

Chapter 4

Disciple/apostle = learn/do.

In Chapter 4 you will:

- Learn to use and understand parables, sayings, similes, metaphors, and analogies (in teaching and healing)
- Recognize degrees of receptivity versus resistance to the Word
- Still storms (emotional and/or in nature)

Please make use of the Journal provided in the beginning of this course to take notes and record your ideas, questions, healings, inspiration, and progress.



Mark 4:1 “And he began again to teach by the sea side: and there was gathered unto him a great multitude, so that he entered into a ship, and sat in the sea; and the whole multitude was by the sea on the land.” The narrative shows how Christ Jesus draws multitudes (without personal or human endeavor). There is no problem attracting followers. The problem is in finding time to be alone in prayer, and finding space from which to teach, preach, and heal without being pressed or thronged.

As Jesus’ disciples, we are also imbued with the Spirit of Love that attracts and heals. When our purpose is pure, to glorify God, as Jesus’ was, we are imbued with spiritual power and the Father is pleased with us.



MULTITUDES THRONGED JESUS

He “healed them all.”

Mark 4:2 “And he taught them many things by parables, ...” (stories that teach a spiritual lesson using a comparison with something familiar).

*The Life App Study Bible*¹ notes, “Jesus taught the people by telling stories called parables, using familiar scenes to explain spiritual truths. This method of teaching compels the listener to think. It conceals the truth from those who are too stubborn or prejudiced to hear what is being taught.”

What are parables, sayings, similes, metaphors, and analogies? These are time-tested rhetorical devices that are particularly effective in what is called “open-air preaching.” Nothing is written or handed out for remembering when someone just speaks, so to have something stick in the mind, it must be mentally memorable!

Take note of the Master’s use of these devices.

Parable. An utterance that involves a comparison (*KJV Dictionary*). Stories that use comparisons to teach a lesson. A parable is on a secondary level, on a deeper level, than the literal words that contain its true teaching. “And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his PARABLES, they perceived that he spake of them” (Matthew 21:45).

Saying. an old and well-known phrase that expresses an idea that most people believe is true.

¹ LASB = *Life App Study Bible*. Used throughout this analysis to enhance the explanation of the Sower parable.

Simile. a phrase that uses the words *like* or *as* to describe someone or something by comparing it with someone or something else that is similar.

Metaphor. a word or phrase for one thing that is used to refer to another thing in order to show or suggest that they are similar.

Analogy. a comparison of two things based on their being alike in some way.

Our work should look like Jesus' work, and our preaching should align with his method. Parables, analogies, and other figures of speech teach by pictures in thought and emotional impact. For example, many people know "fishers of men," — the disciples fished for fish, but Jesus promised to teach them to fish for men!

Our days should be filled with being "about [our] Father's business" as Jesus' life (*Luke 2:49*). You are about your Father's business no matter where you are, no matter what you are doing, no matter how much you think you know or don't know, or how worthy or unworthy you may believe yourself to be.

Remember that Jesus called Levi (who changed his name to Matthew), and he was at that time a hated tax-collector. Jesus saw his worth. Jesus was "fishing." Matthew was caught. He became an apostle and wrote the first Gospel that appears in the New Testament (although it is believed to have been written second, after Mark's Gospel).

What you do “about [your] Father’s business” is what the Holy Spirit gives you to do, and your success is assured. Do all through grace and by reflection as “image and likeness” of Love, and your work is blessed and successful.

In following Jesus’ example, we should also make good use of figures of speech.

Mark 4:3 “Hearken; Behold, there went out a sower to sow:”



Sower - One who scatters or spreads; a promoter.

Sow - to scatter (seed) over land, earth, etc., for growth; plant.

The *Life App* explanatory notes continue, “Seed was planted by hand. As the farmer walked across the field, he threw handfuls of seed onto the ground from a large bag slung across his shoulders. The plants did not grow in neat rows as they do with today’s machine planting. No matter how skillful, no farmer could keep some of his seed from falling on the footpath, from being scattered among rocks and thorns, or from being carried off by the wind. So the farmer would throw the seed liberally, and enough would fall on good ground to ensure the harvest” (*LASB*).

