

### 3.29.15 Mark 4:21-25

- 2 Songs
- Kids choir (Rodney announce musical as they come forward)
- Jim Lewis (as kids leave)
- 1 Song
- Terry intro communion
- Communion: 1 Song (keep playing if needed)
- Message

#### **Intro:**

\*Breatharianism: Many have claimed to be able to survive on air and sunlight (not even water...better than a mere tree that needs water and dirt)

"Oh come, Terry, is that even a thing?"

\*One leader of the movement (made some money from his teaching) was secretly followed and filmed walking out of McDonalds with a 1/4 pounder with cheese and diet coke.

-He later claimed diet coke is "liquid light" ...there you go, you diet coke lovers.

-Maybe the 1/4 pounder was "solid air"

\*Sadly some have died believing this nonsense...including a 50 year old woman who read about a man who lived this way for 70 years...and tried it.

\*I was struck by her will to believe something so obviously not true but yet she ignored pain, weight loss, dehydration...reality itself would not be able to turn her from her fatal belief.

\*Here's the point of telling you that story...to talk about an increasingly popular idiom..."Is that even a thing?" "That's not even a thing!"

\*What does that mean? It means "is it real?" or in most cases "I'm sure that's not real."

\*The saying blurs the lines of what is real (exists as a belief or practice) and what is unreal (not true in terms of matching reality or achieving the results claimed).

\*So, Breatharaism..."Is that even a thing?"

-Yes it is, not it isn't.

\*It exists as belief and a practice

\*It does not exist as a reality

\***Life with God now**...being transformed by Christ, changed into his image...in real, practical ways.

-Having a conversational, living relationship with God now.

\*"Is that even a thing?"

\*Is it real at both levels...not mere belief and practice, but in terms of real, reality.

**Mark 4:21 He said to them, "Do you bring in a lamp to put it under a bowl or a bed? Instead, don't you put it on its stand? 22 For whatever is hidden is meant to be disclosed, and whatever is concealed is meant to be brought out into the open.**

\*Here the Lord is saying that his parables are not meant to conceal the truth but rather to reveal it.

\*He is using a parable to teach about his parables...

"Who would put a lamp under a bowl or bed...that's crazy...you put it on a lampstand so it can provide light...that is its purpose."

\*The gospel was hidden...waiting for the right time...but it was always meant to be brought out into the open.

**Col. 1:26 the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. 27 To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.**

\*The mystery here is the gospel: It was a misunderstood, or not fully understood part of what God was doing and was going to do.

\*But this mystery is now fully revealed in the coming of Christ.

\*It has been revealed among Gentiles...meaning...all people have equal access to God through Christ.

\***Christ in you, the hope of glory**...not mere external religious activities or a "God out there somewhere" or trying to earn something from God...but an internal, heart level experience of God.

\*"Christ in you"...sounds mysterious...vague...impractical...

\*Sounds like "upstairs thinking"...makes for a good inspirational poster, or today I guess...A tattoo...but has no place in the real world.

\*What does it mean where we really live?

\*Borrow an analogy from Dallas Willard to investigate what this means for us:

\*Let's start with what it means to be "alive."

\*How would you define life?: "It means you are not dead."

\*"Okay, what does it mean to be dead...it means you are not alive."

\*That's funny and true...but not helpful.

\*Many people couldn't give a coherent definition of life.

\*Wide disagreement over when life begins and ends...but in general...what is life?

\*Willard says..."Life is the power to act and respond in specific kinds of relations."

\*So different things that are alive have different kinds of life.

\*So for instance consider a cabbage and a Kitten.

\*A live cabbage has certain powers of action and response...it can absorb sun and water, it can grow...it can act and respond to those things.

\*There is a big difference between a live and a dead cabbage...even though the dead cabbage still exists...it doesn't grow, it doesn't respond to sun and water like a live one does.

\*Now on the other hand a live cabbage can make no response to a ball of string...because of the "kind" life that is in a cabbage.

\*It is a live cabbage (alive to the realm of soil, sun, rain) but dead to the realm of play.

\*In the same way a Kitten is alive to the realm of play, but dead to the realm of arithmetic and literature.

\*Kitten and cabbage are both alive and real...but they have different kinds of life in them.

\*Humans were once alive to God...created to be responsive and interactive with him...Adam and Eve lived in a conversational relationship with him...daily renewed.

\*When they mistrusted and rebelled...they were cut off from the realm of the Spirit.

\*They became dead in relation to it, as a Kitten is dead to arithmetic.

