

### Spiritual Truths Shared

#### Mark 4:21-25

Mark 4:21-25 – *“Also He said to them, “Is a lamp brought to be put under a basket or under a bed? Is it not to be set on a lampstand? <sup>22</sup> For there is nothing hidden which will not be revealed, nor has anything been kept secret but that it should come to light. <sup>23</sup> If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.” <sup>24</sup> Then He said to them, “Take heed what you hear. With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given. <sup>25</sup> For whoever has, to him more will be given; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him.”*

#### Background Notes

Verse 1 of Mark 4 tells us that the Lord was speaking to the whole multitude. However, by verse 11 He was speaking just to the disciples when He explained the parable of the sower. In verse 21, the use of the word “them” most likely means that He was speaking primarily to His disciples about not hiding a lamp under a basket.

What was the lamp? Remember that the Lord was speaking in the 1st century - no electric lights - not even a kerosene lantern or a candle. The 1st century lamp was a small, shallow, ceramic pitcher-like container filled with olive oil. Think of “Aladdin’s lamp” - that type of shape, only smaller, hand-held in size, and made of clay. The 1st century lamps would have used olive oil as fuel and a floating wick would have protruded from the spout.

Archeologists use ancient lamps today to help in dating the different layers as they excavate tels (the earthen mounds). The reason is that, over the years, the clay lamps changed in style and shape. For example, the lamps back in Abraham’s time (about 2000BC) were simply an open, ceramic saucer with a floating wick. As time went on, however, the lamp makers began to make an indentation for the wick by pinching off one side of the saucer. Later this shape became more like a spout or nozzle. So when archeologists unearth lamps (or parts of lamps) today, the various lamp styles help them to date the layers of civilizations in the tels.

What was the basket? The basket (or bowl) was another common item of the 1st century home. It was used as a measure for a dry grain, but if it were put over a small lamp the flame would soon dim or be extinguished.

What about the bed? The beds in 1st century homes were more like quilts or thin mattresses. During the daytime the family’s “beds” would be rolled up and piled in a corner - and you certainly wouldn’t want to put your lamp under those beds!

The 1st century Israeli home often had several interior stone support walls or pillars to support the flat stone-slab roofs. On these walls there would generally be niches or little shelves on which to place the lamps. Those niches were the “lampstand” mentioned here by the Lord.

## Doctrinal Points

### 1. The truth will come to light.

Verse 22: *“There is nothing hidden which will not be revealed, nor anything been kept secret but that it should come to light.”*

What does this mean? Look at verse 21. The lamp represents God’s truth, particularly God’s truth that is in our possession. As Christians, we have the light of God’s Word, and we are to let this light shine. We’re not to hide it, and we’re not to allow it to be dimmed or hidden by other things. Don’t let your light be dimmed by over-involvement in business or job - the measuring basket or bowl would have been used in trading or markets in those days. Don’t let your light or your lamp be dimmed by laziness or spiritual sleep – the bed may represent spiritual laziness.

Now – knowing what the lamp represents, what does verse 22 mean: *“...there is nothing hidden which will not be revealed”*? Over the years, Christians have held two interpretations:

- a. The first interpretation is that all disciples (both then and today) should remember that a day of review of our lives and reward for faithful service is coming, and at that time it will “all come out in the wash.” Then it will be known whether you’ve been too lazy or too busy with your career to let your light shine. Whether that’s the Lord’s meaning in verse 22 or not, it’s certainly biblically true that a day of review and reward is coming in the future. As the Lord Jesus said in Luke 12:2-3: *“For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, nor hidden that will not be known. Therefore, whatever you have spoken in the dark will be heard in the light. And what you have spoken in the ear in inner rooms will be proclaimed on the housetops.”* So the truth will come to light.
- b. The second interpretation is that a lot of truth in God’s Word is concealed and hidden, and God has purposed it that way, but we as His disciples are responsible to bring it out into the light. I tend to go with the second interpretation, particularly because of the context. These words were spoken to the disciples, and the idea was that the disciples (and we today) are to take the light and truths of God’s Word (represented by the lamp) and explain them to everyone who is seeking. A paraphrase of Mark 4:22 says, *“We’re not keeping secrets – we’re telling them. We’re not hiding things – we’re bringing them out into the open.”*

