

## *Mark: The Mysterious Messiah*

Week 7: Mark 4:1-20

**Introductory Exercise.** Name three of Jesus's parables. If you can't name three, name as many as you can.

When Jesus speaks this familiar parable (one that appears in three of four gospels), where is he, and why is he there? What does Mark say about the Parable of the Sower's place among Jesus's other teachings that day? Speculating a bit, why might the writer of Mark have recorded this parable in particular?

What account does Jesus give for his speaking in parables? Looking back at the context of the Isaiah passage Jesus quotes, when does Isaiah get the word that Jesus quotes? Why might God give instructions to make a divine word more obscure rather than less obscure?

How does Jesus respond when “those around him” (presumably the apostles) don't understand the parable? How do his expression of concern and his explanation fit together in terms of what the apostles are called to do?

How does Jesus introduce each element of the parable? What does each sort of soil point to in spiritual terms?

Why might this parable be especially important for the apostles to hear? What recent events in the ministry of Jesus give this parable special force, and drawing on your previous knowledge of the story of Jesus, what events in the near future will lend it even more force?