**\*God said "In the day you eat the fruit you will die."**

\*And we did...biologically humans continued to live but we ceased to be responsive and interactive to the reality of God like we were before.

\*It was now necessary for us to be "born again."...to have a new kind of life in us...God's life in us.

\*Imagine an otherwise normal kitten that suddenly begins to do advanced math and that gives you the idea of the kind of change in capacity the new birth in Christ brings.

\*What is important to understand is that this is not just a "change of mind about what we will believe or even how we will act."

**For instance:**

\*"I went from believing Christian stuff to believing Hindu stuff.

\*Or from practicing Hindu stuff to practicing Christian stuff.

\*"Is that a thing?"

-Yes, its a belief and a practice.

\*"No, I mean is that really a thing?"

-Yes, it is real, more than mere belief and practice.

\*The biblical model of Christ dwelling in us...is a whole new kind of life.

\*Capabilities that did not exist...now do.

\*We are now able to be responsive to the reality of God in a way that was impossible before.

\*This will seem odd to those who have become accustomed to living a "two story life."

\*Where they have separated "church" "Christian" stuff and "real" stuff (work, family, habits, possessions, money) into two separate categories.

\*It will also seem odd for those who have believed that the gospel is primarily about "belief" in the sense that people of our time tend to "believe about belief."

\*That is people can "believe" something is true and do nothing with that belief...or be unaffected by it in who they are becoming or what they do.

\*Belief is a "thing" in the first sense, but in the second sense.

\*But what Jesus taught was radical stuff...very controversial...not as much now because, I think, we have toned it down...it has lost context.

\*What Jesus said in essence was **"Unless your love for your family(normally our highest priority) looks like hate compared to your love for God...you are still not getting the point of life in the kingdom."**

\*He was not saying we should hate family...he was giving us a picture of the reality of the Kingdom in our lives...the radical place that it actually has.

\*Not just that it "should have"...that is "you should really try harder to put Jesus first."  
-Believe more, do more.

\*But that it actually does have...**if** we could see things are they really are.

\*If we could, we would see things this way...it would be obvious and automatic to us.

\*With that in mind...lets go on...

**23 If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.”24 “Consider carefully what you hear,” he continued.**

\*Remember last week...the soil that is prepared to receive the seed of truth is attentive and responsive.

**\*Here we see: Three things:**

1. In anyone has ears: "Be attentive, not distracted"

2. Let him hear: "Be responsive, not passive."

3. Consider carefully what you hear: "Consider"= "keep on seeing"

- "Keep on "seeing" what you hear."

"Continue to interact and respond to the truth"

\*Jesus is giving a narrative that is upside down from what most people then and now would believe or be able to perceive.

\*He was teaching Kittens and Cabbages to do algebra, or write poetry...which would be impossible unless he was also going to give them a whole different kind of life.

\*He is going to make them (us) into creatures who are able to be tuned into the Kingdom of God...his will, his ways, his values, his very presence, and power...now.

\*Let's go on:

**“With the measure you use, it will be measured to you — and even more. 25 Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him.”**

\*At first glance it sounds like a terrible injustice...opposite Robin Hood

- "The haves will have more, the have nots will have less."

\*That is not all what is going on here...

\*This is a bit of a cryptic statement...but it's really a summary of what he has been saying all along.

\*It's about: Spiritual Atrophy & Acuity

\*A positive response to God leads to increasing spiritual sharpness, acuity.

-The ones who respond to truth will open themselves up to more truth.

-The "haves" in terms of truth response...will have more truth in their lives.

\*A negative response to God leads to increasing spiritual dullness, atrophy.

-The ones who close themselves off to truth will find themselves increasingly farther from the truth.

-The "have nots" in terms of truth response...will have less truth in their lives.

\*This is not all that mysterious if you think about it.

\*Think about what you see in the world around you, or maybe look at a specific period of your own life.

\*This explains how people who were so far from God at one time...

\*Something happened...they turned to God, they responded with a little bitty "yes"

-Then they began to change...often little by little...

-Until in time they became almost completely different kinds people.

\*Maybe this applies to you...maybe it is your story.

\*It also explains how people can go so far away from truth.

\*Saying "no" to God over and over devastates a life.

**Psalms 14:1 The fool says in his heart, "There is no God."**

\*Few people, if any, at the time this was written doubted the existence of God.

\*The fool here is neither ignorant (lacking knowledge) or an atheist (lacking in intellectual belief).

\*The fool here is a rebel, refusing to submit his choices, values, and his life to God.

\*The fool says "No" to God...he is not an intellectual but rather a practical atheist.

