

Session 8 Harmony of the Gospels

INTRODUCTION

Matthew 12:22. There was a man, a demon-possessed man, who was blind and dumb. Some blindness, some dumbness, some deafness is directly a demon. If you can break the power of that demon, that person's tongue will be loosed and they won't be dumb anymore.

Now that's not always the case. Some people won't be free from blindness until we break that spirit, because it is a spirit harassing them. It's possible for a demon to harass your body without being demon-possessed. A demon can cause a sickness in your body and you're not demon-possessed at all. A demon can be afflicting your soul, causing a real problem. Suppose some people have an unbelievable, unnatural problem with immorality. A lot of times it's a demonic spirit that's promoting that thing. Of course they had to open the door to it. If they'll repent of it, we can break the power of that spirit and they'll have a much easier time staying in a repentant attitude.

Sometimes a demon will get hold of a person in their spirit, and then they're really in bad shape. That doesn't happen to us as believers, but a demon can harass your soul and really mess up your character. You need to break the power of that thing.

This man was demon-possessed, and the thing that possessed him was causing blindness and he couldn't speak. His tongue wasn't loosed. Jesus broke the power of that devil and that devil was loosed. It's amazing how a demon can hold your tongue. It really is.

JESUS IS PUBLICLY CONFRONTED BY RELIGIOUS LEADERS

Verse 23. The multitudes were amazed and said, "This Man can't be the Son of David, the Messiah, can He" (Mt. 12:23, paraphrased)?

The Pharisees said, "This Man casts out demons by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons" (Mt. 12:24, paraphrased). It says in Luke that these Pharisees were from Jerusalem. This was the first time they rejected Him in a really public confrontation like this. He had a confrontation over the Sabbath a little earlier, but they've never openly opposed Him until this time right here.

The folks from Jerusalem came up from Jerusalem to Galilee and said, "This is Beelzebub!" Beelzebub was a heathen deity believed to be the prince of evil spirits. He was the head evil spirit, just under Lucifer. That was a pretty heavy accusation they were making against Jesus.

IF THE DEVIL ISN'T BOUND, THE PEOPLE WON'T BE FREED

Verse 29. "How can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house" (Mt. 12:29). It says in Mark that no one can enter the strong man's house and plunder it until he first binds the strong man (Mk. 3:27). The strong man is the devil. You can't set a person free of a demonic harassment until you've bound the devil, the strong man. Then you can take his property, which is the person being held captive.

Sometimes in the past, you've been the property of the devil. We had to bind the devil before we could take you back into God's kingdom. Plundering the house means to overpower the devil so that we can release that person into divine blessing.

Here's what's going on. Some people come forward so that we can lay hands on them. They won't get healed unless we first bind the strong man.

Mark says no one can be freed until the devil is bound. Sometimes we pray, "Lord, heal them, heal them." Sometimes Jesus spoke and released healing. Other times He bound the devil and then released healing. Sometimes we're just trying to release the power of healing into someone, but there's a devil holding it and we have to bind the devil first. At this stage, with our sensitivity, we're just hitting and missing. There's a place of sensitivity where we know when a devil is causing it very directly. It's a spirit. Sometimes they're not possessed; they're just being harassed. We have to learn to bind the devil or people will never be freed.

IF WE'RE NOT GATHERING THE PEOPLE, WE'RE SCATTERING THEM AWAY

"He who is not with Me is against Me." Here's the part that really touches me: "And he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad" (Mt. 12:30). In the context of dealing with two diametrically opposed kingdoms, neutrality is impossible. To not serve His kingdom is to distract others, resulting in a measure of scattering. If we aren't gathering people to God, ultimately, even if we're ministering, we're scattering them in the end. It's essential that all of our ministry and so on results in people being gathered to Jesus.

The Pharisees' ministry distracted people from really following Jesus in one way or another. Many sincere churches are distracting the cause of God more than helping it. They're not really gathering people under the anointing unto God. All their things are getting in the way and distracting. They're doing worse than if they were doing nothing. If you're not gathering aggressively, then you're negatively scattering.

ANSWER:

No, scattering means I have a ministry and I'm getting you off track from really getting hold of God. Really I'm doing more harm than good, even if I'm sincere. I'm scattering you, causing people to lose contact with God. We have to make sure everything we do has anointing in it, it has life in it, and is gathering people to God, not scattering them in the end.

Our eldership especially needs to evaluate everything we do in light of that. Is it producing life, is it anointed, is it causing people's hearts to flow towards God? If not, it's getting in the way; it's hurting the purpose of God.

