



## The Common Thread: Mark - "Upside Down Kingdoms"

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### UPSIDE DOWN KINGDOMS

**Mark 4:2-11 ESV**—“2 And he was teaching them many things in parables, and in his teaching he said to them: 3 “Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow. 4 And as he sowed, some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured it. 5 Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil, and immediately it sprang up, since it had no depth of soil. 6 And when the sun rose, it was scorched, and since it had no root, it withered away. 7 Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain. 8 And other seeds fell into good soil and produced grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold.” 9 And he said, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.” 10 And when he was alone, those around him with the twelve asked him about the parables. 11 And he said to them, “To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God...”

#### 1. We are Soil, Not the Sower.

**Proverbs 16:9 ESV**—“The heart of man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps.”

#### 2. The Seed Always Works; the Soil Does Not

#### 3. 3 Seeds Grew, but Only 1 was Fruitful

**II Timothy 3:1-5 ESV**—“But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. 2 For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, 4 treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people.”

We may have the gospel growing within us, but ours is the upside down Kingdom, not His. We produce vines and branches, but there is very little fruit that can be actually tasted by a world dying to know who Christ is. The damage done is almost incalculable. When we do speak of Jesus and the gospel, we do so arrogantly and with heartlessness towards our opponents. I love you well enough to tell you directly: these attributes have choked out our fruitfulness.

Keep receiving the seed of the gospel with humility and nothing else added; that is, do your best to keep cutting away anything mixed in that chokes it out.

Everywhere Jesus went in the story, His passport was stamped with these: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, self-control.

**Mark 10:45 ESV**—“45 For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”