

The Great Servant-Prophet: Addresses on the Gospel of Mark

The Sower and the Rester

Mark 4:1-23, 35-41

W. T. Turpin

were men of every conceivable kind of natural characteristic, and there were not two alike. They were simple men that were away from all the prejudices and passions of men; they were humble men, men that led a homely life, most of them Galilean fishermen. The more one thinks of whom He surrounded Himself with as servants of His own pleasure and choice, the character and kind of persons they were, the more one's heart is struck with the beauty of it all. There is nothing so blinding as prejudice; they were free from that. I was struck with what I was reading only this very day, namely, that in the seventeenth century Harvey discovered the circulation of the blood; there is not a man in his senses at the present moment who would deny it, but there was not a physician forty years of age that believed it at that time. Why? Under the blinding power of prejudice; and if that has such a wonderful effect in things terrestrial and secular, we know to our cost how perverting and darkening and deluding it is in things spiritual. You might as well try to get sense into a wall as try to get a truth of God into a mind that is darkened with prejudice. Now what I notice is that these men were simple men, and the first men to whom the message of mercy and greatness and goodness in this world was made known were "shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night." Dear men these were, apart from all the ways of the city that man made, and lovers of the country that God made. So here were these Galilean fishermen, simple, humble men in life. These are the chosen disciples and the chosen witnesses to accompany the Lord of life and glory in His service in this world. O that we may learn to admire His blessed words, and to adore Him for His blessed ways.

I must say in closing one little word more, and then I will return to it, if the Lord permit, next week. You find how little man understands -- friends and enemies are all alike in misunderstanding -- the ways of Christ. You find here that His friends actually thought Him beside Himself. Blind nature, that never comprehends Christ's ways. And then there was the malice and vile wickedness of these hypocritical scribes and Pharisees, that attributed these works of mercy to the devil. Now when all that comes out here, some one comes to the Lord and says, Your mother and your brethren desire to see you. He says, Who is my mother or my brethren? Now He breaks all natural associations, He breaks off from all natural links, He disowns all natural ties; and mark what He says. "Who is my mother or my brethren? Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother and my sister and mother." I do not know a word in scripture that is so comforting as that; He applies the dear titles and the dear names of relationship to the person who in this self-willed world does God's will; "Whosoever shall do the will of God." Ah, beloved friends, that obedience, how blessed it is to think of it! It is not a feeling that evaporates, it is not the self-esteem that will come to an end sooner or later; a broken heart can render obedience, a broken heart can be subject; and that is what I call real life. It is not that sort of life that in reality does not live. There is a thing that moves which is not life; it is like a balloon, it goes up by its emptiness, and it comes down when its inflation is over; but real life, what its principle, what is its character? Obedience. "Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother and my sister and mother." May God

grant that we may understand that, beloved friends, and may He by His grace so write His precious word to-night on all our hearts, that we may take it in a little more through His grace, and that it may come out in us practically to His praise and glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Chapter 7

The Sower And The Rester

Mark 4:1-23; 35-41

I am anxious, beloved friends, to bring before you a little this evening the blessed Lord in both these scenes here. In the first part He is the unceasingly laborious Sower of the word; in the last part He is the weary, resting man. You find Him perfect in both positions. It is very striking to see Him setting forth the new place that He had taken Himself consequent upon the breaking off of all earthly relationships with His own people, and no longer looking for seed or fruit in this world from men, but now Himself sowing it to produce fruit by His doctrine and teaching in this world; and as we have noticed in the other scenes of His blessed ministry and service that we have looked at, sowing it assiduously, unweariedly, in acts of mercy and ways of goodness on every side. Then in the close of the chapter we see Him, I have no doubt, seeking for rest and repose as far as His blessed frame and body was concerned. He says to His disciples, "Let us go over to the other side." I have a little word to say as to what I am assured is a deep moral and spiritual lesson in it for us, but still the fact was that for Himself, as a man, he would rest. I am speaking of Him now as the servant; He was wearied with His journey, as we know He was when He sat on Jacob's well. He proposes to them to go across to the eastern shore of the lake. We will, by God's help, look a little afterwards at the circumstances with regard to the storm, how it found Him and how it found them.