This principle is heavy! If you're not gathering, you're ultimately scattering. I don't like that principle.

FINAL, COMPLETE REJECTION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT'S MINISTRY TO THE HEART

"Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men. Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come" (Mt. 12:31-32).

Mark adds that a person who does that is guilty of an eternal sin (Mk. 3:29).

Why did Jesus say this? They were saying Jesus had an unclean spirit. When they said Jesus had a devil, that was blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. This speaks of a final, complete rejection of the Holy Spirit's ministry to one's heart. Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is a rejection of the Spirit of God's ministry to your heart.

The test is that one doesn't care anymore and has no desire to be right with God. That's the true test. Someone says, "Did so-and-so blaspheme the Holy Spirit?"

If they care that they have, then they've not. Verse 34b is the key: "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks" (Mt. 12:34). To speak against the ministry of the Holy Spirit from your heart involves more than words, but is a reference to a state of hardness in one's heart.

One man came to me and said he got drunk one night, went out on the golf course, and cursed out God. He thought his words blasphemed God and could never be forgiven again. They're talking about rejecting God out of the heart with intelligence. They're not talking about someone who got drunk one night, did something stupid, and now they'll never be forgiven. It's not the words but the heart state He's talking about. The Pharisees knew full well what they were doing. They knew the messianic prophecies. They watched Jesus raise people from the dead. The Pharisees knew He was the Son of God and called Him a devil. That's a lot different from a man drunk on a golf course. It's not the same thing at all.

The devil really harasses people from this verse. This can't happen by accident. You can't blaspheme the Holy Spirit by accident. Nor can such a complete hardening occur quickly. None of you in this room, no matter what you said tonight, could blaspheme the Spirit of God. That's my belief. I don't believe your heart could get in that kind of condition if you got rebellious tonight. You couldn't do it before you went to bed. It's a process of hardening: a total, complete rejection of the Spirit of God's ministry from your heart. A man knows when he's doing it. It's not an accident. It's not a mistake. It doesn't happen quickly. It's a process of hardening.

This hardening against the Holy Spirit was evidenced by their referring to the ministry of the Holy Spirit through Jesus as being demonic. Their rejection started as envy and it became worse and worse until this level of hardening occurred. Hebrews 6 and 2 Peter 2 give examples of that hardening. No one does it without knowing it. When people blaspheme the Spirit of God, in that state of hardening, when they speak against God, they're blaspheming Him. It's not the words, but a heart condition. Not too many people know God enough or know enough of what they're doing to blaspheme the Spirit of God.

ANSWER:

I believe it's a final rejection. Really, it becomes a rejection of Jesus. The Spirit of God is the One ministering through Jesus. You have to reject the Spirit of God, who is His Minister upon the earth. If the words come from your heart, it can be blaspheming the Holy Spirit. It's not just the words; it's a heart condition of total rejection. These were intelligent men who knew their Bibles, knew Jesus, and they were saying with intelligence that He had a devil. They knew what they were doing. It was a hardened heart they had. It's a process you see developing in the Gospels.

ANSWER:

I believe that it was envy and jealousy that stirred them on, spurred them forward. They had wicked hearts. They saw Him doing the miracles. They knew He was of God; He had to be.

“Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by its fruit” (Mt. 12:33). This is a reference to ministries. He says to make something good or to make it rotten. In other words, recognize and acknowledge a good ministry as being good, even if it’s unpopular. Declare a bad ministry as bad, even if people respect that ministry, and you’ll receive persecution.

Jesus says, “Make the tree what it is; recognize it and speak it.” In that day, Jesus was going to make the Pharisees what they were. He was going to recognize them as being bad.

He turns around and says, “You brood of vipers” (Mt. 12:34, NASB). He’s talking about exposing evil and standing for good. It says in Ephesians 5:11 that we have to expose darkness. That’s a tough ministry, to look at something that’s evil and say it *is* evil, especially if it’s popular. Jesus said, “Make it bad if it is bad. If it’s good, stand with it, even if people don’t like it and you get persecution for it.”

IDLE WORDS WILL QUENCH THE SPIRIT OF GOD IN YOUR LIFE

Verses 36-37 talk about careless, idle words. “But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned” (Mt. 12:36-37).

Idle words will quench the Spirit of God in your life. Our lives will be less productive due to idle words. This decreased effectiveness will show up at the judgment seat of Christ. There you’ll receive a judgment for your idle words, because it will quench the Spirit and make your life more ineffective. On the last day He will reveal how idle words made your life less effective.

