First Responders
Mark 4:21-25
Sermon Outline

A. Expose Darkness (vs. 21):

1. continues talking, with no plans to stop, interpreting parables for the disciples (Mark 4:13-14).

   a) The sayings of 4:21-25 are general statements that Christ seems to have used at various times (on v. 21 cf. Mt 5:15; on v. 23 Cf. Mt 11:15; 13:9, 43; Lk 14:35; on v. 24b Cf. Mt 7:2; on v. 25 cf. Mt 25:29). Christ’s purpose on this occasion was to emphasize the responsibility incumbent upon the hearer of the parables. [1]

2. A lamp is continuously moved from one location to the next for the purpose of being hidden.
3. It makes no sense to appoint a permanent place for a lamp to be under a basket or under a bed.

   a) Jesus’ words here declare that a person is responsible for the light or knowledge he or she has received. One does not take a lamp and hide it. Therefore, a person does not take the truth and deliberately obscure it. If that is true of humans, it is even more so with God. But whatever is hidden will be revealed. In fact, the disciples found things they did not understand revealed fully with the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. [2]

4. A lamp has a particular location which is on a lampstand because its purpose is to light up the entire house.

   a) Jesus’ lesson of the lamp, a small clay vessel that burned a wick set in olive oil, is that light reveals what it glows on. Like the lamp, Jesus’ teachings reveal the motives of the human heart. Time would prove the reality of His teaching and bring the secret hidden things of men to light. [3]

5. Absolutely nothing is continuously purposefully concealed, so that it is a secretive, that will not be divinely exposed. It is finally publically exposed through divine revelation.

6. Anything that is purposefully hidden so that it is concealed from another person. This too through divine revelation is publicized.

7. What is purposefully hidden becomes permanently clear so that it is widely known.
a) Had another rabbi uttered the words of 4:22 in this context (contrast Mt 5:15), it would mean bringing forth treasures (special insights) concealed in Scripture. Thus, Jesus claims to reveal God’s message; he calls his disciples to understand and build on his teaching. [4]

B. Alert…. Ready for Action (vs. 23):

1. Since everyone continuously has ears.
2. Anyone who clings to the fact that they can hear need to continuously make it a habit to give attention to what is being said. Upon hearing they must have a heart to do what they hear.

   a) Jesus intends to create a separation between those who truly see and hear and those who do not. The parables help to create that separation. So also does the secrecy surrounding Jesus’ identity and the kingdom’s coming. By preventing outsiders (4:11, notes) from perceiving what is really happening, Jesus gives arounders and the twelve (4:10, notes) time to penetrate the mysteries. Present hiddenness enables revelation to some and concealment from others. [5]

3. The person who listens with a sincere heart do what they hear is commanded to make it a habit to listen.

C. Empowered to Be the Difference (vs. 24-25):

1. Jesus continues talking, with no plans to stop, interpreting parables for the disciples (Mark 4:13-14).
2. We are commanded to earnestly contemplate so that we gain complete awareness of the message we continuously hear. This is critical because once we hear the message with a heart to obey we can then work circumspectly bearing good fruit (John 15:1-5).
3. The grace of God is provided to us and it is proportionately distributed to everyone (Ephesians 4:7; Matthew 25:14-30; 2 Corinthians 10:12-18).

   a) The conventional wisdom was that each person is accountable for what he or she does with what he or she had originally been given; Jesus applies this principle to His own teaching. Thus, if the crowds did not obey what light they had received, they would never receive more. The language of “measuring” is the language of weighing food and other commodities at the market; Jewish texts sometimes use it for God’s measuring out just judgments in the final day. [6]

4. Whatever Christ has set aside to be provided to us as His gift is guaranteed.
5. Christ will increase upon what He generously provides.
6. Those who have been blessed can continuously count upon what Christ has provided.
7. Christ futuristically will permanently establish what He has provided so that it yields much fruit.
8. Those who continuously have nothing can count on even the small amount they have being taken.

   a) Could be a reference back to the seed falling along the road, rocky soil, or thorn bushes.

9. Christ will purposefully carry it away from the person who has nothing (Matthew 25:22-30).

   a) If a person accepts His proclamation (cf. 1:15), God will give him a share in His kingdom now and even more will be added in its future manifestation (cf. 4:21–23). But if one rejects His Word, that one suffers absolute loss because even the opportunity he has for a share in the kingdom now will someday be taken away from him.\]