**\*Again, in this passage...we see warning and opportunity**

\*Warning: against failing to respond to the truth, and thereby finding ourselves moving farther from what is true and real.

\*Opportunity: to respond to the truth in front of us...not merely to believe it factually but to respond to it actively in our lives...

#### **APPLICATION:**

\*Let's look at it both ways: warning and opportunity

**1. Warning:** saying "no" to God at any level; is always a dangerous endeavor.

\*Not because he might give you an almighty "spanking"

\*That would actually be a blessing.

**Heb. 12:6 "because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son."**

\*To be disciplined by God is a really good thing...a demonstration of the love of a father.

\*What is most dangerous about saying "no" to God is possibility of an incremental slide into darkness.

\*Like working outside as the Sun sets and you are so busy at your task that you aren't noticing the twilight setting in.

\*Finally, you realize..."I can't see a thing, when did it get so dark?"

\*This may not sound all that dangerous but Paul describes it in Romans 1 as a devastating thing.

\*A slide into utter darkness that begins by "supressing" the truth of God that is self-evident in our lives.

\*So therein is the scary part...an incremental slide into darkness...that results from saying "no" to God.

\*So if there is an area or areas in which you are saying "no" to God.

\*Repentance is the gift he offers you today..."Turn from the 'no', turn to the 'yes'"

\*Since the Kingdom of God is a "thing" in both senses of the word...the devastation that follows from attempting to live outside of it, is real as well.

\*Let's look at the second part of the application: opportunity.

\*It is the opportunity to move into a deeper awareness and experience of the reality of God in our lives...its right there.

\*It is to be people who are:

-Attentive

-Responsive

-Enduring...in regards to the truth

**\*Let's think about that possibility, opportunity.**

\*How do people grow...by responding positively to truth...attentive, responsive, enduring.

\*Lewis:

"One is sometimes (not often) glad not to be a great theologian; one might so easily mistake it for being a good Christian. The temptations to which a great chemist is exposed are trivial in comparison.

When the subject is sacred, proud and clever men may come to think that the outsiders who don't know it are not merely inferior to them in skill but lower in God's eyes

And as this pride increases, the "subject" or study which confers such privilege will grow more and more complicated, the list of things forbidden will increase, till to get through a single day without supposed sin becomes like an elaborate step-dance, and this horrible network breeds self-righteousness in some and haunting anxiety in others.

"When the means are autonomous they are deadly." Lewis, C. S. (1964-10-07). Reflections on the Psalms (Harvest Book)

\*It's possible for someone in any field of study to become proud, but if the field of study is God himself(theology)...then that pride becomes even more deadly.

\*The "means" becomes the "end"...that is the study of God (the means) in order to actually know and love God (the end) becomes..."the study of God" in order to be "well studied in God." "Or to look smart about God."

\*This what he meant by the quote "When the means are autonomous they are deadly."

\*When the knowledge of God becomes divorced from relationship with and love for God...the results are deadening.

\*Here is how Dallas Willard said it...

"But keep in mind that your aim is not to become a scholar or to impress others with your knowledge of the Bible—a dreadful trap for so many fellowships aiming to be biblical. That aim will only cultivate pride and lay a foundation for the petty, quarrelsome spirit so regrettably, yet so commonly, observed in those outwardly identified as the most serious students of the Scriptures."

"It may help to remember these words of Thomas A Kempis: 'Of what use is it to discourse learnedly on the Trinity, if you lack humility and therefore displease the Trinity? Lofty words do not make a man just or holy; but a good life makes him dear to God. I would far rather feel contrition(conviction) than be able to define it. If you knew the whole Bible by heart, and all the teachings of the philosophers, how would this help you without the grace and love of God?'"

**It is better in one year to have ten good verses transferred into the substance of our lives than to have every word of the Bible flash before our eyes."**

\*We cannot "check boxes" in regards to the truth of God...we must know what God actually had in his mind by what he put in his word.

\*If we read, study, learn...truth looking for a spiritual feeling or merely to check a daily box...

-But we have no real sense of who God is, what he values, what it means to conform our mind, will, emotions to him...then we gained nothing.

\*Transformation of our very selves and not mere information transfer or emotional engagement is the goal.

**2Cor. 3:18 And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit**

\*This process is a life long progression...to encounter, embrace, and apply the truth...so we can know and love God.

**"If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear. Consider carefully what you hear"**

1. Attentive to God
2. Responsive to God
3. Be responsive to God in ongoing fashion...when you stop responding, repent and return.