Mark 4:4 “And it came to pass, as he sowed, some fell by the way side, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up.”

Wayside - the side of the way; land immediately adjacent to a road, highway, path, etc.; roadside. To fall by the wayside, to cease or fail to continue doing something: *Fowls of the air* – the birds. ... the fowls of the air came and devoured it up. Create pictures in thought for lasting teaching/sharing.



Mark 4:5-6 “And some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth; and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth: But when the sun was up, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away.”



Mark 4:7 “And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit.”



Mark 4:8 “And other fell on good ground, and did yield fruit that sprang up and increased; and brought forth, some thirty, and some sixty, and some an hundred.”



Mark 4:9-12 “And he said unto them, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. And when he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve asked of him the parable. And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all *these* things are done in parables: That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and *their* sins should be forgiven them.”

The Expositor's Bible notes, “...He foresaw that they which were without would discern no spiritual meaning in such discourse” (Chadwick)². Jesus shows that we need to take care and be wise when sharing spiritual truths because there are

² *Strong Meat for Hungry Souls*, The Gospel of St. Mark. THE EXPOSITOR'S BIBLE. Edited by THE REV. W. ROBERTSON NICOLL, M.A., LL.D. THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MARK by THE VERY REV. G. A. CHADWICK, D.D., Dean of Armagh

still many who are unable to comprehend it now. As Jesus said, “I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now” (*John 16:12*). There is always a huge reaction in general when new truths come to light (earth is round, not flat), and what Jesus had to teach of the true nature of God and man in His likeness (*Genesis 1:26*), that he showed clearly by healing and restoring harmony, was and is still most extremely at odds with ordinary conceptions and traditional theology.

As disciples and apostles we learn two major things from this: 1) the unprepared or immature thought cannot quite comprehend the spiritual lessons; 2) if you thrust truth out to close-minded, opinionated, thought it will likely turn on you. Feed infant thought milk, “the milk of the word,” and not choke your hearers on “meat” (*1 Peter 2:2*).

Mark 4:13 “And he said unto them, Know ye not this parable? and how then will ye know all parables?”

Jesus’ explanation of this parable to his disciples in private stands as a model of how to interpret, or extract, spiritual meaning from such literary devices. Pay strict attention. Even the simplest parable has a spiritual message that the disciple needs to learn deeply. Learn and then apply; teach others as they are ready.



JESUS TAUGHT HIS DISCIPLES IN PRIVATE:

Mark 4:14-20 “The sower soweth the word. And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts. And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness; And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word’s sake, immediately they are offended. And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful. And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive *it*, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred.”

Jesus' private teaching decodes the parable:

1. The “seed” is the Word of God, the truth of eternal spiritual being.
2. The mental state called “wayside” is one touched momentarily by the Word but that gives it up easily at the first suggestion designed to steal it.
3. The mental state of “stony ground” allows the Word into consciousness and works with it a bit, but as soon as it causes discomfort, persecution, or sacrifice, it is let go.
4. The mental state represented by “thorns” is that one distracted by things of the world – money, popularity, personal success, personal love, personal business, lust – these dark things that take over too much space in consciousness choke out the Word, the spirituality and purity of the Christ in thought and affection.
5. Finally, there is the mental state called “good ground,” where the Word of Truth enters and is nurtured continually; this allows the Word to manifest in peace, harmony, and healing (as Jesus demonstrated). Whether you produce 30, 60, or 100-fold of good – “well done, good and faithful servant” (*Matthew 25:23*).



Know your audience, even an audience of *one*. Speak to the mental state and be wise. Make use of metaphors, analogies, parables as the Father gives you to share. Foster a listening prayer. Ask and listen, then speak and act. Let the Spirit of Love speak in you.