By your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned. Why? Because your words reveal your heart. God is going to replay your words on the last day to determine your standing in the eternal city, as well as the levels of degree in the lake of fire for unbelievers.

Men are going to stand before God and say, “I wasn’t against you.”

God will replay their own words back to them: “Jesus Christ, forget it!” He will condemn them by their own words. When we stand before God, He’s going to see us publicly declaring our love and commitment. He will say, “By your words, you’ve declared your heart condition. Therefore, enter into the kingdom.”

You’ll hear a lot of the things you’re saying again. Good. Praise God. Hallelujah. I was waiting for someone to say, “Oh no!” It should be, “Hallelujah!” I can’t wait until all the difficult times where you stood up before God in uncomfortable positions. Those words will be played back and you’ll be justified, because they speak of your condition.

ANSWER:

It’s not so much that if you said a wrong thing, God is up there nitpicking: “Haha. I got you on this one!”

Everyone in heaven is looking at you. “Oh no, I’m stuck!”

No, but idle words will make your life ineffective. That ineffectiveness will bear itself out on the last day. You'll have a lot less fruit to be rewarded for. Careless words make a definite difference. You read those verses on idle speech and it's amazing.

ANSWER:

It's a word that's not profitable. When your employer came in and said, "What did you do today?" you say, "I did this, this, and this." That's very profitable. That's not idle. It doesn't have to be spiritual by nature; it just has to bring profit. If I ask a guy for a drink of water, it's profitable. It's not spiritual. You saying, "Turn the air conditioner up" is profitable for you if you're hot. Don't get the idea that you have to speak Bible verses all the time. That's not right.

There's a lot of idle chatter, I know in my own life, and it quenches the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God will leave you in terms of bringing revelation. It's serious!

ANSWER:

Humor can be very profitable at times. Humor can be very right at times. Humor can be uplifting and relieve tension and everything. Don't get the idea that you have to frown. Frowning and mourning isn't the opposite of jesting. It says no coarse jesting (Eph. 5:4). I tell you, right now God is putting His finger on this area of my life in a big way. He says, "If you want to walk in the Spirit, you have to make your words perfect." It's ripping my heart out! I never knew how much I was filled with idle chatter. It's terrible.

But it's also encouraging because I know we're going to get hold of God in a new dimension.

ONE GENERATION WILL CONDEMN ANOTHER GENERATION AT THE JUDGMENT

"When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none. Then he says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' And when he comes, he finds it empty, swept, and put in order. Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than him" (Mt. 12:43-45).

Some of the scribes and Pharisees were demanding a sign from heaven. You have to keep your eye out for some of these lawyers. They had very slick tongues. They appeared to be honoring Him: "Teacher, Teacher, I'm not offended. I still respect you."

Once again, He calls them an adulterous generation. There's no flattery with Jesus. Nothing changed His mind. After He blasts them, they try to win His heart through flattery. He says no and repeats the statement.

It's like the time the lawyers came to Jesus. They asked Him a question about the Pharisees and He gave a really negative answer. These lawyers said, "Teacher, You're offending us, too."

He looked at them and said, "Woe unto you, too" (Lk. 11:45-46, paraphrased)! He had absolutely no fear of man, did He?

He's telling this whole generation that the men of Nineveh and the queen of Sheba, and all these different places are going to stand up and condemn their generation in the end. Generations will condemn other generations in the end. No doubt God is going to use some of you as an example to condemn other people. He's going to point out certain men and certain churches and certain generations, and they will condemn other generations and churches and men. Or you may be condemned by someone else who was in your shoes and prevailed. I don't

mean condemned and thrown into hell. He's going to use people and examples in the judgment. Everyone is going to know everything. This whole thing is very hairy; it's very involved. The Scripture says He will use other groups to condemn and raise up other groups.

He's using the example of unclean spirits to illustrate that. He says, "When you're possessed of a demon and that demon is released, it wants to go to waterless places"—to the desert regions. The Jews thought the devils lived in desert regions. That's why there's no life or vegetation. That's the abode of the wicked spirits. That's what the Jews thought. Evidently there's something true to it. If that house gets swept clean, that person gets set free, and the devil comes back and finds that life unoccupied. They're not getting the Word of God or obedience in their life. It's swept, put in order; it's clean, but it's not occupied. The devil has been broken, so the man isn't driven by demonic forces. He's clean, neutral; but he isn't occupied by the things of God.

What will happen? Well, the devil can come back in and get the man again. The repossession of an evil spirit is much, much more difficult to break the second time than the first time. I think *seven* speaks of a perfect number. I don't think it's literally seven. To the degree that you're open, that's how many more evil spirits will come back—as much as you'll let them. I think it could be 300. That head spirit is going to bring many more spirits to come and possess that man again.

