

**SERIES TITLE:** Servant King

**PART FOUR:** INCREASING

**TEXT:** MARK 4:1-34

### **INTRODUCTION TO STUDY**

The gospel of Mark portrays Jesus as a Servant on the move. Using the word “immediately” over 40 times, he shows Jesus ministering. Obedient to the Father’s will, Jesus preaches the good news, heals the sick, teaches his followers, and performs miracles. All the while, he heads toward his sacrificial death on the cross. Mark 10:45 sums up his mission: “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.” Mark’s gospel reveals Jesus to be the perfect Servant and the perfect Sacrifice. Those who receive him as the good news are empowered to serve in his name.

### **CONTEXT OF SCRIPTURE**

In this passage, Mark introduces the Kingdom of God through several of Jesus’ parables. Jesus explains how the Kingdom grows from small beginnings and why some receive the Word of God willingly while others do not. He emphasizes that understanding the Kingdom of God is the key to understanding all his teachings.

### **FOCUS QUESTION**

Compare your life today with how you were years ago. What signs of spiritual maturity can you name?

### **EXAMINATION**

4:1-12 What do you see as the surprising part of the story?

Why do you think the disciples don’t understand?

Why does Jesus say he speaks in parables?

4:13-20 Since the seed is God’s word, what happens to the word scattered on the path, and what type of person does that represent?

What causes the seed that falls on rocky soil to wilt?

What three things choke the life out of the third group?

What characterizes “good soil”?

4:21-25 How do you see the parable of the lamp connected to the previous parable?

4:26-29 What does the farmer have no control over?

4:30-34 How is God’s Kingdom like the tiniest of garden seeds that grows into the largest of garden plants?

## **EXPLORATION**

- Exodus 19:5-6
- Daniel 2:44
- Matthew 13:44-46
- Luke 17:20-21
- Revelation 11:15

## **APPLICATION**

- Which type of soil best describes you right now and why?
- Of the three things that choke the life out of God's word, which one do you struggle with the most?
- What one thing can you do to deal with that this week?
- How is it possible for people to hear the same message at the same time and have two different responses?
- According to the parable of the lamp, what is the danger of storing up God's truth and not revealing it in your life, or exposing it to others?
- Which is a greater problem for you: not taking responsibility to "sow the seed" of God's word; or trying to bring about results that only God can accomplish?

## **SUMMATION**

- Fact: What are key truths that you understood from this passage?
- React: What did you feel?
- Act: What are you going to do?