Jesus' teaching to his close students gives us encouragement as today's *apostles*, as those who share and teach what we learn. The *LASB* elaborates, "This parable should encourage spiritual "sowers"—those who teach, preach, and lead others. The farmer sowed good seed, but not all the seed sprouted, and even the plants that grew had varying yields. Don't be discouraged if you do not always see results as you faithfully teach the Word. Some people do not understand God's truth because they are not ready for it. God reveals truth to people who will act on it and make it visible in their lives. When you talk with people about God, be aware that they will not understand if they are not yet ready. Be patient, taking every chance to tell them more about God and praying that the Holy Spirit will open their minds and hearts to receive the truth and act on it. Productivity is in God's hands."

Furthermore, contemplate this, "The four soils represent four different ways people respond to God's message" (*LASB*). If we watch consciousness, and realize how complex it is, we realize that each type of "soil" tends to exist in every individual.

Our goal is to maintain ourselves as “good ground,” and watch that we do not let go our grip on new spiritual truths and inspiration, suffer from shallow learning without taking time for deep prayer, become too busy, or falter under attacks due to resistance and hatred of truth and the Christ.

As “good ground” we show forth God, Good, and we can heal and save through his gift of grace, and our reflection of His love.

The *Holman Dictionary* explains, “Grain crops were the staple food of rich and poor alike, although the poor may have had to consume barley bread rather than the more palatable wheat. Both were sown by scattering the grains into prepared land usually ploughed by draft animals. The parable of the sower provides an interesting account of grain sowing and the subsequent fate of the seed. Peasant agriculture, unlike modern farming practices, was unsophisticated with primitive implements often used in harsh conditions where rocky ground and vigorous weeds militated against a good yield. Hence it would be normal for some of the scattered seed to fall on a path of compacted soil where it would not be covered and lie vulnerable to birds. Similarly, some seeds would fall at the margins of the fields where thorny thickets and rapidly growing thistles easily suffocated the germinating wheat. Shallow soil and lack of moisture during the hot dry summer encouraged the withering of the seeds that did sprout into young plants on the field’s outer borders. Those seeds that fell on moist, deep soil grew and matured their ears ready for harvest.” Be sure to watch your own mental state.

Maintain the “good ground” consciousness that bears “much fruit” through spiritualization of thought and active Love.

Mark 4:21-23 “And he said unto them, Is a candle brought to be put under a bushel, or under a bed? and not to be set on a candlestick?”



What use is the light of a candle if it cannot even be seen, if it has no space in which to shine and give illumination? What use is the Light of Christ in our consciousness and heart if it is hidden, never voiced, taught, preached, lived, or shown forth in love and good deeds? What use is a disciple who does not actively share as an apostle – one taught and sent?

For there is nothing hid, which shall not be manifested; neither was any thing kept secret, but that it should come abroad. If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.

The Life App Bible asks, “Does your life show other people how to find God and how to live for him? If not, ask what “baskets” have hidden your light?”



The notes continue, “Complacency, resentment, embarrassment, stubbornness of heart, or disobedience could keep you from shining. What do you need to do to let your light shine? The light of Jesus’ truth is revealed to us, not hidden. But we may not be able to see or to use all of that truth right now. Only as we put God’s teachings into practice will we understand and see more of the truth. The truth is clear, but our ability to understand is imperfect. As we obey, we will sharpen our vision and increase our understanding (see *James* 1:22-25).”

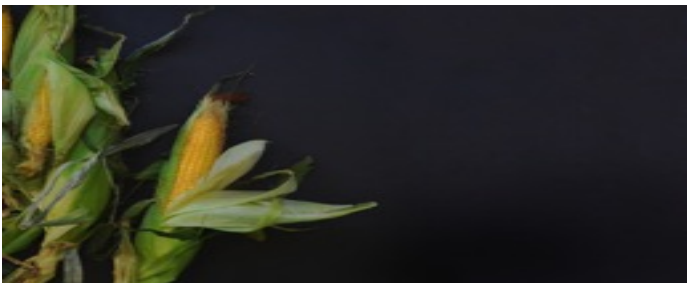
The *Matthew Henry Commentary* adds, “There is no treasure of gifts and graces lodged in any but with design to be communicated; nor was the gospel made a secret to the apostles, to be concealed, but that it should come abroad, and be divulged to all the world. Though Christ expounded the parables to his disciples privately, yet it was with design to make them the more publicly useful; they were taught, that they might teach; and it is a general rule, that the ministration of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal, not himself only, but others also.”