To release a person from demonic bondage who isn't serious about God can be a really difficult thing. If a man isn't serious about repenting and breaking the power of the devil over him, and he goes right back to his mess again, he can get really messed up. This is serious business. He's in much worse shape than if nothing had happened at all.

JESUS USED PARABLES TO CONCEAL TRUTH FROM THOSE WITH A WRONG HEART

Let's go to the parables now. Matthew 13. Why parables? Jesus used parables to deliberately conceal truth from people with a wrong heart. He didn't use parables to make truth easy; on the contrary, He used parables to make the truth hard. Jesus doesn't want people to have the truth, the precious jewels of truth, if they don't have a right spirit. He wants them either to submit to Him and get it, or not submit to Him and be utterly deceived.

In 2 Thessalonians 2, it says that in the last days that God is going to send a deceitful spirit and delude the people because their hearts are wrong (2 Thess. 2:9-11). God says, "I'm not giving you any of My treasures until your heart is right." He started speaking in mysteries so that no one could understand Him except those with right hearts.

He has nine parables here. The first one is pretty self-explanatory. Verse 19. There are four types of people. I just want you to know this: it's the devil that steals the Word of God out of your heart. The third type of person is a sincere Christian, but he or she is distracted. The Word of God and the power of God is choked in them. It can't flow out of them. Their soul is muddled in sin and unbelief. The power of God is unable to flow through them.

The fourth type of Christian is fruitful. I trust God that everyone in this room is in the fourth type. Even in this room, there are some who will be only thirty-percent mature, some of you sixty, and then on occasion, there's a rare soul that walks in hundredfold obedience and diligence with God and faith. Those kinds of people are rare. This is serious stuff. Because every one of us is qualified as one of these four guys. When we stand before God on the last day, He's going to call forth your name. He may say you were fruitful, but you don't want Him to

say you were thirty-fold. I don't want that. I would say, "What a bummer! I read the parable, I taught it and I knew it, and I got stuck in the thirty-fold bracket."

I don't want that to happen. That's really serious stuff. This man is fruitful in thirty, sixty, and hundredfold maturity and development in faith and obedience. When you see, then you'll be radiant.

There's this idea of seeing, understanding: if you know this is what makes you different from others, then you will pursue revelation of the Word like a great treasure.

THE WHEAT AND THE TARES MATURE TOGETHER AT THE END OF THE AGE

The second parable is about the tares. There are tares and wheat. When tares are little, when they're babies, they look just like the wheat. You can't distinguish between the two at all. The enemy sows tares in the Church. In this church, South County Christian Fellowship, there are a few people who look just like Christians but aren't Christians. We don't know which ones they are because they look like all the other ones. Everyone is getting kind of paranoid now.

In verse 28, here's what the people in the Church said. The enemy has done this. I'm giving the interpretation. Here's what we're saying to God: "Do You want us to go and gather the tares" (Mt. 13:28, paraphrased)?

The Father says, "No, don't go gather the tares up. Because while gathering up the tares, you may accidentally root up the wheat in the process." This is the point of the whole parable—verse 30. "Allow them both to grow together. Don't uproot them. I will make the distinction in the last day with the angels. Let people more qualified than you make the distinction."

There are going to be times in the Church when someone could be insincere. We don't know because they're so much like a genuine believer. Even saints could be tares in one sense of the word. They need discipline. The Lord says, "If it's not abundantly clear, if the fruit is not obvious, back off and leave it alone, because you might in your zealotry injure someone without meaning to do so."

Back off, because if it resembles the real thing so closely, you could make a very serious mistake tromping on a believer, calling him insincere and a fake, when really he was struggling and you didn't understand. He said, "If the fruit is obviously rotten, then judge it. If the fruit is obviously good, then recognize it. If it's that close, leave it alone. You're not qualified to root that thing out, and you'll injure someone in the process."

The real exhortation is to be very slow and cautious in disciplining people. You have to make sure it's for real.

I give everyone doubly the benefit of the doubt. If I think they're kind of haywire, God says, "Let them alone until it's obvious. Allow them both to grow."

THE CHURCH WILL COVER THE EARTH BEFORE JESUS RETURNS

The third parable is the parable of the mustard seed. Verse 31. "Another parable He put forth to them, saying: 'The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches'" (Mt. 13:31-32).

