

THE PROCESS OF DIVINE LIFE

(The Power Of A Patient Heart)

Mark 4:24-32



We're All In Process Today!

- ◆ Our Decisions (Determine Capacity)
- ◆ Our Development (Demands Patience)
- ◆ Our Destiny (Is Guaranteed)

"First the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head." (V. 28)

Bill Kirk

The Process of Divine Life

Text: Mark 4:24-32

Subject: The Process of Divine Life In The Soul

Introduction

I love the phrase Jesus used in Mark 4:33:

“With many similar parables Jesus spoke the Word to them, as much as they could understand.”

Question: How much of God’s revelation did Jesus share?

Answer: “As much as they could understand.”

(In Other Words)

- ◆ Jesus could have given the listeners a whole lot more.
- ◆ He could have led them deeper, richer, fuller and wiser.

Question: So why did Jesus limit His parables?

Answer: Because you cannot fill a cup fuller than its capacity!

Question: What’s this have to do with you and me?

Answer: It provokes us to think about our own spiritual growth!

- ◆ Do we limit Jesus because we refuse to enlarge our capacity?
- ◆ Do we shut off learning because we’ve already come so far?
- ◆ Do we feel we’ve expanded enough in comparison to where we used to be?

Question: What’s the good news?

Answer: The good news is our capacity can expand!

- ◆ We all can grow more!
- ◆ We all can receive more!
- ◆ We all can learn more!

(In Other Words)

- ◆ Our capacity can increase to love, grow, serve, expand, pray, study, and be healthier followers of Jesus!

Question: How many of you want to grow beyond previous boundaries (and enlarge your capacity to receive from God?)

- I. **Our Decisions** (Determine our capacity and potential)

(V. 24) “Consider carefully what you hear, he continued. With the measure you use, it will be measured to you – **and even more.**”

(V. 25) “Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him.”

(I’ve heard this mis-preached many times)

- ◆ So many falsely assume Jesus is talking about money or economics (You know)
- ◆ “The rich get richer and the poor get poorer.”

(That’s not it at all)

- ◆ Jesus isn’t addressing money, economics or possessions.
- ◆ Jesus is addressing how to grow, be spiritually strong and “seize the moment.”

Question: How do we know this?

Answer: Because Jesus said; “Consider carefully what you hear.”

(In Other Words)

- ◆ There is a relationship between how you hear and how you grow!

(In Other Words)

- ◆ Our capacity to grow is not only in God’s hands, it’s in our hands.
- ◆ We can bring to God a cup capacity, a glass capacity, a jar capacity or a barrel capacity.

(In Other Words)

- ◆ The capacity to “hear” lies within us. (Or)
- ◆ We can bring whatever receptivity we want to the table!

(In Other Words)

- ◆ Whatever capacity we offer to God; He will fill it up.

(In fact, V. 24 says)

- ◆ “It will be measured to you – **and even more.**”

(In other words, this means)

1. We determine the size of our capacity to grow (and)
2. What you do today determines what is given to you tomorrow!

(Jesus says here)

- ◆ If you choose to become stagnant – then more will not and cannot be given to you.

(And also)

- ◆ You risk losing even what you have (V. 25) “Even what he has will be taken from him.”

(In other words)

- ◆ There’s never a time we can coast (and)
- ◆ There’s never a time to stop growing.

Because...

- ◆ When we stop growing, we lose what we had, and we go in reverse!

Its use it or lose it!

Illustration: At 14, I broke my hand in a fight (cast)

Illustration: At 16, I broke my ankle playing basketball (6 weeks in a cast)

Illustration: At age 9, I was confined to a wheelchair for 2 years, never walked a step (had to learn how to walk all over again)

Principle #1 To Seize The Moment?

- ◆ What you do with what you hear determines what is given to you tomorrow! (And)
- ◆ It’s your decision (and no one else’s) how strong and healthy and spiritual you become!

In Other Words

- ◆ Only you can “seize the moment” for yourself!

II. Our Development (Reveals the reward of patience)

(V. 26) “A man scatters seed on the ground.”

(V. 27) “The seed sprouts and grows.”

(V. 28) “First the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel is ripened.”