First of all, with regard to the seed-sowing. Notice the way it is introduced; it is the first beginning of His ministry in parables. What we have had before us up to the present have been works of mercy, ministry in acts rather than in preaching, though there was preaching as well, there was also teaching; but still, for the most part, what we have been considering these weeks past have been *works* and *acts* of mercy in which His goodness was displayed. But here now you have, more properly speaking, ministry itself, and ministry after a peculiar form, even after a parabolic method; He is teaching by parables. I think there was an especial reason for His doing that. First of all, as the opposition to Him in His service is increased (for we find it increasing as we go on in the gospel), as this opposition was growing on every hand, and the hatred and dislike of His enemies met Him more at every turn, He has recourse in the wisdom and blessed knowledge of His own mind, to this method of imparting instruction in the face of the opposition. Also, I have no doubt at all, it was the governmental dealing of God with a people who had always rejected the plain words and plain truth that had been set before them both by His forerunner and Himself. Hence this passage quoted from Isa. 6 is a very solemn passage; He gave it as the reason why He taught them in parables; He expounded them to

the disciples, but He taught the people in parables: "That seeing they may see and not perceive, and hearing they may hear and not understand." That is to say, there was, in the manner of instruction, and in the mode of conveying the doctrine, as far as the people were concerned, a judicial dealing with them. The people had positively refused Him. You must remember that His forerunner had set Him forth in the plainest way, and His own acts and works of mercy declared distinctly who He was, and yet He was rejected; and as we saw last week, He rejects and breaks off all associations with His own people after the flesh. He says, "Who is my mother and my brethren? And he looked round about on them that sat about him and said, Behold my mother and my brethren; for whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother and my sister and mother." That is to say, He recognizes in a self-willed generation and in a self-willed time, when all minds passed over to their own way -- He recognizes, I say, as in the dearest and tenderest ties to Him those who were governed by the will of God. Now, beloved friends, that is very blessed for our souls, even that He counts in the dearest and tenderest and nearest relationship to Himself in that way the one who by grace does His Father's will. You can see at once how this opened distinctly the way for what we may call this new action here. He is not looking for anything from man; after that I should not expect that He would seek to find any thing, even in Israel here. Now He takes this entirely new place; He is now the *producer* of what He would have; He is not *seeking* for it now, He is about to sow; He takes the place of Sower; He sows this seed, falling upon different soils, and with different effects.

He begins it with this: "Hearken." And that is a word that is peculiar to Mark; you will not find it in the other gospels: "Hearken." I believe He had a reason for using this word; first of all as a caution against anything like levity of mind with respect to the simplicity of the figure under which He would convey the most profound truth -- "Hearken" -- He has something to communicate which, perhaps, at first sight would be of little account to those who listened or heard, and therefore He would impress upon them the importance of what He is about to convey.

Then there is another word, and all these are important to notice -- "Behold." I think that justifies the inference that has been drawn from it, that there was such a scene going on there under their very eyes, that is to say, there was a sower sowing his seed. The Lord was in the boat on the sea, and the people were on the land, and it is more than probable that there was such a scene before them there and then, for we know how often the Lord drew His parabolic instructions and lessons from things in nature as they passed before the eyes of those to whom He was communicating His mind. So it might be that there was within their sight a husbandman engaged in his field with his seed, and therefore the Lord says, "Hearken, behold, a sower went forth to sow." Yet it is His own case; it is the place He has taken in this world.

But there is one other little word before we pass on which connects itself with that. We must remember, beloved friends,

that the seed here is distinctly the word of God, the word is what is really sown, and sown broadcast; He preached the kingdom of God, His servants since have preached; but that was what was really sown here broadcast in this world. And that which makes it so very important, is, there is no expectation now from man at all, there is no looking that anything could now be produced even from Israel, which was the best specimen of humanity in this world; it must be now an entirely new and divine thing, that is, as it were, planted in this world. Hence you get seed, heavenly seed, if you so like to call it; because everything in that sense that really is for God in this world is heavenly, has come from heaven; you cannot get anything from man or from the earth, it must all come from above. And hence it is not only a new action, but there is an entirely new seed now which is about to be sown, which is the word of God: "the seed is the word of God" He tells us Himself when He interprets it.