A mustard seed is a very, very small seed, one of the smallest seeds. When it grows to maturity, it is one of the largest plants. Jesus was saying that the kingdom of God would start as a mustard seed, with 120 believers or twelve disciples, however you want to look at it. But when it's fully grown, it will cover the earth. He said, "The birds of the air will come and nest in its branches when it covers the earth." The Church will cover the earth before Jesus returns. It will be the largest of all religions in the earth in the end. But the devil will attack it through counterfeit, false brethren in positions of leadership. I'm more concerned with false brethren getting into places of leadership. They'll bring false doctrine and false teachings, etc. Timothy and Peter warn us of false teachers in the last days.

The birds speak of men inspired by Satan to do harm within the ranks of the Church. The largeness and the prosperity of the Church is going to draw and attract demonic influences. The positive aspect of the Church in the last days is this: it will have great triumph and tremendous growth. The negative aspect is that in its bigness, it will attract all kind of false brethren and compromise and everything else. Jesus is saying, "Be very careful, especially in the last days." It will be really big, but it will be really subtle. The birds will sneak into the branches. It will be a wicked thing.

THE KINGDOM IS LIKE LEAVEN WHICH A WOMAN HID IN THREE MEASURES OF MEAL

Verse 33. This is the only parable that speaks of a woman: "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened" (Mt. 12:33). Revelation 17 and 18 describe a woman called *Babylon*. It's a false religion. The kingdom of heaven is like leaven which a woman took and hid until it was all leavened. She deceitfully hides false doctrines and sins, which is the same thing as leaven. Eventually it will affect men with all different levels of authority.

This is also a warning that some men in the highest rank in the kingdom of God will be in sin and error. This is an exhortation for saints to study the Word of God and know the Bible for themselves. The devil is going to come, and false religions are going to hide leaven that influences every level of the Church. There will be men of the highest ranks who go sour at the end. Not predominantly; I'm not saying most will be that way. Some men with the greatest churches and the biggest ministries will go sour, because there will be leaven at every level of the Church in the last days. The woman is going to hide it in there, the mystery Babylon. It speaks of the devil, but it's also a warning that there will be lies at every level.

That puts the fear of God in you, doesn't it? We have to be people who stand on the Word. This is the motivation of having a Bible college, right here. It was the warning in 1 Timothy 4 that really motivated me to push this thing hard. At any rate, I feel this was what God called us to do. The Spirit of God explicitly says that there will be doctrines of demons and deceitful spirits deceiving, if possible, the very elect. I said, "Brethren, we have to have a system to start training and schooling people in the Word of God so that they know it from Genesis to Revelation and no one can steal it from their heart."

That's the whole point of the Bible college. These parables promise that there will be leaven at every single level of authority. Every single way you turn, there's the possibility of someone doing something that's not right. It's a spiritual kingdom. It's wicked; it's warfare. When the forces of darkness and the forces of light meet head on in the last days, it's going to be a terrifying thing. This isn't the sort of thing where you can "play church" and make it. The powers of darkness will be pursuing your soul to rule your soul with all their power. We have to stand tight together, we have to stand on the Word, and we have to know our Bibles.

THE VALUE AND THE GLORY OF WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A CHRISTIAN

Let's go on. He gives two different parables in verses 44 and 45. "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field" (Mt. 13:44). This man is a laborer; he's out in the field, working, doing his routine business. He wasn't looking for the Lord. He was just out doing his thing. He accidentally found a pearl. God suddenly apprehends some. Some of you were just living in this world and you had no more interest in God.

You showed up one day and got saved in an hour and you didn't even know what happened. You were minding your own business, doing your own thing, and stumbled upon a pearl. When you saw the value of it, you sold everything and went to the Lord. When men see the value of a pearl, then they sell everything.

I really am convinced that the highest—not the only, but the highest—motivation for believers is to see the value and the glory of what it means to be a Christian. In seeing the pearl, it causes them to sell everything. I believe in warnings of hell, but I don't believe those will motivate people like the potential for walking in glory. I think that in our counseling and also in our own pursuit of spiritual things, it's the pearl of great value that causes you to sell everything. It's the knowledge of God's glory that's available to you. That's one reason I go in that direction, because I believe Jesus said it would be that way.

SOME PEOPLE FIND GOD SUDDENLY, AND OTHERS FIND HIM GRADUALLY

Verses 45 and 46. "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it" (Mt. 13:45-46).

This man was a merchant, the owner of his business, and diligently seeking to attain more. He didn't stumble into it like the laborer; he was going after something. This speaks of the man who goes through the process of seeking God and gradually looking at every direction. The point is that some people find God suddenly and some people find God gradually.

