

and his disciples had no time to eat. **21** When his family heard about it, they set out to take charge of him, because people were saying, "He's gone mad!"

22 Some teachers of the Law who had come from Jerusalem were saying, "He has Beelzebul in him! It is the chief of the demons who gives him the power to drive them out."

23 So Jesus called them to him and spoke to them in parables: "How can Satan drive out Satan? **24** If a country divides itself into groups which fight each other, that country will fall apart. **25** If a family divides itself into groups which fight each other, that family will fall apart. **26** So if Satan's kingdom divides into groups, it cannot last, but will fall apart and come to an end.

27 "No one can break into a strong man's house and take away his belongings unless he first ties up the strong man; then he can plunder his house.

28 "I assure you that people can be forgiven all their sins and all the evil things they may say. **29** But whoever says evil things against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven, because he has committed an eternal sin." (**30** Jesus said this because some people were saying, "He has an evil spirit in him.")

Jesus' Mother and Brothers

31 Then Jesus' mother and brothers arrived. They stood outside the house and sent in a message, asking for him. **32** A crowd was sitting around Jesus, and they said to him, "Look, your mother and your brothers and sisters are outside, and they want you."

33 Jesus answered, "Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?" **34** He

looked at the people sitting around him and said, "Look! Here are my mother and my brothers! **35** Whoever does what God wants is my brother, my sister, my mother."

The Parable of the Sower

4 **1** Again Jesus began to teach beside Lake Galilee. The crowd that gathered around him was so large that he got into a boat and sat in it. The boat was out in the water, and the crowd stood on the shore at the water's edge. **2** He used parables to teach them many things, saying to them:

3 "Listen! Once there was a man who went out to sow grain. **4** As he scattered the seed in the field, some of it fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. **5** Some of it fell on rocky ground, where there was little soil. The seeds soon sprouted, because the soil wasn't deep. **6** Then, when the sun came up, it burned the young plants; and because the roots had not grown deep enough, the plants soon dried up. **7** Some of the seed fell among thorn bushes, which grew up and choked the plants, and they didn't bear grain. **8** But some seeds fell in good soil, and the plants sprouted, grew, and bore grain: some had thirty grains, others sixty, and others one hundred."

9 And Jesus concluded, "Listen, then, if you have ears!"

The Purpose of the Parables

10 When Jesus was alone, some of those who had heard him came to him with the twelve disciples and asked him to explain the parables. **11** "You have been given the secret of the Kingdom of God," Jesus answered. "But



the others, who are on the outside, hear all things by means of parables, **12** so that,

‘They may look and look,
yet not see;
they may listen and listen,
yet not understand.
For if they did, they would turn
to God,
and he would forgive them.’”

Jesus Explains the Parable of the Sower

13 Then Jesus asked them, “Don’t you understand this parable? How, then, will you ever understand any parable?”

14 The sower sows God’s message.

15 Some people are like the seeds that fall along the path; as soon as they hear the message, Satan comes and takes it away. **16** Other people are like the seeds that fall on rocky ground. As soon as they hear the message, they receive it gladly. **17** But it does not sink deep into them, and they don’t last long. So when trouble or persecution comes because of the message, they give up at once. **18** Other people are like the seeds sown among the thorn bushes. These are the ones who hear the message, **19** but the worries about this life, the love for riches, and all other kinds of desires crowd in and choke the message, and they don’t bear fruit. **20** But other people are like seeds sown in good soil. They hear the message, accept it, and bear fruit: some thirty, some sixty, and some one hundred.”

A Lamp under a Bowl

21 Jesus continued, “Does anyone ever bring in a lamp and put it under a bowl or under the bed? Isn’t it put on the lampstand? **22** Whatever is

hidden away will be brought out into the open, and whatever is covered up will be uncovered. **23** Listen, then, if you have ears!”

24 He also said to them, “Pay attention to what you hear! The same rules you use to judge others will be used by God to judge you—but with even greater severity. **25** Those who have something will be given more, and those who have nothing will have taken away from them even the little they have.”

The Parable of the Growing Seed

26 Jesus went on to say, “The Kingdom of God is like this. A man scatters seed in his field. **27** He sleeps at night, is up and about during the day, and all the while the seeds are sprouting and growing. Yet he does not know how it happens. **28** The soil itself makes the plants grow and bear fruit; first the tender stalk appears, then the head, and finally the head full of grain. **29** When the grain is ripe, the man starts cutting it with his sickle, because harvest time has come.

The Parable of the Mustard Seed

30 “What shall we say the Kingdom of God is like?” asked Jesus. “What parable shall we use to explain it?”

31 It is like this. A man takes a mustard seed, the smallest seed in the world, and plants it in the ground. **32** After a while it grows up and becomes the biggest of all plants. It puts out such large branches that the birds come and make their nests in its shade.”

33 Jesus preached his message to the people, using many other parables like these; he told them as much as



Jesus Wants Us to Hear and Accept His Word

STORY
Mark 4



Mark 4:16-20 (For the full story, read Mark 4:1-20.)

16 [Jesus said, "Some] people are like the seeds that fall on rocky ground. As soon as they hear the message, they receive it gladly. 17 But it does not sink deep into them. . . . So when trouble or **persecution** comes because of the message, they give up at once. 18 Other people are like the seeds **sown** among the thorn bushes. . . . 19 The worries about this life, the love for riches, and all other kinds of desires crowd in and choke the message, and they don't **bear** fruit. 20 But other people are like seeds sown in good soil. They hear the message, accept it, and bear fruit: some thirty, some sixty, and some one hundred."

persecution attacks on people because of who they are or what they believe
sown planted
bear produce



Understand It!

Jesus often told stories to teach us lessons. In this Bible passage from Mark, Jesus tells a story about growing plants. He wants to teach us to listen to God's Word and then to act on it. In his story, seeds stand for God's Word. Soil stands for our hearts.

Seeds in rocky soil may grow at first, but soon they will die. Just like in some hearts, God's Word doesn't sink deep. When doing what God wants is difficult, these people give up. In some hearts, God's Word does not have room to grow. This is like seeds planted in thorns. But in some hearts, God's Word grows strong, like seeds planted in rich soil. These people bring much good to the world. What is your heart like? How do you make sure God's Word grows in you?

We can read God's Word in the Bible. We can hear God's Word at Mass and in the sacraments.

Mark 4
STORY

Live It!

Draw a garden with healthy plants growing in it. Think of some good acts you can do. Beside each healthy plant, draw a picture of one of these acts. Put your drawing in a place where you will see it daily. Remember to do a good act every day as God's Word grows in your heart.

Tell It!



1



2



3

Using the pictures above, retell this story in your own words.