Now we have the different classes, and I think you will notice three things in them. The first class is indifference; there was the wayside, and as the sower sowed, some of the seed fell by the wayside. The meaning of the wayside was the hard footpath that had been trodden down through the cultivated field, and which had become hard by the constant pressure of the feet upon it. Some seed fell upon this footpath and the fowls of the air came and devoured it: that is indifference, and that is what we see continually and constantly. But there are two things that are very momentous for us to take account of; there is not merely the badness and unprofitableness, so to speak, of the soil upon which the seed fell; not merely the sterility and hardness and barrenness of the soil, but there is a distinct power of the devil as well which acts here. You will observe the two things, the wayside and the fowls; and we must not forget that, because the blessed Lord when He interprets the parable tells us that the fowls really correspond to and set forth the evil influence of Satan, the devil, the adversary of God and men, the accuser of men too, the devil is watching and waiting at every moment to snatch away the seed that is sown. And, characteristic of this gospel of Mark, that word I have pointed out to you as so frequently occurring in it is here; "immediately." When this seed falls on that soil there is nothing in the soil that is in kindred character to produce anything from that seed, but on the contrary it is the very place where Satan can come and "immediately" snatch the seed away. That is the indifference one continually finds with regard even to the truth of God in this world; we are confronted with it every day, a sort of callous, cold, hard, stoical indifference to the whole thing. There is a very remarkable illustration in the apostle Paul's ministry of this "wayside"; I was struck with it in looking at it recently. Read at your leisure Acts 17, when the apostle was at Athens. What did he find at Athens? That they lived simply to cultivate some fantastic novelty for their mind, and to listen to and gather up some new thing, but there was the most absolute indifference with regard to truth. When the apostle pressed it upon them you remember what they said, "He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods, because he preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection." And not only

that, but they mocked, and they were perfectly ready to defer the preacher of that gospel to another time. It was "the wayside." The word was sown by the servant of God; it fell upon a surface trodden down by the feet of natural interests. That is what the wayside hearer is; it is a surface of mind that the feet of natural interests have trodden hard. That is what the Athenians were; the devil came and took away the precious seed at once, and there was nothing at all produced. What a word it is! And it is for us as Christians and believers in our Lord Jesus Christ to learn lessons from such a word as this. You see, beloved friends, what indifference leads to; we can see it, perhaps, a little more plainly in its wide general sense in the world; but the same thing, the very same principle, will work with us as regards the truth of God, that affects the worldling and unconverted person. If you get to be a wayside hearer, if you get a hard, stolid, stoical mind and heart, so that the word falls on it and produces nothing, but on the contrary is snatched away by Satan, you will find the very same thing in principle; you will find that there is a measure of indifference.

If you hang your hands down in slothful ease, if you simply give yourselves to this principle which has been promulgated to a very great extent of late, and which is considered to be a very good and just thing to press upon people, that you have nothing to do but just simply to open your ear in a sort of listless way and take the thing in, that there is to be no exercise of soul or heart, no subjective process in your heart by the Spirit of God, you become practically in principle wayside hearers of the truth of God. I do not say in fact, because of course in fact we are speaking of that which is outside; but *the principle* of it. If your heart is uncultivated, if there is no tenderness and softness of soil there, if it is merely trodden down by those feet that constantly pass over it every day, there is nothing to receive the seed; and not only that, but the devil is at hand; and mark this, the very best bit of truth that falls upon your heart, if it does not receive through God's grace a lodgment there, and if it does not by His mighty power get a place in the soul, that is the very truth the devil will take from you. Therefore you find these two things (I am speaking now to saints for a moment, to try and draw lessons from this), there is the state of the mind and the state of the heart, and there is also the bird of prey that is ready to take the seed away. And I have observed, and painfully observed, oftentimes, that when that is the case, very soon the terms of the truth disappear; that when people have simply rested in the terms, by-and-by there was not a shred of the terms left with them. I have seen often that the very outward expression, the very outward name that is attached to certain truths of God has gone as sure as the truth itself has not pulverized the soil of the soul and received a lodgment there by God's Spirit. The truth is gone, and the state becomes the most appalling deadly indifference, even in the children of God. The Lord help us to watch against that; it is a most dangerous condition of things. Therefore I call that first principle here indifference: the wayside hearers are indifferent hearers; there is no softness in the soil to receive the word; it is hard and trodden down, and the bird of prey is

on the alert, and the seed is taken away.

