, Which we can, Meditate upon, Is that there is no accident, No chance event, No mistake, When it comes to the death, Of every believer.

Because our great, Husband man, He always waits, Until the appointed time. And when the golden, Ears of corn, Are hanging down, It's then that he'll, Gather the fruit.

The fruit of his labor. He'll gather it, Into his barn. My friend, It's a beautiful picture, Of the life of grace. In the heart, Of a careful listener.

I just hope, That that's your experience. And that you are, A careful listener. Because Jesus, Is asking us, Are you listening?

Are you listening? So we've looked at hearing, About the parable of the lamp, Considered growing, With the parable, Of the man who scattered seed. But lastly and briefly, Jesus told a parable, About a mustard seed, Which, Is described, With this spreading effect.

[ 35 : 18 ] The spreading effect, Which the gospel has. Because he says, In verse 30, With what can we compare, The kingdom of God, Or what parable, Shall we use for it?

It's like a grain, Of mustard seed, Which when it is sown, On the ground, Is the smallest, Of all the seeds, On the earth. Yet when it is sown, It grows up, And becomes larger, Than all the garden plants, And puts out large branches, So that the birds of the air, Can make nests, In its shade.

Jesus initiates, This last parable, In this chapter. By the way, I have a question. To what shall we like, In the kingdom of God? Or what, What parable, Shall we picture it with?

What's the best way, To describe the kingdom of God? And Jesus says, It's like a mustard seed. Because a mustard seed, Says Jesus, It's smaller than all the seeds, On the earth.

But the results, Of sowing the mustard seed, The growth, Is remarkable. For this very small, Mustard seed, It grows into this, Sizeable plant.

[ 36 : 24 ] But not any small plant, Or a shrub. Jesus says that, In its mature state, The mustard seed, Grows into the size of, A tree. In fact, In maturity, A mustard seed tree, Can grow, To about 8, Or 12 feet.

And the purpose, Of this parable of Jesus, Is to remind, His congregation, That even though, The kingdom of God, May look so small, And so weak, And so insignificant, It will spread, And it will grow, And it will be strong, Something far beyond, Our asking, Or our thinking.

And what Jesus is saying, Is that, Despite the fact, It may have a small beginning, The kingdom of God, Will advance. And that's exactly, What has happened. Where it all began, With the king, And head of his church, Coming into the world, Being born as this, Feeble infant, Born in a manger, Born without riches, Without an army, Without power, Or without status.

Jesus came to his own, But yet he remained unknown. But who were the men, He called and appointed, To be his apostles? Who were these, Twelve men, That we looked at, A few weeks ago?

Who would he send out, With the message, That the kingdom of God, Has finally arrived? This Jesus, He sent out, The most unlikely group of men, Who could ever, Cause a stir.

[ 37 : 57 ] Because among this group, Were unlearned fishermen, Unwanted tax collectors, And an unhelpful creator. But what was the message, That these men, Were to go out with?

What was the message, That Jesus gave them? What was the gospel, That they were to preach? They preached, A crucified Christ. They preached, That their leader, Their king, And head was caught, And tortured, And crucified, Crucified like, A common criminal.

How is that going to be, A message of salvation? And, And yet that was their commission. How was that going to save anyone? Yet that's what they were sent out with. They were to go, Into the world, Preaching, A crucified, But risen savior.

And you might have thought, Who's going to believe their report? Who's going to believe, What they've said? Who's going to listen to them?

Because to the Jews, Their message was, Nothing but a stumbling block. And to the Greeks, It was foolishness. Utter foolishness. And yet it was through, The foolishness, Of preaching, A crucified, And risen Christ, That the kingdom of God, Grew, And grew, And grew.

[ 39 : 14 ] To the point that it was said, About these men, These unlearned, Unwanted men. They've turned the world upside down. They've turned it upside down.

That, Tiny seed, It's growing. And it'll keep on growing. And it'll keep spreading. And it'll continue to spread, To places that have never even heard, The name of Jesus.

Until at last, Said the hymn writer, When the trumpet of the Lord shall sound, And time shall be no more, And morning breaks, Eternal, Bright and fair, When the saved of the earth, They gather, Over on the other shore, And the role is called up yonder.

There will be those, From every nation, Every tongue, Every tribe, As many as the sand, Upon the seashore, As many as the stars in the sky, They will all gather, And worship, At his throne.

And they will sing, Worthy, Worthy, Is the lamb, Who was slain. You see my friend, The cause of Christ, Is much bigger than us.

[ 40 : 40 ] And God's plan and purpose, For this world, It's far beyond anything, We can understand. And it's unstoppable. Unstoppable.

Because it's Jesus, Who is building his great kingdom. But are you part of that kingdom? Have you entered into the kingdom?

Because being close to the kingdom, Is not close enough. You need to enter, Into the kingdom. Jesus used parables, In order to preach the word, To his congregation.

As those who were able, To hear it. You are his congregation today. But are you listening? Are you listening?

Are you listening? May the Lord bless these thoughts to us. Let us pray. O Lord, Our gracious God, Give to us a hearing ear, And an understanding heart, That thy word would truly penetrate, That it may go, Into the deep roots, And the deep soil of our heart, That O Lord, That it may bring forth much fruit, For thine own glory, We thank and praise thee, That thou art one who remind us, That thy kingdom, That thy kingdom, Will have none end at all, That it will go, From strength to strength, That no man, Shall stand, Against thee, O Lord, We bless and praise thee, That we have such a privilege, In hearing the word, And help us to do so, And respond, To what Jesus is saying to us, Go before us then, We pray, Cleanse us and keep us, For Jesus' sake, Amen.

[ 42 : 39 ] We shall conclude, By singing in Psalm 67, Psalm 67, In the Sing Psalms version, On page 84, The prayer for blessing, God be merciful and bless us, Shine upon us with your face, That the earth may know your actions, And all lands your saving grace, O God, May the peoples praise you, May all peoples sing your praise, For you judge the nations justly, Ruling over every race, Psalm 67, The whole psalm, God be merciful and blessed, God be merciful and blessed, Shine upon us, With your grace,

That the earth may know The earth may know your actions, and all lands your saving grace.

O God, may the peoples praise you, may all peoples sing your praise.

For you judge the nations justly, ruling over every race.

May they sing with joy and gladness, may they all rejoice as one.

[ 44 : 40 ] O God, may the peoples praise you, as they all unite in song.

Then the land will yield its harvest. God will pour his gifts abroad.

God, our God, will surely bless us. All the earth will fear our God.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all, now and forevermore. Amen.