

**The Parable of the Lamp**

**The Parable of the Measure**

**Mark 4:21-25**

**Luke 8:16-18**

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**Text:**

**Mark 4:21-25,**

**21. He said to them, "Do you bring in a lamp to put it under a bowl or a bed? Instead, don't you put it on its stand?"**

**22. For whatever is hidden is meant to be disclosed, and whatever is concealed is meant to be brought out into the open.**

**23. If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear."**

**24. "Consider carefully what you hear," he continued. "With the measure you use, it will be measured to you—and even more.**

**25. Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him." (NIV)**

**Luke 8:16-18,**

**16. "No one lights a lamp and hides it in a jar or puts it under a bed. Instead, he puts it on a stand, so that those who come in can see the light.**

**17. For there is nothing hidden that will not be disclosed, and nothing concealed that will not be known or brought out into the open.**

**18. Therefore consider carefully how you listen. Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has will be taken from him." (NIV)**

**Introduction:**

I. Verses 21-25 consist of various sayings of Christ.

A. Undoubtedly Jesus used his illustrations and sermon/lesson points repeatedly to different audiences and in different contexts saying the same things over and over sometimes in different connections.

1. These teachings were frequently presented in different words, to make the same point, depending on the audience and the occasion.

## II. Black observed:

A. “The parable of the Lamp does not fit the modern definition of a parable. The term can be used to apply to any figurative saying.”

B. “The sayings in vv. 21-25,” Black further observed, “are extraordinarily difficult to understand.”

C. Black and Coffman both noted that some of these sayings occur in other contexts in Matthew and Luke.

**1. Matthew 7:2, For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. (NIV)**

**2. Matthew 10:26, "So do not be afraid of them. There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. (NIV)**

**3. Matthew 25:29, For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. (NIV)**

**4. Luke 6:38, Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running**

**over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you." (NIV)**

**5. Luke 12:2, There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. (NIV)**

**6. Luke 19:26, "He replied, 'I tell you that to everyone who has, more will be given, but as for the one who has nothing, even what he has will be taken away. (NIV)**

D. Black noted that “the same sayings may have differing meanings in different contexts.”

1. Today’s preachers may use the same illustration to make different points on various occasions.

2. Black stated that he viewed Mark 4:21-25 as having been addressed privately to the disciples rather than publicly to the crowds.

3. Jesus often taught the crowds publicly and then explained what he had said more in detail to the disciples.

III. Boles wrote, “This parable, like the parable of the sower, deals with the word of God as beneficial to man.”

IV. The Greek word “parabole” means to lay something alongside something else.

A. It is hoped that by looking at the more familiar object, we will come to understand the true meaning of the less familiar one laying beside it.

## **Commentary:**

**Mark 4:21, He said to them, "Do you bring in a lamp to put it under a bowl or a bed? Instead, don't you put it on its stand? (NIV)**

**Luke 8:16, "No one lights a lamp and hides it in a jar or puts it under a bed. Instead, he puts it on a stand, so that those who come in can see the light. (NIV)**

I. This literal two sentence statement is easy to understand.

A. A lamp is placed where its light will do the most good.

B. A hidden, covered lamp is of no benefit to anyone.

**1. Mark 4:21, He said to them, "Do you bring in a lamp to put it under a bowl or a bed? Instead, don't you put it on its stand? (NIV)**

**2. Matthew 5:15, Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. (NIV)**

C. It would be up to the disciples to place Jesus on a public lampstand for all the world to see. (Black)

II. Coffman quoting Cranfield make the point that God did not send Jesus into the world to be concealed, hidden.

**A. Luke 8:16, "No one lights a lamp and hides it in a jar or puts it under a bed. Instead, he puts it on a stand, so that those who come in can see the light. (NIV)**

**B. Mark 4:21, He said to them, "Do you bring in a lamp to put it under a bowl or a bed? Instead, don't you put it on its stand? (NIV)**

**C. Matthew 5:15, Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. (NIV)**

**D. Luke 11:33, "No one lights a lamp and puts it in a place where it will be hidden, or under a bowl. Instead he puts it on its stand, so that those who come in may see the light. (NIV)**

E. Coffman observed that the gospel seed could be choked and the light hidden.

III. "The purpose of light is not to enable people to see the light itself, but to see, understand something else, in this case 'the mysteries of the kingdom of God,'" Dorris wrote.