Now look at the second for a moment. "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." Now if what we have already looked at is indifference, this is *shallowness*; here you get a shallow order of things. If you get carelessness and recklessness and insensibility in the first, here you get want of root, want of depth, shallowness and emptiness; and that is what the stony ground hearer is. The expression "on stony ground" does not mean exactly, perhaps, what we mean when we use the word conventionally; it is not ground in which there are stones, because that of itself would not hinder the root getting down into the earth; but what the blessed Lord means here by stony ground is a positive surface of rock, over which there was a very slight and thin coating of earth. It is not the ground or soil that has stones merely scattered about in it, as you may have often seen as you pass through the country, but here it is a hard surface or bed of rock, over which there is a slight coating of earth. And the Lord says in His parable, there is *no depth of earth*, there is no root. Look what happens; the seed falls there, and -- it is a very remarkable thing -- immediately it springs up. Now, beloved friends, we have often seen that; and we have to watch against that kind of thing. Immediately it springs up; that is to say, that the growth in the first instance is as rapid as the withering at the close. It springs up with a rapidity in proportion to the absence of depth. I daresay there may be a great deal of feeling about it, but it is *only* feeling; and there may be a great deal of sentiment connected with it, but it is only sentiment; the solemn point here is, that there was no depth of earth and no root. Now what is that, beloved friends? I believe firmly if there be any truth that needs pressing more earnestly than another upon our consciences and hearts it is this, that there must be a deep root in conscience, a work in conscience in our souls before God. Oftentimes you will find that people take up a thing for the delight and joy of it, and, as has often been said, give it up afterwards for the trouble it may bring; the conscience has never been penetrated and pierced through and through, it has never been pulverized by light. Conscience must be gripped and grasped by the light and truth of God; that is the way it enters in; if it does not enter in that way, it may perhaps affect a man in two other ways, both of which are profitless. If it enter in merely by the mind, it remains a cold, icy, powerless, unproductive, unprofitable thing; if it enter in merely by the feelings, that perhaps will express itself like the noisy pebbles of the brook, loud in proportion to its shallowness; there is a great noise made, but there is no depth of water. It must be deep down in the conscience, for in that is the root and foundation for all the truth of God; conscience is the avenue to the soul; there is no other way by which truth can really get into our souls except by the conscience; and therefore the first effect of the truth of God upon a person when it comes in divine power, is to make a person not glad, but greatly cast down, not to lift a person up or to elate him; it is not to make a man go about and say, What a beautiful

word this is, how lovely it is, how precious it is! and so forth. That is only *vox et proeterea nihil* -- a sound and nothing more. When the word and truth of God reaches our consciences in divine power it must judge us; the entrance in of light must find out the darkness that is there; we must be subdued by it. The stony ground hearer is exactly the opposite of all this; the whole thing is rapid; the process is rapid, growth is quick, externally it looks beautiful to an untutored and unpracticed eye; but mark the effect, "They have no root in themselves"; and observe the interpretation the blessed Lord gives of this, "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." How often, beloved friends, if we take that out of the parabolic representation that is given of it there, how frequently have we found that principle working. It is not merely in regard to the truth in the world and the consciences and souls of men in the world, but how often have we found that working in ourselves. Perhaps there is somebody here to-night to whom this word comes, and fits them exactly. How often have I heard people say with regard to the truth of God, "Oh! I thought it was all so nice, it sounded so sweetly, it was indeed as a lovely sound and as one who can play well on an instrument, but now the whole thing is changed as to my judgment, and I give it all up." Do you see the shallowness and emptiness of the way in which the truth -- any truth you like, whether truth about the church, or truth about Christ, or whatever else it may be -- the shallow way, I say, in which the truth has got hold of a person, the entire absence of all real root and depth of earth there? The consequence is, the moment trouble comes and pressure comes, instead of that root being deepened the whole thing is abandoned. That is the history, I grieve to say, of many a person tonight; they gave it up for the trouble it entailed; they took it up for the joy, but they gave it up for the trouble; the moment there was pressure for it they abandoned it; they never suffered for it. It is a grand thing to suffer for the truth. I believe in my soul that if the truth had been more suffered for by us in these last days, we should cling more tenaciously with all our hearts to it: I believe it has all been too easy, instead of being like the Christians at first and in New Testament times, when they had to suffer on every side, and were cast out and despised, and when the taking up the part of the crucified Nazarene, and professing themselves to be His disciples, and following in His ways, put them outside everything that was accounted respectable, the friends and disciples of a crucified Man, scorned and hated of all men for His sake. We have not got that now, and are we not correspondingly weak without it? Be assured, friends, that for which a person suffers is the thing that is *valued*. If it were possible to shed a little of your blood for the truth, if you could conceive such a thing as a person going to the stake and suffering for the truth because it was dear to the heart, if one could come away from the stake, O what an inscription that suffering would make of the blessedness of the truth upon