(Remember this)

1. Only Mark was given this parable (in V. 26-29)
2. Mark was so impressed by the parable because of his own experience.
 - ◆ Paul & Barnabas had a difference of opinion concerning Mark. (Acts 15:36-41)
 - ◆ Paul felt that Mark was vacillating in his ministry call. (V. 38)
 - ◆ Paul judged a weakness in Mark’s character, causing Mark to “go back” while at Pamphylia. (Acts 13:13)
 - ◆ Contention was so great that Paul and Barnabas parted ways (and Paul took Silas while Barnabas took Mark). (15:39)
 - ◆ But, later on, Paul would ask Timothy to “Bring me Mark, for he is profitable to me for the ministry”. (II Timothy 4:11)

(Wow!)

- ◆ Mark would remember the patience of Barnabas with him, as this parable was poured into his heart and ours.
- ◆ Mark actually was a living illustration of how important this parable really is.
- ◆ Mark had to write this down (inspired by God) because God knew then that you would be here now.

Question: So what is Jesus teaching here?

Answer: That salvation is two-fold:

1. It's a miracle! (Supernatural) and also
2. It's developmental!

(In Other Words)

- ◆ Healings and conversions can happen immediately.
- ◆ But learning and growing takes time (it's incremental).

(So Jesus uses the plant process to speak to us)

1. Nothing springs up from the ground fully grown!
2. There is a process of germination, growth, progress and development!
3. No one becomes spiritual all at once!

Question: What's the message?

Answer: God isn't finished with you yet!

God knew what He was getting into when He saved you!

God's not surprised by your process!

God chose a small band of unknowns (with lots of imperfections as disciples)!

(V. 28) "First the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear."

Question: What's it all mean? (And)

Question: How does it affect the way I live?

(Two Ways)

1. Jesus said in V. 27, the seed will produce a harvest in a heart that's prepared!
"The seed will spring up and grow."

Question: What's that mean?

Answer: It means #1 that you can live with rest instead of anxiety!

- ◆ V. 27 "You can sleep night and day." (Means)
- ◆ You can rest and rise with joy each day.
- ◆ You can be sure that God is committed to you "long term".

(So #1 you can rest instead of worry)

2. You can live by faith without all the answers!

(V. 27) "He knoweth not how." (Means)

- ◆ You don't need to figure it all out!
- ◆ You don't need a ten year plan!
- ◆ You don't need to fret, stew and have all the answers to your future!

Illustration: Green apples (not red yet)

Illustration: Corn in the field (not full yet)

Illustration: Baby born 7 pounds, 20 inches long (not mature yet)

(Development means)

- ◆ The grace of God at work in any heart is gradual in process (so be patient with yourself and others).

(Why remember this? Because)

1. When a candle is newly lit and needs to be moved, it must be carried at a slow pace or it will be extinguished.
2. A fire which is almost expiring may be revived by a gentle breath, but will be blown out if the bellows are plied full force.
3. A little plant can be drowned by watering it too much.
4. You can destroy a lovely flower by exposing it to too much sun.

(Principle #2 To Seize The Moment?)

- ◆ God is working even when I cannot see Him, and He will finish what He started in me!

III. **Our Destiny** (Understands that God has a plan)

(V. 30) "What is the kingdom of God like?"

(V. 31) "It's like a mustard seed which is the smallest of seeds."

(V. 32) "Yet when it's planted, it grows to be a large garden plant – with such big branches that the birds of the air can rest and find shade."

Question: What's the mustard seed message?

Answer: That God's presence can transform anyone! And...

- ◆ The small seed has great potential.
- ◆ The small beginning has a greater ending.
- ◆ The development stage moves to the ministry stage.

Illustration: The small mustard seed had a destiny (and didn't know it underground)

- ◆ Now it's seen as a place of safety, rest, and refuge for birds.
- ◆ It's a picture of the church (you and me) where people can find safety and protection!
- ◆ As birds look for a safe place to land and rest in the shade from the hot sun...
- ◆ So multitudes of people will find the same because of your ministry down the road!

(Principle #3 To Seize The Moment)

- ◆ What I see as a small mustard seed now, will one day (under God) be a blessing to so many people!

(Why?)

- ◆ Because God has a plan and you are a part of it!!!
 1. What I do today determines what is given to me tomorrow.
 2. At times God's work is invisible, but God is working even when I cannot see Him.
 3. God has a plan and a ministry, and by His grace I am a part of that great plan!

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