In verses 11-12, where the Lord was speaking to His disciples, He said, *“To you it has been given to know the mystery of the Kingdom of God. But to those who are outside, all things are in parables so that ‘seeing they may not perceive and*

*hearing they may not understand lest they turn and their sins be forgiven them.”* We see that again in verses 22-25. We, as the disciples, need to dig out the truth and explain it.

So “the truth will come to light,” no matter which of the two interpretations you take. Whether we’re to let our light shine because our lives will be reviewed and rewarded, or whether it’s that we’re to bring concealed truth to light, we have the great responsibility to reveal it to others. **The truth will come to light.**

## **2. The possession of spiritual truth follows the “law of supply and demand.”**

In economics, we talk about the “law of supply and demand.” In a free enterprise system, if there’s a demand for a certain product, the supply of that item will be produced. Take broccoli, for example - even though it’s good for you, you won’t find it in a supermarket if there’s no demand for it. If people don’t like it and don’t want it - even though it’s nutritious – if there’s no demand, there won’t be any supply of broccoli!

In the same way, if we don’t hunger for God’s truth, and if we’re unwilling to put in time digging into the Word, and listening and taking heed, we won’t get anything. But if we **do** listen and heed and put in time and effort, then we’ll receive abundantly. I’m sure you’ve heard (and perhaps experienced) the thought that the one who gets the most out of a Sunday School or Bible study class is the teacher - right? The teacher who puts in a lot of time and effort to dig out the truths of God’s Word will receive abundantly! A believer doesn’t become a master of God’s truth overnight – it takes years of work and study. We can’t sit in front of the TV all evening and expect to get a good supply of God’s truth, but if we “demand” it – if we’re willing to “demand” truth by digging in - the supply of God’s truth will certainly be there as well.

## **Practical Applications**

### **1. If you’re willing to draw water, your well will never run dry!**

That almost sounds contradictory, doesn’t it? But when we want to know God’s truth, that’s the way it really does work! The more we’re willing to dig in and study and be involved, the more truth we’ll receive.

What do you think one of the biggest barriers was, when I was considering leaving my job as a research engineer and going into the Lord’s work full time? You might think it was the money - but that wasn’t it. My fear was that I was going to “run dry”! I knew I had only a few sermons “in my back pocket” and I really thought that I would run out of sermon material! “I’m going to run dry – and then what will people say? Will they think, ‘Doesn’t he have anything more than that?’” Well, it doesn’t work that way. The more you get into God’s Word and the more you dig, the more there is! **If you’re willing to draw water, the well will *never* run dry!**

## **2. Use it or lose it!**

Verse 25: *“For whoever has, to him will be given; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him.”*

Let's be careful not to pull that verse out of its context. The Lord wasn't saying if you have a million dollars, you're going to make a million more! No – He was talking about *spiritual truth*. If you have and hold the truth of God's Word, more will be given. If you dig it out, if you spend time to study and learn - more will be given. But if you don't have much – if you're not digging it out, and you're not putting in your time because you're lazy, and you're not “having ears to hear,” and you're not taking heed – you won't get more!

Also - **if you're not using what you have, you'll lose what you have!** I took piano lessons for four years when I was a young kid, but I can't play a note today. Why? After the four years were over, I didn't continue to study or play the piano. My parents gave me the option, so I quit. I didn't care about continuing, and I can't play anything today! I've lost everything I ever knew about the piano. However, had I continued to study, “more” expertise would have been “added.” It's the same way with spiritual truth. We can't stand still - we've got to keep moving forward. Keep digging it out, and more will be added. But if you just sit still or quit studying, and if you don't use what you have, you'll lose what you have.

**So - use it or lose it!**