one's affections and heart. The spirit of martyrdom and the spirit of the martyrs is not in this age. The more I think of it the more solemn it is to me; people will not suffer for anything; the principle of the day is, let us have it all with the greatest possible ease and the greatest possible luxury, let it be all a smooth way, the absence of all contrariety in every shape and form. Alas! I fear this is the principle, and in proportion to it is the shallowness. That is what the stony ground hearer brings before us; the shallowness, the emptiness, the rapid growth that so quickly passes away.

We have an illustration of it in the Epistle to the Galatians, as well as Paul's ministry at Athens in Acts 17. I think his ministry in Galatia strikingly illustrates the stony ground hearer, and is it not quite evident that in Galatia there was very great exuberance of feeling and heart? Does he not say, "I bear you record that if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes and given them to me." They seem to have been perfectly entranced with the truth he brought before them; but now he is obliged to say, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel, which is not another." He says, as it were, You have given it up, or were on the eve of giving it up.

Now let us look at the third class here, that is, the thorns. In the thorns I see the effect of mixed motives. I believe the first is indifference, the second is shallowness, and the third mixed motives. "And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no fruit." The Lord explained it in this way, "These are they which are sown among thorns, such as hear the word" -- now mark -- "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." There is a double action in the thorns; there is the light-excluding power of the thorns, and there is the terrible grip which the thorn growing up has over the plant, so that it chokes it; it has neither light nor fruit. The light is excluded from the plant by the power of the thorn, and it is choked before it can produce fruit under the enormous tenacity and grip of the thorn upon it. Now mark what the Lord calls thorns when he takes this out of parable and puts it into reality for us. It is a very strong word that is used in the original for "cares," the very strongest word that can be used; it means corroding, perplexing, care, care that, so to speak, would cut a man in two! I believe that is really the thought of it, "the cares of this world." I want to press that earnestly upon hearts to-night; because you know we should all accept the other part of it, we should all say, "I know something about the deceitfulness of riches," though we might like to have them for all that, and I quite believe there is a danger of the "lusts of other things" coming in; but I am quite sure many of us tonight might speak humbly before God about cares, for we know what it is to pass through terrible anxiety about cares till God in His infinite grace freed us from them. But there is nothing that has so destructive an effect upon a Christian as care, and for this reason, because we think in a kind of way, and reason to ourselves, that we have a right, and that it is correct and proper for us to have cares.

Now where have we learned that it is right and proper for us to have cares? Oh, the terrible pressure of anxiety and fretting and trouble and difficulty that too often settles down upon us, "the cares of this world" do indeed corrode. Have we not a Father in heaven whose heart delights that we should roll our burden upon Him? Is there not a bosom and a heart where if you put your head you can lose your care? Does not He invite us in the love of His heart really to cast the thing upon Him, really to roll it upon Him? As the apostle says, "Casting all your care upon him." Why? In order to get free from it? No, but because "He careth for you." "Be careful for nothing," that is the same word.

Do you say, How? "In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God; and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts." It is these cares that wear people out, these anxieties that press upon us. And more than that, often it is not so much cares about the present, but cares about the future. How do you know that you will have that future? What right have we to talk about to-morrow? Look here, beloved friends, we oftentimes put before our minds a to-morrow with some sort of perplexing worry we have to meet, when today or to-night we might be with the Lord. It is not to-morrow and the burdens that we imagine, but it is to-day. How do you know to-morrow will ever come. Alas it is not only to-morrow, but we hear people constantly say, "I do not know what I shall do next year." Why should we trouble ourselves as to next year? Rather let us hearken to what the scriptures bring before us, "Now we beseech you brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and by our gathering together unto him." This is the proximate, immediate hope before us. We have to do with Him to-day, and He may be here before to-night. A person said not long since to me, "I did not think of that." The Lord help us to think of it, how it disposes of all anticipations. May we not well dread about ourselves, and fear as to how far the truth and doctrines we assert are practical with us? For instance, this very truth of the Lord's coming, that precious, blessed present living hope for our hearts. What is the value of our assertion of it in words, if by it we are not delivered out of this wretched, miserable, corroding care with regard to the future? If it were in our hearts in power I believe it would thus work. I say I may not be here, yet if I am here, and if the trouble is there, thank God, there is One whose heart is sufficient, whose tenderness is unbounded, whose power is unlimited, and whose grace knows no end and no let; and is He going to desert me?

