

^{4:1} Again Jesus began to preach beside the lake. but such a huge crowd gathered around that he got into a boat and sat there, while the crowd remained on the shore.

² Jesus taught them many things in the form of parables and, in the course of his teaching, said, ³ “Listen carefully. Imagine a sower going out to sow, scattering the seed widely. ⁴ Some of the seed fell on the edge of the path, and the birds came and ate it. ⁵ Some seed fell on rocky ground where it found a little soil, and sprang up immediately because the soil had little depth— ⁶ but then, when the sun came up and scorched it, it withered for lack of roots. ⁷ Some seed fell into thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it produced no crop. ⁸ And some seed fell into rich soil and grew tall and strong, producing a crop thirty, sixty, even a hundredfold.” ⁹ Jesus ended by saying, “If you have ears to hear, then listen.”

¹⁰ Now when Jesus was away from the crowd, the Twelve, and others who formed the community, asked what the parable meant. ¹¹ Jesus said, “The secret of the kingdom of God is given to you, but to those who are outside, it comes in parables, ¹² So that ‘they may look and look again, but not perceive; they may listen and listen again, but not understand.’ Otherwise they might be converted and be forgiven.”

¹³ Jesus continued, “Don’t you understand this parable? Then how will you understand any of the parables? ¹⁴ The sower is sowing the message. ¹⁵ Those on the edge of the path where the message is sown are people who have no sooner heard it, than the Tempter comes and carries away the message that was sown in

them. ¹⁶ Similarly, those who receive the seed on patches of rock are people who, when first they hear the message, immediately welcome it with joy. ¹⁷ But they have no root in themselves, they do not last; when trials or persecutions rise because of my message, they immediately fall away. ¹⁸ Then there are others who receive the seed in thorns. These have heard the message, ¹⁹ but the worries of this world, the lure of riches and all the other passions come in and choke the message, so it produces nothing. ²⁰ And there are those who have received the seed in rich soil. They hear the message and accept it, and they bear fruit, thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold.”

²¹ He also said to the crowd, “Would you bring in a lamp and put it under a bushel basket or hide it under the bed? Surely you’d put it on a lampstand! ²² Things are hidden only to be revealed at a later time. They are made secret only to be brought out into the open. ²³ If you have ears to hear, then listen!”

²⁴ He continued, “Listen carefully to what you hear. The amount you measure out is the amount you will receive—and more besides. ²⁵ To those who have, more will be given; from those who have not, what little they have will be taken away.”

²⁶ Jesus said further, “The reign of God is like this: a sower scatters seed on the ground, ²⁷ then goes to bed at night and gets up day after day. Through it all the seed sprouts and grows without the sower knowing how it happens. ²⁸ The soil produces a crop by itself—first the blade, then the ear, and finally the ripe wheat in the ear. ²⁹ When the crop is ready, the sower wields the sickle, for the time is ripe for harvest.”

³⁰ Jesus went on to say, “ What comparison can we use for the reign of God? What image will help to present it? ³¹ It is like a mustard seed which people plant in the soil: it is the smallest of all the earth’s seeds, ³² yet once it is sown, it springs up to become the largest of shrubs, with branches big enough for the birds of the sky to build nests in its shade.” ³³ Using many parables like these, Jesus spoke the message to them, as much as they could understand. ³⁴ Everything was spoken in parables, but Jesus explained everything to the disciples later when they were alone.

³⁵ With the coming of evening that same day, Jesus said to the disciples, “Let’s cross over to the other shore.” ³⁶ Leaving the crowd behind, they took Jesus in the boat in which he was sitting. There were other boats with them.

³⁷ Then a fierce gale arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat so much that it was almost swamped. ³⁸ But Jesus was in the stern through it all, sound asleep on a cushion. They woke him and said, “Teacher, doesn’t it matter to you that we’re going to drown?”

³⁹ Jesus awoke, rebuked the wind and said to the sea, “Quiet! Be calm!” And the wind dropped and everything was perfectly calm. ⁴⁰ Jesus then said to the disciples, “Why were you so frightened? Have you no faith?”

⁴¹ But they became filled with fear and said to one another, “ Who is this, whom even the wind and sea obey?”