IV. Coffman wrote, "By this Jesus indicated his true purpose of enlightening all men by the gospel he was bringing. The blinding and hardening were not something Jesus desired, but a necessary result, a side-effect, of the truth's impact upon wicked hearts."

A. Summers via Coffman wrote, "Jesus' main purpose in using parables was to make his teaching easier to grasp."

B. Christ's disciples are not to hide the gospel either by failure to proclaim it or by less than exemplary Christian living.

**1. Matthew 5:14-16, "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven." (NIV)**

C. The church is to be a light to the world by righteous living and faithful proclamation of the gospel.

**1. Revelation 1:20, "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven. (NIV)**

V. Boles wrote that the light from the lamp is God's Word which is to give enlightenment to the world.

**A. Matthew 5:15, Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. (NIV)**

**B. Matthew 7:2, For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. (NIV)**

**C. Matthew 10:26, "So do not be afraid of them. There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. (NIV)**

**D. Matthew 13:12, Whoever has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. (NIV)**

**E. Luke 8:16-18, "No one lights a lamp and hides it in a jar or puts it under a bed. Instead, he puts it on a stand, so that those who come in can see the light. For there is nothing hidden that will not be disclosed, and nothing concealed that will not be known or brought out into the open. Therefore consider carefully how you listen. Whoever has will be given more;**

**whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has will be taken from him." (NIV)**

**Mark 4:22, For whatever is hidden is meant to be disclosed, and whatever is concealed is meant to be brought out into the open. (NIV)**

**Luke 8:17, For there is nothing hidden that will not be disclosed, and nothing concealed that will not be known or brought out into the open. (NIV)**

I. The **application** of this parable is more difficult.

A. Black wrote, "The lamp stands for something which is hidden or concealed, but is meant to be disclosed and brought out into the open.

1. This certainly is inclusive of the gospel.

B. Black applies the parable as follows: "Although Jesus teaches in a form that obscures his message for those outside, his message is meant to be made known and will be made known to the disciples through his explanations."

C. Christ's message was not meant to be hidden, but will in time be proclaimed to the world.

D. Coffman observed that the same phrasing is found in Matthew 10:26.

**1. Matthew 10:26, "So do not be afraid of them. There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. (NIV)**

2. Jesus spoke in parables so his enemies could not readily and prematurely use his teachings to criticize him.

a. However, once Jesus had ascended, his disciple spoke the message ever so plainly!

II. Coffman also noted that this verse is applicable to the judgment of the great day when all the secrets of men's hearts will be made known.

III. Boles observed that the wisdom and purpose of God was to be revealed, no longer hidden.

**Mark 4:23, 24,a, If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear." "Consider carefully what you hear," he continued. (NIV)**

**Luke 8:18a, Therefore consider carefully how you listen. (NIV)**

I. Hear, pay attention, listen carefully, ponder thoughtfully and understand what I (Jesus) say, Christ urged the apostles.

A. How we listen to Christ's words is crucial!

II. Coffman stated we should be careful about whom and what we choose to listen to, hear, be influenced by.

1. **Mark 4:24, "Consider carefully what you hear," he continued. "With the measure you use, it will be measured to you—and even more. (NIV)**

2. Careful attention is to be given both to how and what we hear. (Dorris)

III. Boles well wrote that "Nothing is more worthy of being heard than the word of God."

A. Consider well what you hear before accepting, Boles further wrote.

B. Excellent advice!

**Mark 4:24, "Consider carefully what you hear," he continued. "With the measure you use, it will be measured to you—and even more. (NIV)**

**Luke 8:18b, Therefore consider carefully how you listen. (NIV)**

I. This and the verse following are instructions, further explanations of what Jesus has said.

A. This also appears to have been addressed privately to the apostles.

II. The parables were intended to make Jesus' teachings clear to those like his apostles who had a sincere interest in understanding his teachings while obscuring his teachings from those who were his enemies and who had no sincere interest in understanding his teaching.

III. This parable also teaches that we will reap what we sow.

**A. Matthew 10:26, 27, "So do not be afraid of them. There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. What I tell you in the dark, speak in the daylight; what is whispered in your ear, proclaim from the roofs. (NIV)**

**B. Luke 6:37, 38, "Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will**

**be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you." (NIV)**

**C. Matthew 7:1, 2, "Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. (NIV)**

D. "As you treat others so shall you be treated by them," Boles observed.

E. Boles applied this statement on this occasion to Christ and his apostles. ". . . as you treat me as a teacher so I will treat you as learners."

