

Opportunities Abound
 Jesus Explains What the Kingdom is Like
The Greatest Opportunity Series – Part 10
 Mk 4:21-34
 May 25-26

Introduction

- There are many voices trying to get our attention. That's what the fight is over – our attention. Whatever has our attention has our affection. Superbowl commercials.
- *"We must assess the primary voices in our lives. Who are the power voices in our lives?" – Pastor Lance Hahn*
- Who or what has your attention?
- Summary: Jesus continues teaching in parables, highlighting revelation and response. The outsiders get parables, and the disciples get explanations.

Give God Your FULL Attention.

Recap

Last week Pastor Paul Thome taught us about maximizing our spiritual growth potential. As he did, he preached with no notes and no podium. At the end of the message, he shared four things; embrace Jesus, listen, really listen, and keep listening. And we're going to piggyback on that somewhat. Pastor Paul covered the first parable Jesus shares in Mark 4 and today we'll look at the other three.

A Lamp Under a Basket

Lesson

- **Be the Light**
 - **Lamps are not meant to be hidden.**
 - **Mk 4:21-23 – "And he said to them, "Is a lamp brought in to be put under a basket, or under a bed, and not on a stand? 22 For nothing is hidden except to be made manifest; nor is anything secret except to come to light. 23 If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear."**
 - **He said** – who said? Jesus
 - **To them** – to who? Chapter 4 verse 1 tells us there was a crowd around him. But at this point we know according to v. 10 that who he's talking to here is the twelve and those disciples who were "**close**" to him that asked him what the parables meant. Closeness, intimacy, we share our secrets, dreams, ambitions, and fears with people we are close to.
 - **Lamp** – what type of lamp? Purpose of lamp? It wasn't the kind of lamp we use today; rather it was a hand lamp carried around like a flashlight. To illuminate the pathway or your room. He mentions it because he knows his audience was

familiar with. This is what Jesus did as he told parables. Jesus used everyday realities to communicate eternal truth.

- **Silliness of covering and hiding it** – under a basket or bed. He is asking a question here. I love the way Jesus communicates (he told great stories, and he asked great questions – just over 300 questions in scripture). And the question he asks here is a rhetorical one. *“Is a lamp brought in to be put under a basket, or under a bed, and not on a stand? And this question exposes the silliness of doing anything with the lamp other than what it’s purposed for. Similarly, neither a basket nor a bed was meant to cover up a lamp. In **Luke 8:16** it goes on to say why no one would hide it, but rather put it on a stand; “.....so that those who enter may see the light.” A lamp was never meant to be put under a basket or a bed, only on a stand! It sounds elementary, but when you think about it, we do this all the time: we use things for purposes other than what it they were intended for.*

Story - Toothpick – dental floss

With this, we get a glimpse here into something that is key and critical (but often forgotten) – and that is that the kingdom of God is purposeful! In other words, everything God does, he does it **on purpose for** a purpose. More specifically, you were created on purpose for a purpose. And it’s time for some of us to stop living outside of God’s intended purpose for us. And his purpose for us collectively and chiefly is to reflect his light. When we lean into that, some of the other things he wants us to do will become clearer.

Honestly, there are some situations where the last thing we’re thinking about is reflecting the light of Christ.

Story – pic - Traffic – vehicular instances Confession.....gratitude training

*Metaphorically Jesus is speaking about himself. He is the lamp/light (**John 8:12** – “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in the darkness but will have the light of life.”). The light of the world has come into the darkness to occupy an elevated place and spread the light. And those of us who are Christ followers are to reflect His light to a lost, dark, and chaotic world.*

- **Hidden to be made manifest/Secret except to come to light – (v.22)** *“For nothing is hidden except to be made manifest; nor is anything secret except to come to light.”*

The kingdom of God, the gospel of Jesus Christ brings hidden and secret things into the light. His presence then and the Holy Spirit now, is exposing the hidden motives and misunderstandings in the hearts of people.