Mark 4:24-25 “And he said unto them, Take heed what ye hear: with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear shall more be given. For he that hath, to him shall be given: and he that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath.”

Matthew Henry's Commentary explains that we are to “mark what [we] hear, and to make a good use of it.” To “hear” is to understand spiritually and deeply.

Mark 4:26 - 29 “And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.”

Our disciple/apostle job is to cast good seed into the consciousness of mankind as God brings us occasion. Then He will bless it and cause the spiritual truths and explanations to grow in our hearers until their is ‘fruit,’ healing and spiritual awakening.



Mark 4:30 – 32 “And he said, Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it? *It is* like a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth: But when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches; so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it.”



The tiniest bit of spiritual understanding, if you nurture it (*good ground*), will continue to grow within you until many come under your care and protection through knowing the Truth and expressing Love.

Mark 4:33-34 “And with many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to hear *it*. But without a parable spake he not unto them: and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples.”

Note, when Jesus was alone with his disciples, he “expounded all things” to them – he explained in detail to them. The Master promised that he would not leave us comfortless, and that the Comforter would teach us all things – expound in detail. Ask that the Comforter work in your consciousness, then watch and listen.

Mark 4:35-37 “And the same day, when the even was come, he saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side. And when they had sent away the multitude, they took him even as he was in the ship. And there were also with him other little ships. And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full.”



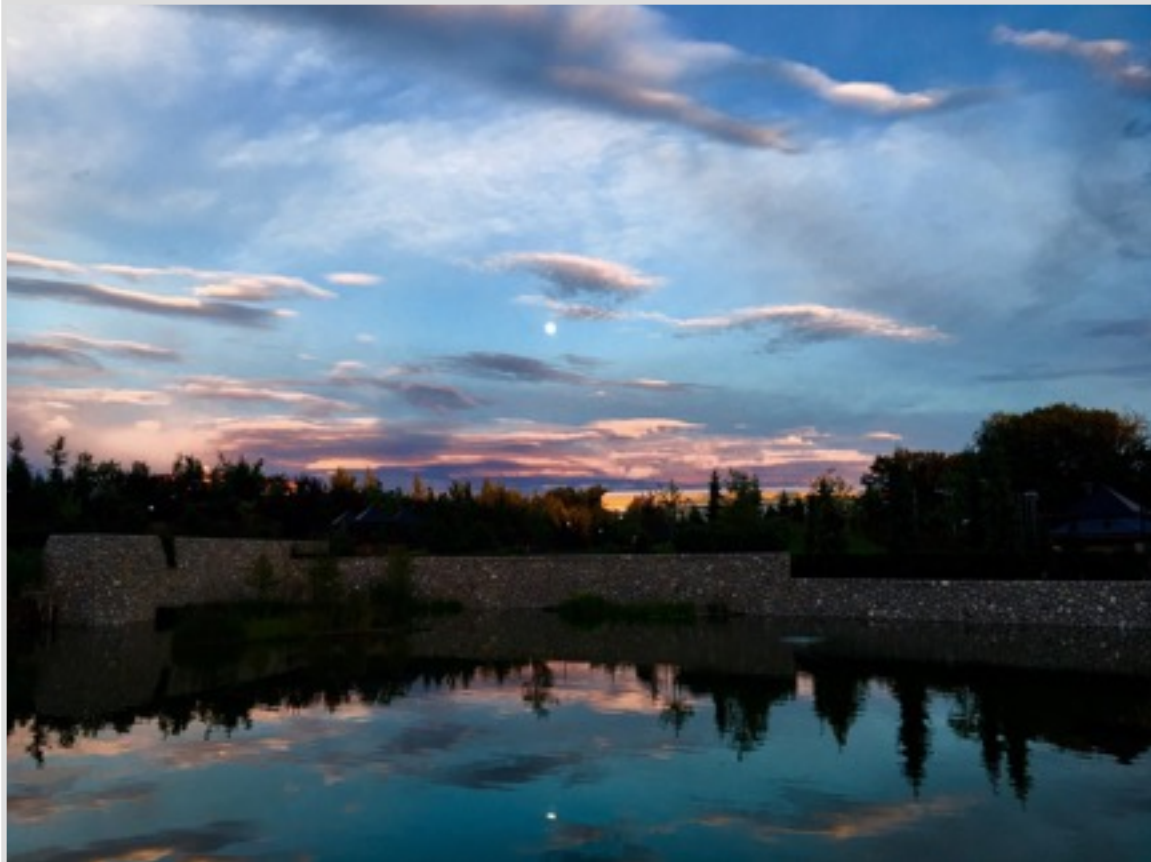
Storms arise. They may be emotional or physical (nature or violence of men), but it is within our power by reflection and expression of Christ, God's own Being expressed, to still these storms and protect innocent ones. The disciples, caught in a huge life-threatening storm, decide they must awaken the Master. He is asleep on a pillow through all of this noise, movement, and fear. He knows he is safe in Spirit, Love, in the Father's hand.