F. The more carefully the disciples attended to Christ's words, the more benefit they would receive from his teachings. (See Boles)

1. "Giving and receiving are reciprocal," Boles wrote.

2. If we would learn we must give careful attention! (Boles)

IV. Coffman concluded with this poignant statement: "The person who has the honest and good heart and responds by faithfully hearing and obeying the saving words of Christ shall be given the riches of the kingdom, even unto eternal life; but the person who has an evil heart, even though like the Pharisees glorying in the law, shall have what they think they have (the word of God) taken away from them."

**Mark 4:25, Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him." (NIV)**

I. Those who had a sincere interest in understanding would comprehend this parable while those who had no such interest would be left more confused than they were before they heard Jesus speak.

A. Black observed, “The rich get richer and the poor get poorer.”

B. Black concluded, Jesus is speaking of the “economics of spirituality.”

1. “Those who are open to his teaching will learn more, those who are spiritually obstinate will never learn.” (Black)

2. “He who has received opportunities and improved them, to the good of others as well as to himself, shall have more opportunities,” Boles wrote.

3. Those who do not have a teachable spirit and who do not take advantage of their opportunities will be left with nothing. (See Boles)

a. Remember Judas!

**b. Matthew 25:14-30, "Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them. To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. So also, the one with the two talents gained two more. But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. "After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. The man who had received the five talents brought the other five. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more.' "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You**

**have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!' "The man with the two talents also came. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two talents; see, I have gained two more.' "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!' "Then the man who had received the one talent came. 'Master,' he said, 'I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.' "His master replied, 'You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest. " 'Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents. For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'(NIV)**

C. "Only those who have good and honest hearts will perceive" Christ's message. "To these more will be given." (Black)

D. Black further wrote, ". . . from those who will not accept Jesus, even what they think they have will be taken away from them."

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## Questions

**Mark 4:21-25**

**Luke 8:16-18**

**(Questions based on NIV text.)**

1. Did Jesus say the same things over and over to different audiences at different times and places? \_\_\_\_\_ If yes, give examples. \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Did the same illustration always have the same application? \_\_\_\_\_ Give examples to support your answer. \_\_\_\_\_

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3. Is the illustration of the lamp a typical parable? \_\_\_\_\_ Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. Do you agree with Black that Mark 4:21-25 is very difficult to understand? \_\_\_\_\_ Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. What does the parable of the lamp teach? \_\_\_\_\_

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6. What is the *lamp*? \_\_\_\_\_

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What is the *light* produced by the lamp? \_\_\_\_\_

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What is the *lampstand*? \_\_\_\_\_

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7. "The \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ is not to enable \_\_\_\_\_ to see the \_\_\_\_\_, but to see, \_\_\_\_\_, in this case 'the \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_,'" Dorris wrote.

8. Is Dorris' statement totally applicable to the parable of the lamp? \_\_\_\_\_ Give reasons for your answer. \_\_\_\_\_

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9. Why did Jesus teach in parable? Why did parables sometimes confuse his listeners? \_\_\_\_\_

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10. \_\_\_\_\_'s \_\_\_\_\_ are not to \_\_\_\_\_  
the \_\_\_\_\_ either by \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_  
it or by \_\_\_\_\_ than \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

11. Explain what Jesus meant by, "If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear. Consider carefully what you hear." \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

12. Was Jesus speaking to the multitudes or to the disciples privately in Mark 4:21-25 and Luke 8:16-18? Why was this Jesus' frequent custom?

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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

13. "The \_\_\_\_\_ who has the \_\_\_\_\_ and  
\_\_\_\_\_ and responds by \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ shall be given the

\_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_, even unto \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_; but the person who has an \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_, even though like the \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ in the \_\_\_\_\_, shall have what they think  
 they have (the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_) taken  
 \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_,” Coffman concluded.

14. “He who has \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_  
 them, to the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ as well as to  
 \_\_\_\_\_, shall have more \_\_\_\_\_,” Boles wrote.

15. “Thos who do not have a \_\_\_\_\_ and  
 who do not take \_\_\_\_\_ of their \_\_\_\_\_ will be  
 \_\_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_.” (See Boles)

**Extra Credit Question:** Give biblical examples to show that Boles’  
 statement in question 15 is true, accurate. \_\_\_\_\_

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