**The Word and the Kingdom of God**

Mark 4:21-34 (Key Verse: 4:31-32)

“Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop—some thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times what was sown.”

1. How does the placement of lamp reveal its purpose (21)? How does this reveal Jesus’ intention in telling parables (22)? Why did Jesus emphasize having ears to hear (23)?
2. In order to understand the meaning of Jesus’ parables, what should we do (24a)? What does it mean to you to “consider carefully what you hear”? How does Jesus’ analogy encourage us to devote our attention to thinking about his words (24b-25)?
3. What is the kingdom of God like (26-29)? What does this parable teach us about the power of the gospel? What can we learn about God’s kingdom from the seed’s independence from the sower, the stages of growth, and the certain harvest?
4. How small is a mustard seed (30, 31)? How big does it grow when plated (32)? What do all garden plants stand for? What do the birds of the air stand for? Talk about the power of the word and the influence of the kingdom of God?
5. How did Jesus help the crowd to understand the word (33)? What privilege was given to his disciples (34)? Why did Jesus train his disciples by teaching them?
6. Discuss Jesus faith and vision for the work of God’s word.