

Date: May 10, 2026
Series: Mark: The Sovereign, Suffering Servant
Title: When People Hear the Word of God
Text: Mark 4:1-20



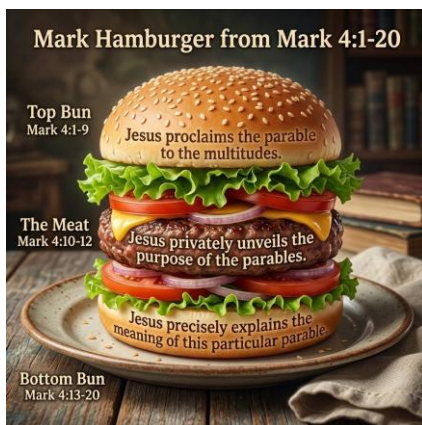
INTRODUCTION

2 Timothy 3:14-17

Note: This parable stresses three things: our need to faithfully share the truth, our dependence on God, and the varying responses that will come from human hearts.

Mark 4:1-2

Note: A parable is a simple earthly story used to communicate spiritual truth by placing it alongside something from everyday life.



The Top “Bun” - Mark 4:1-9 - Jesus publicly proclaims the parable.

The Middle “Burger” - Mark 4:10-12 - Jesus privately unveils the purpose of the parables.

The Bottom “Bun” - Mark 4:13-20 - Jesus precisely explains the meaning of this particular parable.

I. WHEN PEOPLE HEAR THE WORD OF GOD

A. Verses 1-9 - Jesus publicly proclaims the parable to the multitude.

1) Jesus begins and ends this parable with a call to listen, hear, and understand!

(Mark 9:7)

2) This parable involves a sower spreading the same seed over different soils!

B. Verses 10-12 - Jesus privately unveils the purpose of the parables!

1) Jesus' parables are truly a "double-edged sword": they give light, joy, and understanding to His disciples, but leave in darkness those who have chosen to reject Him.

(Romans 1:24-25)

2) Obviously, this "hard saying" carries a timely warning: never waste the time God has given you! Don't harden your heart, but be an eager "hearer" and "doer" of God's Word!

(Hebrews 4:7 and Psalm 119:57-60)

C. Verses 13-20 - Jesus precisely explains the meaning of this particular parable.

1) The Hardened, Unresponsive Heart: *"I want no part of Jesus! He's nothing to me!"*

(2 Corinthians 4:4)

2) The Shallow, Impulsive, Superficial Heart: *"I tried Jesus, but it didn't work for me!"*

(Mark 8:34)

3) The Double-Minded, Divided Heart: *"There's something else I love more than Jesus!"*

(1 Timothy 6:10-12a)

4) The Prepared, Responsive Heart: *"By God's grace, I'm going to follow Jesus!"*

(Matthew 3:8; Galatians 5:22; John 15:7-9; Ephesians 2:8-10; 1 John 3:16-18)

Questions for Further Study, Reflection, and Application...

1. Why did Jesus teach in parables? How were parables a "double-edged" sword?
2. What are some of the core truths that this parable (in Mark 4:1-20) communicates?
3. What is the problem with the "shallow rocky soil"? What is the problem with the "thorny soil"?
4. What do these different soils reveal about the human heart?
5. Which soil are you? How do you know?