

Dear Friend,

All of us have heard so many sermons from Mark chapter four about “the sower sows the Word” that we can almost repeat that message from memory. Like all of the Word of God, the depth of understanding increases as we mature in Christ. There is a “milk” level and a “meat” level in all of the Word of God.

When Sue and I were baby Christians, we understood Mark chapter four at the milk level (milk is good) and we would sow the written Word into our heart for healing, for prosperity, for our marriage, for our children, and so forth. That is absolutely valid and always will be. God cannot lie and if you trust His Word, He will confirm the Word with signs following.

At the next level of understanding Mark chapter four, Pastor Dave Roberson taught us the “Born Again Trail” series and we knew that God was the Sower, that He had sown the WORD (Jesus) into our hearts when we believed the gospel, and that it was now the very life of Christ coming to maturity within us. This is the message that causes us to understand we are truly free from sin, and that we can live a righteous life through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The current level of understanding can best be described the way the apostle Paul wrote it when he said, “**For to me, to live is Christ.**” [Php 1:21] Paul had come to the level of maturity where his life was completely surrendered to the living Christ. “I go where You say for me to go. I do what You say for me to do.” This way of living is perfectly illustrated at the end of Mark chapter four when Jesus told the disciples,

Mar 4:35 And the same day, when the even was come, he saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side.

Notice it was THE SAME DAY that Jesus had taught them the sower sows the Word. He Himself sowed the word of instruction to them. He gave them the assignment, “Let us pass over unto the other side.” The Sower had sown the Word of instruction to them.

Notice also that Satan came immediately to steal the Word, just as Jesus had taught them earlier that day. A great storm arose that was so severe that even these experienced fishermen thought they were going to die. They asked Jesus, “Don’t you care that we perish?” Jesus calmed the storm and rebuked them for having no faith. It’s almost like He was saying, “Were you not listening earlier today when I told you Satan comes immediately to steal the Word from you? Of course the enemy always tried to make it look impossible for you to do what I said, but you have authority over him in My name.”

It was years before I connected up the next part of the story with the message of Mark chapter four. WHY did Jesus instruct them to go to the other side? Here is what they found when they go there:

Mar 5:1-5 And they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes. (2) And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, (3) Who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains: (4) Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him. (5) And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones.

We all know the rest of the story, how Jesus cast out the legion of devils and the man was completely set free. But I have tried to meditate this from the disciple's viewpoint when they first saw him; this dirty, retched, naked man, who no doubt stunk to high heaven, who moaned like an animal, who lived in the graveyard, and was a hopeless case by all who knew him.

I have wondered if they thought, "We risked our lives to obey the Lord in order to come here. We nearly died during that storm ... for this demon possessed man?" Yet I can hear Jesus thinking, "I WILL DIE FOR THIS MAN."

Why had they gone to the other side? Because here was the lost sheep, who everybody thought was worthless, but who was precious to our Lord more than His own life. He may seem a hopeless case to everybody else, but he was of immense value to our Lord. Jesus and His disciples had left the safety of the ninety nine to go seek and to save this one who was lost.

Oh my friend, the love of God has been wrecking me in a wonderful way lately. Little by little, the Holy Spirit has been allowing me to taste just tiny morsels of the love of God and I can barely take it in. How like that madman of Gadara I was when the Good Shepherd came looking for me in order to save me and set me free.

1Jn 4:16 And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.

Let us pursue after the love of God with all of our heart. One thing I have learned, this kind of love does not exist on planet earth apart from God. This kind of love can only be obtained from God Himself. I have found that the more time I spend in private worship, the more I get to taste another morsel of the true love of God. Let us seek Him with all of our heart.

Your co-laborer for Christ,

GARY