The tension for many of us is that we want the gospel **and** our secrets. We want to be Christian and stay the same. We want Christ but not change. But the light,

Jesus is saying, will expose what's hidden in darkness. That's why he came. That was his purpose!

Story - Thermal imaging camera. Firefighter

It was a part of our uniform. It was used in IDLH environments (immediately dangerous to life and health – smokey, low visibility or dark environments. It helped us to visualize our plan of attack, locate hot spots that we couldn't otherwise detect, and save lives. In short, they helped expose things that were hidden in the dark.

Just like the light of Christ does!

- **Ears to hear – (v. 23) IF anyone has ears to hear let him hear. What does Jesus mean by this? Jesus said IF anyone...This suggest that what he's referring to goes far beyond our natural ability to hear.**

*The phrase "ears to hear" is used all throughout scripture. Moses used it in **Deuteronomy (29:4)** when he was rebuking the rebellious Israelites. **Jeremiah** used it (5:21). **Ezekiel** used it (12:2). And Jesus used it many times in the gospels. "Ears to hear" was a common idiom that referred to those whose hearts were ready to **act** on the truth they were given.*

Pastor Brian reminded us a few weeks ago that we're called not just to believe in Jesus but to **follow** him!

John 14

¹⁵ "If you love me, you will **keep** my commandments.

DC Talk song that came out in 1992: "Love is a verb".

I want to be careful that you don't hear me promoting performance or efforts and works but rather emphasizing that it's belief that drives behavior. Orthodoxy precedes orthopraxy.

Also, having "ears to hear" isn't restricted to people who are well-educated, or wise. The Pharisees were some of the most well-educated people of their time, yet with all their education they still didn't have "ears to hear". Many people were impacted by Jesus' earthly ministry; yet comparatively only few had "ears to hear".

So, when Jesus says "anyone", that includes Jews, Gentiles, Samaritans, Romans, those from the city, those from the country, those from the east coast, from the

west coast, the north, or the south; anyone who is willing **to draw near**, listen and live it out his words (by the grace of God).

While Jesus did want certain things about his kingdom concealed in certain ways and at certain times (which is why he charged certain people to not speak of the miracles he did); it's not that the things of the kingdom are necessarily "hidden" or "secret"; it's just that they're reserved for those willing to come close enough to the king to hear and allow him to bring understanding. In fact, that's what he wants. Jesus wants us close to him. Because **with Jesus, "it's more about relationship than information transfer" (Lance Hahn).**

The **obstacle** for us here is that though we're called to reflect the light of Christ, we have a proclivity to darkness. We live in a sinful world, we have sinful flesh, and we have Satan as an adversary. And the darkness is all too familiar and way to comfortable for many of us. This is why we need to give God our full attention! Because the more we do, the more we're ready to act on the truth we receive, and the less we want to fellowship, dance and party in the kingdom of darkness. Because there's far too much at stake!!

Opportunity for us is to **reflect the light of Christ** in the dark world. It's an opportunity **to stand up and stand out** for the Kingdom of God so that others may be drawn to him. In my story, because a guy named Rodney Parker reflected the light of Christ and stood out for kingdom of God, Rodney Gray came to faith in Jesus. I wonder who the light of Christ through you is drawing and will draw to the Lord!

- **Pay Attention**
 - **Pay attention to what you hear and how you heed.**
 - **Mk 4:24-25 – "And he said to them, "Pay attention to what you hear: with the measure you use, it will be measured to you, and still more will be added to you. 25 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."**
 - **He said** – Jesus.
 - **To them** – The twelve and close disciples
 - **Pay attention** – Jesus here seems to be foot-stomping the point he just made in v. 23 – and we would do well to listen. **Luke 8:18** "Take care then how you hear". What this means is to weigh carefully or examine what you hear. When you think about it, many of us (in the church) are far too casual when it comes to what we hear; if we're honest. I believe that's due in part, to the fact that we take lightly the weight of what we hear. What's clear here is that not only is **what we hear** important, but also **how we heed** what we hear.