I believe in my soul it is a simple question of our knowing Him, and knowing His heart, so that we can trust Him. To know Him is to trust Him. I see all that in connection with this word, "the cares of this world." O my dear brother or sister, perhaps you have cares in your family, and cares in your household; beware that they do not press you down; do not let them be like the thorns that choke the living truth of the word of God in your soul. "The cares of this world."

"The deceitfulness of riches" I need not dwell upon; but I remember being struck with the fact that cares are put here with these things, and put first, too: "The cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in; choke the word and it becometh unfruitful."

Now I think I see a very remarkable illustration of that, too, in the apostle's ministry; I believe his ministry at Corinth was a perfect illustration of the thorns. If you make yourselves acquainted in detail with the circumstances of the assembly at Corinth, and with all the things that were there, you will see how striking it is. There they were at Corinth, setting up factions and rival teachers, as if they wanted to bring the schools into the church of God: one said he was of Paul, another said he was of Apollos, another said he was of Cephas, and most sad of all, another said he was of Christ. To make Christ the head of a party was disgusting and revolting in the extreme. Not only that, but they got drunk at the Lord's supper; there was at Corinth immorality and drunkenness, faction and party spirit; and together with all that, when you come to the end of the epistle, you find that they were positively wrangling and disputing about the resurrection. If ever there was a thorny field it was Corinth; there was every sort of evil there, "the deceitfulness of riches," "the lusts of other things" -- because lust was rampant at Corinth -- and there was the apostle's word choked in that assembly, and it became unfruitful. God in His infinite mercy and grace wrought through His servant, and brought them to their bearings; but it is a striking illustration of the thorns. I think those three illustrations are most illustrative of those three conditions -- his ministry at Athens of the wayside hearers, his ministry in Galatia of the stony-ground hearers, and his ministry at Corinth of all that takes place in the thorns.

The Lord in His infinite grace give us to be exercised before Him, that we may not have the word choked. How many a one I have seen where alas! it is so. It is a most expressive phrase, "The word is *choked*, and it becomes unfruitful."

Then we have the last, namely, they upon good ground. "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." Then He gives the explanation of it, "These are they which are sown on good ground, such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit." I need not dwell upon that, only this, that what marked those on the good ground was *loyalty to the truth*. Mark the three things that are said here, they *heard*, they *received*, and they *brought forth*; three very important realities. They heard; many a one hears; do you receive? They received, and then they brought forth fruit, that is to say, they practiced it: they heard it, they received it, they practiced it; some thirty, some sixty, and some a hundred fold.

One little word more, and then we will look at the last scene. Why does this next illustration follow the parable of the sower? He says in v. 21: "Is a candle brought to be put under a bushel or under a bed? and not to be set on a

candlestick? For there is nothing hid, which shall not be manifested; neither was anything kept secret, but that it should come abroad." What is the meaning of that? Why should it come there? What connection has it with the sower? You observe how He passes from the similitude of the sower and seed and various kinds of soil to a lamp-stand or candle-stand, and He says, "Is a candle brought to be put under a bushel or under a bed?" I believe it was the custom amongst the Jews to have in each house one bushel and one bed. It comes in very strikingly, and to me it means not only has the Lord sown the seed in this world, but His intention is that it should shine, and that it should be openly seen and manifested here, so that the light of it should spread on every side. Hence He says, If you light a candle, you do not go and put it under a bed or under a bushel. I am afraid some of us are inclined to do that: what is wanted is that the light should be seen, that it should shine, that it should go out on all sides. If you light a candle, you do not put it under a bushel or under a bed, you put it on a lamp-stand, that all may see the light. I think it is most remarkable that that symbol and that figure should come in immediately after the sowing of the seed, indicating to us, that His truth is to be continued in this world as a light that everybody may see, and that it should shine out, blessed be God, through His people; through us, if it has got into us and that people should see it, and that it should not be hidden away, as it were, but brought out in open day, shining before men. How blessed to see the clear, bright light of truth shedding its own rays on all around. Oh that it may be so placed, as it were, on a lamp-stand, that it may give light to all that are in the house. I think that is the connection between the lamp-stand and the sower.