Here's the last thing. Both men sold all that they had to keep the treasure. Whether you stumble into it or seek it, in the end, when you see its value, you'll sell everything. Neither of them earned the treasure. They both received it as a gift.

Page five. Mark 4 and Matthew 13 are very similar. This is one of my favorite passages of Scripture. Jesus was saying, "A lamp isn't bought to be put under a bed" (Mk. 4:21, paraphrased). God's intention of putting His Spirit inside of you, God's intention of giving you revelation, was to put you on the lampstand so that you could help other people.

God didn't save you and fill you with the Spirit to put you in the cellar so you would be ineffective. The whole point is so that power can flow from you. The reason I'm telling you this is because one of the biggest problems we have in developing a mind of faith and an attitude of expectancy is that we don't really believe God will give us this stuff. We think God put His power in us and gave us the Word of God to put us in the cellar. Jesus was insisting that God didn't give you His Word to put you in the cellar, but rather it was His desire to use you powerfully.

Here's why I think it's so important: the big thing in our way is that we just can't believe God really wants to use us. That's the biggest hindrance for every one of us in this room. It's just too good to be a miracle-worker.

That's why Jesus said, "God's intention wasn't to put you in the cellar. That's not why He put the Spirit of God in you."

GOD ONLY HIDES THINGS TO REVEAL THEM TO THE DILIGENT

In verse 22, He gives a little warning. It's an encouragement more than a warning. He says, "Nothing is hidden, except for the purpose of being revealed; nor is anything secret except that it can come to light" (Mk. 4:22, paraphrased). He's talking to His disciples and He's talking about the Word of God. He uses this in other situations. He quoted this statement in about three or four different situations. In this particular context He's talking about the Word of God.

It's the glory of a king to conceal a matter, and the glory of a man to search it out (Prov. 25:2). God only hides things to reveal them to the diligent. Because there's a principle in God that says this: "He only gives to the diligent man who knocks and keeps on knocking, asks and keeps on asking, seeks and keeps on seeking." God has things hidden, and only a select few of you in this room will get them because you'll be more diligent than the rest. It's not that God is mad at the rest, but He says, "I hid them to reveal them to the select."

Every man decides if he wants to be select. That's our prerogative. In every one of these parables, He's talking about the Word of God and the growth of the kingdom. Nothing is hidden except to be revealed in time. Nothing is withheld except to be released to the diligent. This is an encouragement after verse 21. I get more ministry from this little passage of Scripture here. I read these all the time and think to myself, "Man, I'm going to get it."

God says, "I'm only withholding it from you in order to give it to you when you grow in greater diligence. Then you'll have it."

I say, "Why don't You just give it to me now?"

"There's a principle that goes like this. I only give to hungry men, and you're not hungry enough for some of the things you want yet."

I say, "Me?"

"Yes, you. You're just like everyone else. You have to submit to the same principle." There are things that our souls are going to lay hold of when we start to hunger for them. If we don't want to get hungrier, we're still going to go to heaven and have a good time; but a few souls who get hungry will get them.

He only withheld them to give them to the hungry. It stirs you up in one way, and in another way you think, "Oh, boy... why doesn't He just make it easy?"

He says, "No, they're too precious to give that easily."

That's His purpose, here in verse 21: to give it. Verse 22 tells you to press in and be diligent. You have to be hungry in order to get it. Verse 24 is probably one of my very favorite passages. This is all in relationship to verses 21-22.

“Take heed what you hear. With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given. For whoever has, to him more will be given; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him” (Mk. 4:24-25).

If you have a revelation from God, and you grow negligent, you’ll lose the revelation you had. I’ve had fresh revelation of things, and then a year later I grew negligent in my soul and I lost the freshness. I couldn’t get a handle on it anymore. I lost the thing I had at one time.

These verses put the fear of God in me. Be very careful what you listen to. What’s the message? The message is verse 21: God will put a light in you to shine it to other people. That’s the purpose of God. Be careful that you don’t water that down.

THE SEED THAT IS PLANTED WILL TRANSFORM YOUR HEART

“The kingdom of heaven is like a man who cast seed upon the ground. He goes to bed at night and gets up in day and the seed sprouts up and grows. How it grows he doesn’t know. The earth produces crop by itself: first the blade, then the head, then the mature grain in the head. When the crop permits, he immediately puts in the sickle, for the harvest has come” (Mk. 4:26-29, paraphrased).