What we give our attention to, over time, slowly and subtly disciples us. We're either being disciplined towards God or away from God. If away from God, we slowly become desensitized to the work and move of God. Before long we're insensitive and even indifferent to the love of God and the many opportunities he provides for us (oftentimes without even realizing we've drifted).

So, what we hear and what we do with what we hear is important.

Pastor Judah – “The Radical Theology of Listening”. – “Our success or failure as believers is predicated on our ability to hear/listen” (to pay attention to and heed the words of Jesus).

This was so important to us as we processed the possibility of moving cross the country. That's why Jesus wants us to pay attention! In other words, give God your full attention.

- ***With the measure you use, it will be measured to you –***

Our “measure” here is essentially our time, attention, and submission to Jesus' words.

To the extent or measure that we as disciples are open to God's word, pay attention to his teaching and apply his wisdom to our lives, is the extent or measure that we'll benefit from it.

If we do little with the truth that we're given, we get little out of the truth.

What I believe he's communicating is that there's a relationship between interaction and understanding.

-Have you ever thought one thing about someone only to spend time with them, get to know them, and find out they were nothing like you thought? It's because your understanding was proportionate to your interaction. You had a limited or shallow understanding because you had limited or shallow interaction.

-Now we all know people who've been in church for a long time and yet they're as mean as a snake! If you're sitting beside someone like that just keep looking forward (look at me). How is that? It could be because though they heard the word (they were exposed to it), they didn't welcome the word into their hearts. They haven't interacted with it to the point of understanding and transformation. That's why I love all the classes and offerings we have here at Bridgeway; because they provide countless opportunities for us to grow in our knowledge and understanding.

With the measure you use, it will be measured to you. But he doesn't stop there.

- **And still more will be added to you.**

25 For to the one who has, more will be given - If someone listens well (pay attention to Jesus' words) and receives the truth, they will receive **even more**. We see this principle in the parable of the talents.

The Parable of the Talents

Matthew 25:14-23

¹⁴ “For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants^[c] and entrusted to them his property. ¹⁵ To one he gave five talents,^[d] to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. ¹⁶ He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more. ¹⁷ So also he who had the two talents made two talents more. ¹⁸ But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money. ¹⁹ Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. ²⁰ And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me five talents; here, I have made five talents more.’ ²¹ His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant.^[e] You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’ ²² And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me two talents; here, I have made two talents more.’ ²³ His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’

Now to be clear, the "more" that will be added isn't necessarily power, influence, or material possessions. It's spiritual wisdom and understanding!

If you've been paying attention around here, to Pastor Lance, you know he's always reminding us that "there's more". In fact, that was one of the things that resonated with Jacqueline and I when we came to visit October of last year. "There's more"! The "more" for us was an opportunity; an invitation to partner with God in the work he's doing here at Bridgeway.

Then he gives a warning at the end of verse 25.

- **What's taken away?**

V. 25b *“.... and from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away.”*

Matthew 25:24-30 – The Parable of Talents

²⁴ He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, ‘Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed, ²⁵ so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here, you have what is yours.’ ²⁶ But his master answered him, ‘You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed? ²⁷ Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. ²⁸ So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents. ²⁹ For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. ³⁰ And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

If someone listens poorly, rejects, or shows little to no interest in the truth (or prioritizes it beneath their own selfishness, wants and desires), even the little they “think they have” (Luke 8:18b) will be taken from them.

What we lose is our understanding of spiritual things (clarity, direction, a sensitivity to the work of God in our lives). All because we neglected the truth that we received.

“Neglect always gives room to the enemy” (health, marriage, yard, walk with God). And consequently, we miss divine opportunities.

The Pharisees and to some degree the crowd are examples of this. The Pharisees rejected Jesus and only wanted to debate and find fault with him. And the crowd was apathetic. While they might’ve been interested in what Jesus had to say, they weren’t interested enough to get closer to him and interact with him more intimately. In both cases Jesus’ teaching wasn’t received by them. And though they might’ve gotten something from it, the light of Jesus and power his kingdom was hidden from them.

Obstacle – The temptation to pay attention to other voices that have distracted from the voice of truth. Voices that cater to our need for convenience, acceptance, and personal satisfaction.