**Diagnostic Questions:**

\*"Find yourself convicted or challenged (disciplined)...remember you should feel loved not guilty"

**1. In your life right now, what needs to happen on your calendar to make time to be attentive to God?**



**-Nothing is more practical than what you actually put on your calendar and do.**

-Takes time (don't worry about how much) right now...think about whether you have time built in to your life to pay attention to him.

-Don't feel guilty...the amount is not as important at this point as the "perspective, desire, and what happens in that time."

\*Better to have 1 passage, one chapter or one verse actually change you than to skim over the entire Bible this year.

\*Want to read the Bible through in a year?...okay...but its not okay if at the end of the year...you are unchanged by that process.

\*The process should lead to progress in Christ likeness.

**2. In your heart right now, what needs to change so that you will be positioned to hear and be responsive to God when he speaks?**

-Do you have a divided heart...in love with the world and with God?

-Do you have an area that you are refusing to surrender...a habit, an attitude, a thing, a relationship?

\*If you are holding on to something that is between you and God...it will bring you heartache...and it is keeping you from more truth in your life.

**3. In your current trajectory, are you positioned for long-term endurance in being attentive and responsive?**

-Are you allowing things to creep in your life now that may not yet, but likely will, undermine your ability to stay attentive and responsive to God long-term?

\*Do you have a record of starts and stops?

-If so it would help explain if you have not experienced the kind of growth you think possible.

\*Seeds grow...but they take time...consistency is very important.

**Gal. 6:9 Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.**

**\*This is invitation, opportunity...Jesus has offered us the opportunity to live a life that touches his kingdom now...**

\*Not just a life of a cabbage now and then when we die a life as sons and daughters.

\*Live as sons and daughters now.

**SMALL GROUP NOTES**  
**March 29, 2015**                      **Mark 4:21-25**

**Intro:**

Terry has spoken frequently of a "single-story" life. This analogy comes from the work of Francis Schaeffer who wrote of an "irrational leap upstairs."

By this he meant that in order for people to find or create meaning in a world they believe to be purely mechanical, physical, non-spiritual and without any basis for meaning they must take a "leap upstairs."

Some would claim that they are able to exist without any meaning but upon close examination this is never actually true. Others claim they can have meaning without any reference to God or something other than a physical world. This claim is not coherent.

So these people will "believe" in a "real" world downstairs and "believe" in another sense in an upstairs world that is not really, real but that they use to give themselves meaning, comfort, and hope.

The current phrase that captures this thinking is "Is that a thing?" or "That's not even a thing." By this you can have two different realities. Something can be "a thing" in the sense that it is believed and practiced but not "a thing" in the sense that it actually aligns with what is real.

1. Terry mentioned "Breatherianism." Can you think of other, maybe less odd, ideas that people really have but are not "real"?
2. What are some reasons people (both believers and non-believers) will put Christianity in the realm of the "Thing that is not a real thing?"

**Read:**

**Mark 4:21 He said to them, "Do you bring in a lamp to put it under a bowl or a bed? Instead, don't you put it on its stand? 22 For whatever is hidden is meant to be disclosed, and whatever is concealed is meant to be brought out into the open. 23 If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear." 24 "Consider carefully what you hear," he continued. "With the measure you use, it will be measured to you — and even more. 25 Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him."**

**Discuss:**

1. In verse 21 Jesus gives his purpose in teaching, it is to reveal not to conceal the truth. Why do you think he used so many parables, stories, and other means of teaching if he wanted to reveal truth?
2. Jesus sometimes said, "If anyone has ears to hear" clearly he is not talking about the physical ear but what do you believe he is getting at with this statement?
3. In verse 24 the word translated "consider" is a Greek word that means a continual act of seeing or paying attention. So we could say "Keep seeing what you are hearing" or "Keep on paying careful attention to what

you hear." What are the implications for this statement? Why is this such an important part of lining our lives up with the truth?

4. Verse 25 looks like a reverse Robin Hood, taking from the "have nots" and giving to the "haves." But in here Jesus is describing the reality of our lives as we respond to the truth of the gospel. If we respond to God in a positive way our capacity for experiencing Him will increase. If we respond in a negative our way our capacity will decrease. Describe in practical ways why and how this is true.

5. Psalm 14:1 reads, "The fool says in his heart, 'There is no God.'" This is not describing an intellectual atheist but rather a practical atheist. This is a person who lives as if God were not real or important. In essence they are saying "No! God." Describe a time in your own life where you lived as a practical atheist. Why did that lifestyle make sense to you and what happened or is happening to change your mind?