There’s a seed thrown in the ground, the guy sleeps, and there’s a harvest the next day. The seed planted in your heart will transform you, whether you understand how it works or not. The guy couldn’t understand how it grew so quickly, but it did happen. It grew by itself as far as he knew. When that Word gets in your heart, it will perform a great work in you. It will transform you.

All those verses, in Thessalonians, Acts, 1 and 2 Peter, and Colossians, they’re all verses that tell you the Word of God in you will change you. The Word of God dwelling in you through meditation will transform your life into godliness and power. It has to be grafted in your heart. The result of the implanted Word: the results are progressive yet continually maturing. God will cause the Word to produce fruit in you. It’s a supernatural mystery until a great harvest of power and godliness results. It’s really mysterious, the way this works. He will cause it to grow until great power flows through you one day. You’ll go to bed and wake up and all of a sudden you’ll be anointed. You’ll think, “Where’s this power coming from? How am I *doing* this?!”

You won’t know. It’s going to start as a blade, and it will mature, and mature, and mature. There will be a great harvest in the end. That’s encouraging.

All these are about the Word of God. Mark 5. There’s a great little story in between verses 35-41 of chapter 4, but I don’t have time for it now. Jesus rebuked the wind. When He fell asleep, they started getting all upset. Jesus rebuked them for being upset in the middle of the storm. He said, “I’ve given you plenty of reasons to understand that I’m the Son of God. You have no reason of being afraid right now.” It wasn’t a cute little rebuke. He was really rebuking them because of unbelief. He sternly rebuked them.

They said, “Lord.”

He said, “No, you’ve seen Me raise the dead. You’ve seen Me do all kinds of things. You have no reason for fear.”

Fear and unbelief is not a second-rate sin. It's at the top of the list. It really is. Telling God that He's not who He says He is, is not a small a thing.

JESUS CASTS A LEGION OF DEVILS INTO A HERD OF PIGS

Mark 5. Jesus casts a legion of devils into a herd of pigs. Matthew says there were two men possessed. One was possessed by a legion, and another was a demon-possessed guy. Mark and Luke just say it was one man, because Mark and Luke wanted to single out the one. It's not that there's a contradiction. They didn't have to tell the story fully, as we saw in the first session. One man can leave out as many details as he wants and he isn't contradicting the man who adds details as long as they're all truthful. It is just interesting.

There was a leading demon whose name was *Legion*. There were a lot of other demons inside of this man. A man can be filled by a lot of demons; did you know that? But there's always a ruling demon. This one particular ruling demon, his name was Legion. Jesus spoke to Legion and Legion said things like, "My name is Legion; for we are many" (Mk. 5:9). He says his name in the singular *and* in the plural!

Legion began to earnestly entreat Jesus not to send them out of him. "Don't send all of us out." This is the demon with the highest authority speaking. They began to implore Jesus (Mk. 5:12). All the other demons started talking up. All these lesser powers started speaking as well. Legion shut up and all the other demons were talking through this guy. I think he was a very famous man. I don't think this is the average possession; I think this was a very extraordinary possession. Everyone in Decapolis knew who this man was. He was very well known as the demoniac.

Jesus was over here in Galilee. He crossed the sea to heal that one man and He crosses back over and the crowds were still waiting. He was gone for a day at most. He maybe left for a day and came back at night. Someone must have come to Him and said, "Hey, the guys on the other side of the lake." Everyone for hundreds of miles around knew about this guy.

Jesus said, "I will take care of him." He hopped in the boat. That just shows you how nervous He was. He fell asleep in the boat. It didn't bother Him.

This was probably the most demon-possessed man in all of Palestine. "For He had been saying to him, 'Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!' (Mk. 5:8, NASB). The implication is that Jesus didn't just speak the Word and break the power of the devil; He was commanding in a continuous way for that devil to come out.

Luke tells us that Jesus had been commanding that devil out, for the devil didn't come immediately (Lk. 8:29). There was a little warfare, even with Jesus. That encourages me a little. "Come out of him!" That devil kept talking and Jesus was commanding him over and over to come out.

You ought to read the three accounts, in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. This is a powerful demon-possession. He was naked. He broke chains. He had guards. He could beat up scores of men at one time. He was a really fierce man. He had a little buddy with him; there were two of them and they caused all kinds of trouble.