Opportunity – **Audit the voices we’ve been giving our attention to. To allow the truth of God’s word to be the dominant voice in our lives.** Whether His truth comes to us through the church, our community, or through the pain of some of life’s most trying times.

Give God your full attention.

The next parable he shares is peculiar to the gospel of Mark.

The Parable of the Growing Seed

- The Kingdom of God
 - God's power, God's timing.
 - **Mk 4:26-29** – *“And he said, “The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground. 27 He sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows; he knows not how. 28 The earth produces by itself, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. 29 But when the grain is ripe, at once he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come.”*

- **What is the Kingdom of God?** – The phrase “kingdom of God” is used roughly 15 times in the book of Mark and close to 70 times in the New Testament. Jesus is clarifying what his kingdom looks like, and how it functions. This was important because the kingdom Jesus was establishing was different than the kingdom they were expecting.

The kingdom of God is simply God's rule and reign over creation. One pastor defined the kingdom of God this way, "God's people in God's place under God's rule."

Jesus was the embodiment of God's kingdom.

- **A man should scatter seed on the ground** – The “man” in the context of the parable is the farmer but in the kingdom of God it's the followers of Christ. We are the ones who scatter (share) God's word (the seed). Which is what we're commanded to do according to The Great Commission). **Matthew 28:18-20** – *¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in^[a] the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”*
- **He sleeps and rises night and day and the seed sprouts and grows** – After he scatters the seed, he goes about his normal routine. But watch what happens, “the seed sprouts and grows”. So, other than scattering the seed, the “man” makes no other contribution to the growth of the seed.
- **He knows not how** – Not only does he not make any other contribution to the growth of the seed, but he also can't even comprehend how it grows. It's a mystery to him (us).
- **The earth produces by itself** – While you and I are called to faithfully share God's word (scatter the seed), the power to change hearts (or bring growth that produces a harvest) is his. The results are up to him! We don't know exactly how he does it, we just know he does!

“First the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear”. The kingdom advances one soul at a time.

But we still have a responsibility to scatter the seed or to say it another way, to share the story of God in our lives. How he’s kept you, how he’s keeping you, how’s he’s brought you out, how he’s bringing you through!! Some of us have been sleeping on our story; and we’ve allowed the enemy to silence us. If that’s you, it’s time to open your mouth and tell your story, the story of God’s faithfulness, grace, and love towards you; because God is going to use it to bring a harvest in somebody’s life!!

- **But when the grain is ripe** – Not only is the growth by God’s power, but it’s also according to his timing. It’s not about our talent, abilities, or timeframe. For you and I, we must be ready to take advantage of the opportunity when the time comes. Because the scripture says, [“at once he puts in the sickle...” V.29](#). That suggest that he was ready. He was expecting the harvest. God is ultimately the one who’s in control and in charge of the harvest.
- **The harvest has come** – Notice the certainty of the harvest in the kingdom of God. He didn’t say the harvest might come; he said the harvest has come. Whether you and I choose to participate or not; God is and will be glorified. Don’t hear me wrong. It’s His will is that none should perish but that all would have everlasting life through Jesus Christ. Be we must give God our full attention.

The point here is that the way God’s kingdom advances, the way his word grows in the hearts of his people, is many times imperceptible (we don’t know how it happens and we’re not always aware of what God is doing). But just because we’re not aware doesn’t mean God is not moving. What we know through this scripture is that he often moves independent of human effort.

Obstacle – It’s hard for many of us to trust what we can’t control. It’s often difficult to maintain faithfulness when you don’t know exactly when the harvest is coming.

Pastoral Moment

So, to the **parent** who’s been praying for your children; I want to remind you that God hears your prayers and he’s still on the throne. To the **couple** whose marriage is on shaky ground; I encourage you to trust God’s heart even when you can’t see his hand. To the **single person** that’s believing God for a spouse, I want you to know that God does all things well, and he gives good gifts to his children. And his timing is perfect. And to the person that feels forgotten about, just like there’s a certainty to the harvest there’s a certainty to God’s love! And in spite of how you feel, the truth is that He loves you.