Jesus is ready instantly upon awakening to handle the situation — another lesson for today's disciples. Immediately upon awakening, we are sharp and alert, having "that Mind that was in Christ Jesus."

Mark 4:38-41 "And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish? And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith? And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

A response to "what manner of man is this" (shared with me years ago) is memorable. This is the manner of the man of *Genesis one*, the "image and likeness," — that "manner of man" stills a storm with a word. This is what you are in reality, now.

Man, created in the likeness of God is your true being. You are “like” Him, good and full of the power of Spirit. Use your reflected spiritual power and bring calm, peace, and safety. The Christ-consciousness within you has the authority.



Matthew Henry's Commentary supplies today's disciples some very nice *food for thought* on this event: "This miracle which Christ wrought for the relief of his disciples, in stilling the storm" is also found in *Matthew* 8:23. "Observe:

1. It was *the same day* that he had preached out of a ship, *when the even was come*, v. 35. When he had been *labouring in the word and doctrine* all day, instead of *reposing* himself, he *exposeth* himself, to teach us not to think of a constant remaining rest till we come to heaven. The end of a toil may perhaps be

but the beginning of a toss. But observe, the ship that Christ made his pulpit is taken under his special protection, and, though in danger, cannot sink. What is used for Christ, he will take particular care of.

2. He himself proposed putting to sea at night, because he would lose no time; *Let us pass over to the other side*; for we shall find, in the next chapter, he has work to do there. Christ went about doing good, and no difficulties in his way should hinder him; thus industrious we should be in serving him, and our generation according to his will.

3. They did not put to sea, till *they had sent away the multitude*, that is, had given to each of them that which they came for, and answered all their requests; for he sent none home complaining that they had attended him *in vain*. Or, They sent them away *with a solemn blessing*; for Christ came into the world, not only to pronounce, but to *command*, and to *give*, the blessing.

We see the tireless labor and compassion of Jesus here in care for the multitude. We see his fearlessness and the urgency of his mission in insisting on crossing the lake that night. We see his care for the disciples (and for us, his disciples today). You are safe and cared for. Do not fear the storms – awaken the Christ within you. Command the wind and waves in oneness with him. Peace, be still.

Concluding questions:

Contemplate these questions and write in your Journal:

What have I learned in chapter four as a *disciple*?

How will I express this as an *apostle*?

In what ways specifically should I change (spiritualize/purify) my thinking?

How do the ideas in this chapter apply to healing?

Write what “manner of man” you are — the “image and likeness of God” — and write a note of gratitude for the God-given power to still the storms of life and of nature when needed or called upon for aid.

May the Holy Spirit inspire and energize you; may divine Love bless your prayers with ‘signs following.’

CROSS REFERENCES

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Mark 4:6:

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