DEVILS FIND THEIR GREATEST EXPRESSION IN HUMAN BEINGS

The devils asked the question, because devils can talk. Most of you know that. In deliverances demons can talk back through the voice of the person. They said, "Hey, how about let us go into those pigs over there" (Lk. 8:32,

paraphrased)? Devils can inhabit animals, and a devil would rather get in an animal than just go to the waterless places. A devil can find the greatest expression in a human being; the second greatest expression in an animal. They don't like to be cast out into the waterless places, the desert region, because they don't get any expression there. It's just across the lake. Decapolis, a Greek region, is right underneath. Jesus is in the Gadarenes. Here there were Jewish people on the backside of the mountains selling pigs. All of you know that a good Jewish boy doesn't raise pigs to sell them. It was a very unlawful thing they were doing. They had an entire farm of 2,000. Imagine being a good Jewish boy. No one knows, because you were on the other side of the sea. No one crossed over. You're in the little wilderness area. They would sell them to the Greeks and make a lot of illegal money. Here you are selling pigs and the Messiah comes to your market. The Messiah, the Promise of Israel, comes and discovers them with all these pigs. They thought, "Ay, yi yi! Guess who's coming to dinner?"

He comes there, sees all the pigs, and He knew it was unlawful. That's why Jesus allowed the spirits to go into the pigs to destroy them. It was an unlawful practice. It's not like Jesus came into town and took liberty to destroy someone's farm. It was a very illegal practice that was going on. That's why all that happened.

Then later the people came to Him and asked Him to leave the region (Mk. 5:17). "We appreciate You casting devils out of our guy, but You ruined all our profits. Would You go somewhere else?" They didn't want Jesus around. That tells you a little of their condition.

ACCORDING TO YOUR FAITH, YOU WILL BE MADE WELL

Two last things. Two blind men; the woman with the hemorrhage; Jairus' daughter. Three or four miracles. He crosses the sea and does three or four miracles just like that. Every single one of them He said, "According to your expectancy, it will be given to you." He called it faith. It's the same principle as Mark 4:24. The woman wants to get healed and He says, "According to your expectancy of what I'll do as God, that's what I'll do for you—no more and no less" (Mk. 5:34). Four times or five times in a row, He gives that principle. I think it's a principle we have to get hold of. That's the one statement He said every time. According to your faith, you will be healed. If you live in fear, you won't get what you're asking for.

ANSWER:

Prayer and fasting makes your soul—mind, emotion, and will—more sensitive and developed in faith and obedience.

ANSWER:

Some devils you can cast out more easily than others. Others take a much greater consciousness of your dominion to cast them out. That's called *faith*. When you pray and fast, your heart rises in revelation, which is dominion. The disciples probably couldn't have cast that devil out if they couldn't cast the other devil out.

ANSWER:

I believe we're in the beginnings of it. I believe there will be a great increase. Already across the city, I believe things are going more quickly.

ANSWER:

Parables aren't intended to establish doctrines. Parables can bring to the sensitive heart a warning or an exhortation to something. A parable never gives doctrine. It always gives an exhortation or a warning. That's very, very good. It's a warning to stay away or an exhortation to avoid something.

ANSWER:

I tell you, it's the nature of the devils to murder. Jesus told them that their father was a murderer from the beginning (Jn. 8:44). If I was a devil and I was going to possess someone, I would take good care of them. I wouldn't beat their heads against walls. Their nature is so bent on destruction that even against their own interest and purpose they destroy. It's the wildest thing I ever heard of. They destroy their own dwelling place, and they'll go to another one and destroy that one. If all of you were devils, wouldn't you just go easy on the guy and hang tight for a while? They don't do it that way.

ANSWER:

It says the power was leaving Him. The gal touched Him and He perceived that power left Him. In Luke, it's a different situation where power was leaving Him and healing many.

In Colossians 1, Paul says he labors according to the power that mightily dwells in him (Col. 1:29). When Paul laid hands on people, power actually left his hands physically. Tangible power leaves you. That's what he's talking about. It's kind of neat.

I've only had one vision in my life. There was this beaming light in me. It was beaming out of me. I could direct it with my hands, with my eyes, and with my mouth. I could go like this. When my soul was pure, this light would flow through my hands and deliver people. It was coming out of me. Something was actually leaving my hands. It was the wildest thing I ever saw.

ANSWER:

Then we become conscious of it in our soul making us pure, and we actually become conscious of it leaving our hands. There are times, not very often, when I'm laying hands on people and I can feel the power leaving me. I can tell many, many times if a person is going to get slain in the Spirit. I can feel it leave. I'm so positive about that. I think, "Man!"

Will whispers over sometimes. Some of the other people have said it: "My hands are starting to burn right now." "Let's get a healing line going." Those kinds of things. There's the residue of power in you. It flows out according to faith and obedience in your soul. It flows through you. You have to remove all the defilements out of you or it won't flow.