

April 5, 1983 The Sower Went Forth to Sow (Mark 4)

I'm going to begin reading from the fourth chapter of Mark beginning at the second verse (reading text, Mark 4:1-12)

The understanding of parables is not easy. We must be careful in examing parables to try to get all the truth you can that God has put there, but not to read into it something that is not there. A parable, after all, is an illustration to make a truth clear to us. In order to better understand it. It is a == In a debate or a discussion, an analogy is often very helpful in making your thoughts clear, but we never prove anything by an analogy. We illustrate it. Similarly with parables we must be careful not to read into it, not to use it to prove something that is not clearly in it.

There are some parables which have only one central idea. They illustrate one thought. There may be a certain amount of detail around it, a certain amount of illustrative matter. It is only there in order to present the story of the situation, and which has no particular meaning for us aside from being a part of the presentation, of the general presentation of the story rather than of its meaning.

From that, that is much better to == than to go to the extreme of saying everythineg parable has only one idea, than it is to do as some do and read all sorts of things into the parable that are not there.

I remember hearing about a minister who preached a sermon on the Good Samaritan. He said the priest who went down to Jericho and passed right by and paid no attention to the man who had been robbed and beaten, why didn't he help him? Because he was going the wrong way, he was going down to Jericho. And the Levite came along and he went right by. Why? Because he was going down, down to Jericho. He was going to wrong way. But the Samaritan was on his way up to Jerusalem, and so he stopped and helped. Well, there is nothing in the story about what direction the people were going. He was simply reading it in. If they had all been going down, or all going up it would not necessarily mean anything. We must be careful not to read into parables what is not there.

Yet a parable can suggest quite a bit beyond what is actually stated. Often we find in the interpretation of a parable that there is more than the central idea. There are other ideas; they may be vital ideas that God is anxious to bring into our hearts and minds.

This parable of the sower must be of great importance for God caused it to be given three times in His Word. So it must have in it much that is valuable and important for our lives. I believe there is much more in it than simply the central fact. The central fact is of course very simple. The central fact is that the seed is not the sole determining factor in its effectiveness. That there are other factors that enter in that affect the result, ~~facets~~ factors that you are not aware of. That is the central truth in it, and that is a very helpful, important truth.