



And he was teaching them many things in parables, and in his teaching he said to them: "Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow..." (Mark 4:3)

Imagine...

Imagine being an ordinary Jewish farmer living in Galilee of the first century. It's been a long day's worth of hard work in the fields. You're walking along the sea on your way back home and you see "a very large crowd" gathered along the coast. Sitting in a boat, just a few feet from the shore, is that young teacher, Jesus. You've heard various rumblings and even some hard-to-believe rumors of extraordinary healings. But you've been busy. So very busy. Too busy to waste an hour of daylight listening to some son of a carpenter from Nazareth. But the breeze along the large lake is nice, so you stop and stand on the outside fringe of that very large crowd. And this is what you hear...

Mark 4:3-9

How would you have reacted? What would you have thought? If you left the crowd at that point and headed for home, what would you have taken away from this encounter with Jesus?

But what if, as the majority of the crowd dispersed, you got closer and you heard...

Mark 4:10-34

What now? If later you were going to describe what you had heard and recap what Jesus was talking about, how would you do it? What was Jesus' main message on that ordinary day in Galilee?

"Listen! Behold..." Those two words in Mark 4:3 are really important. In your own words—just one lesson into this series—what does Jesus want people to see?



For Class & Family Discussion:

What about you? How do you think you would have reacted if you heard Jesus in [Mark 4:3-9](#)? What would you have thought? If you left the crowd at that point and headed for home, what would you have taken away from this encounter with Jesus?

As our study develops, we'll look deeper into [Mark 4:10-34](#), but using it now as a kind of introduction to our study, what do you think the big idea of Jesus' message was on that ordinary day in Galilee?

We're going to use the word "parable" a lot in this study. If you were explaining what Jesus did in passages like [Mark 4](#) to someone who doesn't know much about the Bible, how would you describe what a parable is?

Why wouldn't Jesus come right out and just give us a list of things to do and not do? Why do you think Jesus often taught using parables?

How many parables of Jesus can you remember? Working as a group, how many can we list together? Hold on to your list and we'll revisit what you wrote in next week's class...