### Apply:

### Warning:

**Heb. 12:6** "because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son."

1. How is a warning or a rebuke a show of love from God?

2. If you have time read the passage below, if not summarize it.

**Rom. 1:18** The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, **19** since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. **20** For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities — his eternal power and divine nature — have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. **21** For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. **22** Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools **23** and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles. **24** Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. **25** They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator — who is forever praised. Amen. **26** Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. **27** In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion. **28** Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done. **29** They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, **30** slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; **31** they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. **32** Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them. **2:1** You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things.

\*How does this passage describe a descent into darkness that is the result of choosing to deny self-evident truth?

3. If there is a specific area in which you are current saying "no" to God? Would you tell the group either specifically or generally what is it and then pray for the courage and follow through to begin saying "yes"?

### **Opportunity:**

1. What needs to happen in your heart, mind, and on your calendar to become more attentive to God?

\*What would it mean for this change of action and attitude to "make more sense" to you than it currently does?

2. If you are doing well right now, let others who are struggling speak and without offering too much advice, pray for them and encourage them for being honest.

3. What would it mean to better connect the "end and the means" or the "process and progress"? Have you turned relationship with God into a box to check and if so, what would it mean to change in your actions and attitude?

\*Dallas Willard wrote:

**You may have been told that it is good to read the Bible through every year and that you can ensure this will happen by reading so many verses per day from the Old and New Testaments. If you do this you may enjoy the reputation of one who reads the Bible through each year, and you may congratulate yourself on it. But will you become more like Christ and more filled with the life of God? It is a proven fact that many who read the Bible in this way, as if they were taking medicine or exercising on a schedule, do not advance spiritually. It is better in one year to have ten good verses transferred into the substance of our lives than to have every word of the Bible flash before our eyes. Remember that "the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life" (2 Cor 3:6). We read to open ourselves to the Spirit. Dallas Willard. Hearing God: Developing a Conversational Relationship with God (p. 163). Kindle Edition.**

4. Its not wrong or bad to read the Bible in this way but if our process gets in the way of progress we must consider changing our process.

\*Is your process leading you towards progress in becoming more like Christ? What needs to change?

***Breatharianism***

***"Is that even a thing?"***

**Mark 4:21-22 He said to them, “Do you bring in a lamp to put it under a bowl or a bed? Instead, don’t you put it on its stand?**

**For whatever is hidden is meant to be disclosed, and whatever is concealed is meant to be brought out into the open.**

**Col. 1:26-27 the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.**

***"Life is the power to act and respond in specific kinds of relations."***

**D. Willard**





***"Life is the power to act and respond  
in specific kinds of relations."***

**D. Willard**

**"...for when you eat of it you will surely die."**

**Genesis 2:17**

**"You should not be surprised at my saying,  
You must be born again."**

**John 3:7**

**Mark 4:23-24a “If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.” “Consider carefully what you hear,” he continued.**

**Mark 4:23-24 “If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.” “Consider carefully what you hear,” he continued.**

**1. Ears to hear: Be attentive, not distracted**

**2. Hear: Be responsive, not passive**

**3. Continue to hear: "keep on 'seeing' what you hear"**

**Mark 4:24b-25 “With the measure you use,  
it will be measured to you — and even more.  
Whoever has will be given more; whoever  
does not have, even what he has will be  
taken from him.”**

**Mark 4:24b-25 “With the measure you use, it will be measured to you — and even more. Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him.”**

- 1. Increasing spiritual acuity**
- 2. Increasing spiritual atrophy**

**Psalms 14:1 The fool says in his heart,  
“There is no God.”**

## Warning

**"Saying 'no' to God at any level is a dangerous endeavor."**



**Heb. 12:6 "because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son."**

## Romans 1

**"A devastating slide into darkness that begins with the suppression of self-evident truth."**

# Opportunity

- Attentive
- Responsive
- Enduring

**In response to the truth**

***"When the means are autonomous they are deadly."***

***"It is better in one year to have ten good verses transferred into the substance of our lives than to have every word of the Bible flash before our eyes."***

**2 Cor. 3:18 And we, who with unveiled faces  
all reflect the Lord's glory, are being  
transformed into his likeness with ever-  
increasing glory, which comes from the Lord,  
who is the Spirit**

**1. In your life right now, what needs to happen on your calendar to make time to be attentive to God?**

***"The processes should lead to progress in becoming like Jesus."***

**2. In your heart right now, what needs to change so that you will be positioned to hear and be responsive to God when he speaks?**



**3. In your current trajectory, are you positioned for long-term endurance in being attentive and responsive?**

**Gal. 6:9 Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.**