Now let us look for a little at the end of the chapter, because the varied glories of our dear and precious Master are so comforting to the heart to dwell upon. We come now to a different scene entirely. After all the instruction given by Him here, and after all His toil, He says a little word that has a great deal of comfort in it; He says to His disciples, "Let us go over to the other side." Beloved friends, I believe He says that to us, and I do not believe there is any rest elsewhere but "the other side." I believe this side is for toil and I would to God there was a great deal more of it, hard, laborious toil, toiling in the interests of Christ in this poor wretched world but "the other side" is where the rest is, and oh, the sweetness of it. He says, "Let us go over to the other side: He is inviting us over to the other side to-night. It is so blessed to see that He proposes it; it does not come from them, it came from Him. He says, as it were, "I know where the rest is." I believe "the other side" here in this chapter is as significant as the "mountain" was where He chose His disciples; we were looking at it the other evening, and I fully believe the mountain is symbolical of the fact that all true ministry in this world comes *from on high*. So here, for all rest in the midst of service, for all repose in the midst of toil, for all real refreshment of heart, we must, brethren, "go over to the other side": you will not find it this side. This is the expenditure side; that is the side where your heart can bask in all the fulness and refreshment of His rest. O how blessed to think of it! What a strange thing it is that some people do not like to go to the other side; they even resent it. Let us never forget we

must go to the other side for rest. "Let us go over to the other side."

Now observe what happens. (Of course I am taking the thing out of figure to press the great truth and reality upon you.) They crossed this lake, and as they crossed it a great storm arose. Mark how it found them; you get the contrast between Jesus and His disciples in a remarkable way here. There He is; it is a picture that causes the deepest homage and worship to spring up in the heart, to see that blessed, weary, lonely, perfect man asleep upon a pillow. Oh! to think of it, beloved friends, the perfection of the God man in His manhood glory! He was asleep on a pillow in the hinder part of the ship; no storm could disturb Him. No waves and no wind could wake Him out of His sleep: He rested there in the perfection and blessedness of all He was. Now let us look at them! They were in a panic -- that is the word I feel which describes them -- a perfect panic. Of all the dreadful things in this world is a panic: may we be kept from panic. The panic that some people raise is ten thousand times worse than the trouble that caused it; the panic-stricken condition in which we find the children of God about things, is far worse than the danger which is dreaded as ahead. The disciples then are in a panic, and they come and rudely and roughly awake Him out of His sleep, and with what I believe must have touched and wounded His heart to its very depths, "Master" -- (Luke repeats it in a very striking way, "Master, master") -- "Master, carest thou not that we perish? Then he arose, and rebuked the wind." Now look at the contrast, from a "great storm" "there was a "great calm"; you get the two "greats," a great storm and a great calm. "Peace, be still." Oh! dear brethren, do we not want Him to say that to our hearts often? Our hearts are at times far more perturbed than even this lake; waves and winds are often there. How we need that He should say that to our poor wretched, troubled hearts; "Peace, be still." "And there was a great calm." Now I tell you what comes before me very much in this. There is something so divine, and supernatural and blessed in the scene; because after a storm at sea, you do not get a great calm at once; you know very well that after a storm of great violence has swept over the sea or the ocean, it takes often days before the sea or the channel or the ocean returns to its usual serenity; the water has to go down, as it were. But there was nothing of that here; it was "a great calm" at once; "Peace, be still." The literal force of the word is, "Be muzzled"; the same word that is used in ch. 1 for what the Lord said to the demon, "Be muzzled, and come out of him." "Peace, be still; and there was a great calm."

Look at them for a moment more. They are full of astonishment: they might have worshiped, but they are astonished; instead of being worshipers, they are confounded; they fear. Is it not a wonderful thing to think how men are afraid? They are not afraid of the devil; they are not afraid of evil or sin; but they are afraid when God comes near them. What a remarkable thing it is! They fear. We find the same thing in the history of Jacob; when Jacob found God was there, he says, "How dreadful is this place." Why? God had come near; he was not afraid when he was alone there, with the stones of the earth for his pillow, although it must have been a dreary, desolate spot for him, all alone, overtaken by darkness