Opportunity – to see the faithfulness and power of God in a fresh way. It’s an opportunity to be expectant for the harvest that is to come. To know that his love and faithfulness is not based on our efforts. To be assured that every opportunity that God provides will have a harvest.

The Parable of the Mustard Seed

- **The Kingdom of God**
 - **It’s bigger than you think.**
 - **Mk 4:30-32 – “And he said, “With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable shall we use for it? 31 It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when sown on the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth, 32 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.”**

The parable of the mustard seed is also in the books of Matthew and Luke. Only in Matthew and Luke it’s followed by the parable of leaven – which shares the same theme: the kingdom of God growing from a small, humble beginning to something much larger with great impact.

Here in Mark, in the parable of the growing seed, we saw the **means** of growth in the kingdom of God – **God’s power**. In this parable we learn the **extent** of growth in the kingdom of God.

Again, Jesus is using a horticultural example to describe what the kingdom of God is like. Only this time, his subject is a mustard seed.

- **A grain of mustard seed** – *I’m* sure it was surprising to the disciples; that he would use a mustard seed, something so small and seemingly insignificant to compare the kingdom of God with.

Jesus knew that using imagery like this would shatter misconceptions about the kingdom. Because no one imagined his kingdom coming this way. Their expectation was that it come in a way that was both obvious and overpowering. They were expecting his kingdom to come and overthrow the Roman empire.

In this parable, he’s describing how the kingdom **begins, builds, and how it blesses**.

How the Kingdom **begins**.

The mustard seed itself is very tiny. It takes roughly between 15k-20k mustard seeds to weigh an ounce. It is a tiny seed, but it produces a large plant.

Most people believed that nothing would come of Jesus and His ministry. The people could see the tiny seed, but they could not see it becoming anything bigger than what they saw.

Here are a few examples that show us that his kingdom began as a “mustard seed”:

- Jesus was born in the tiny town of Bethlehem in abject poverty.
- He was reared in Galilee, and no one believed that a man of God could come from there, (John 7:52).
- Then his family went to Nazareth. The people of Nazareth were considered wicked and worldly by the Jews.
- Jesus was considered a nobody from nowhere who would amount to nothing!
- His followers were, for the most part, a band of misfits.
- His own people rejected Him.
- Even the message he preached was hard for many to accept. For some of us it still is! Jesus told some people to give away what they had. He told people to love their enemies. He counseled people to turn the other cheek.
- He would eventually be nailed to a cross and buried Him in a tomb.

Without question the Kingdom of God was just like that tiny, seemingly insignificant mustard seed in the beginning.

- *V. 32a “yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants.”*

With this, he describes how The Kingdom **builds**.

When the mustard seed is planted in good soil, it germinates and produces a large shrub-like plant that can grow to resemble a tree. Some mustard plants have been known to grow as high as 15 feet tall. Something so small, with such humble beginnings, can become something far greater.

Again, this is a picture of the amazing growth of the Kingdom of God.

Think of it this way:

- In the beginning there was just Jesus and a few followers. His followers consisted of some uneducated fishermen, a former tax collector, some women, and an eventual traitor.
- By the time Pentecost came around, there were 120 devoted followers (**Acts 1:15**).
- In **Acts 2:41**, over 3,000 came to faith in Christ.
- Not long after that another 5,000 were saved, (**Acts 4:4**).

And that was just the beginning; but it was building!

Here's the point friends, God has a way of bringing great things out of humble beginnings.

Look at the life of **David**. He was like the mustard seed.

- The youngest son in a family of eight boys. He was ignored and given the job no one else in the family wanted, taking care of the sheep. God took that "mustard seed" and made a giant-killing king out of him.
- **Moses** was abandoned by his mother (albeit for good reason – to preserve his life). He was adopted by Pharaoh's daughter - born Hebrew and raised Egyptian. He was a murderer who couldn't speak very well.
- And yet on multiple occasions he came face to face with the unconditional love and grace of God. And would eventually lead God's people out of Egypt. He too was like that mustard seed.

Now, what about **you**? Whether you're a child of God or not, you certainly have had "mustard seed beginnings"! How do I know that? For starters, your presence in this place is evidence of his grace. Which means with all you've been through, you're still here; still standing!

Furthermore, I'm sure that everyone in this room is currently experiencing something that was once on your prayer list!

As for me, the fact that I'm standing here, sharing this moment with you all, is not only an answer to prayer, but it's also a demonstration of the faithfulness and love of God towards me!

Because God, in His grace, looked beyond what we were, to see what we could become through His grace. He saved us, planted us in Jesus and now our lives are bearing fruit for his glory. And if you're here today and you aren't yet a part of God's kingdom family, there's no better day to come home! So maybe today is the day that the kingdom of God in you begins to build.

- **V. 32b** "and puts out large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade."

Now, he talks about how the kingdom **blesses**!

The tiny mustard seed grew into a large plant; with branches large enough for birds to make nests (a home). For birds, the nest represents rest, safety, a place to birth their offspring, and shelter.

Just as the plant in this parable brought joy to the birds who flocked to it for the things it could provide, the Kingdom of God provides many benefits/blessings for those who trust in Jesus.

There's Love, joy, peace, shelter, freedom, healing, forgiveness, and rest in his kingdom just to name a few! Thank God for the blessings we have in Jesus!

God can take something that seems so small and insignificant, and He can transform it into something much bigger! Just as he has done it and is doing it with his Kingdom, he has done it and will continue to do it in our lives.

Obstacle – We often despise small beginnings. We can easily dismiss the work of God through things that seem small or insignificant. If we're honest, our expectations of God are much like those of the people in Jesus' day. We expect that he'll always move on our behalf in grand and obvious ways (which he sometimes does). But what about when he doesn't?

Another obstacle this makes me think of is our tendency to discount our contribution to the kingdom because we think it's small or insignificant. We think what we have won't make a difference.

Let me remind you of the widow in Luke 21.

Luke 21:1-4

As Jesus looked up, he saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury. ² He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins. ³ "Truly I tell you," he said, "this poor widow has put in more than all the others. ⁴ All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on."

John 2 – The Wedding at Cana

The people run out of wine and Jesus tells them to fill the jars with water (in other words – give me what you've got, I'll do the rest).

Some of us haven't sown what we've got because we think it's small and insignificant. I get it because I struggle with that at times too! But God is reminding us today that in his kingdom small things, when committed to him, have huge impact!

- Those small prayers may result in mighty movements of God. That little word of encouragement may be life or death for someone.
- That short conversation you had where you shared the Word of God with someone may be the turning the point that person needed.

- That small act of generosity because of your love for Christ and people may be the shade someone needed to get them through a difficult crisis.

Opportunity – to find encouragement in the fact that even small things, when committed to God’s kingdom, will have huge impact. Because even small seeds can transform lives, nations, and even the world.

- **Parables and Explanations**
 - **The crowds get parables, those that are close get explanations.**
 - **Mk 4:33-34 – “With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it. 34 He did not speak to them without a parable, but privately to his own disciples he explained everything.”**
 - **He spoke** - Jesus.
 - **Parables** – crowd
 - **Privately** - to his own disciples he explained everything.

Conclusion

- In the passages we covered today we saw both revelation and response. As Jesus revealed what his kingdom is like, some got parables while others got deeper explanations. The difference was a matter of attention. Some had “ears to hear” and some did not. Some decided to get closer to learn more and some did not.
- What we learn here is that divine opportunities abound when we give God our full attention.

The invitation of the gospel is not just to follow Jesus, it’s to become like him!

“Discipleship is the process of becoming who Jesus would be if he were you”. Dallas Willard

We cannot become like him without giving him our full attention.

- I ask you at the start, who or what has your attention?

Takeaway Questions

- 1. What people or things are competing with God for our attention?**
- 2. How can we better give God our time and attention this week?**

Prayer