

The Hidden Kingdom [Mark 4]
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INTRODUCTION

1. In my time scouring the interwebs, I heard of this thing called Skyrim.
 - a. It's a mythological role playing game. Here's the description:
Following the Dragon attack on Helgen, the player character can choose to escape either with an Imperial soldier or a Stormcloak rebel. After the escape, the player travels to the nearby town of Riverwood. The player is then asked to travel to the city of Whiterun, to request aid from the Jarl against the Dragon threat. The Jarl agrees to send a detachment of soldiers to Riverwood, and asks the player to aid his court-wizard in return, retrieving a Dragonstone from a nearby ruin known as Bleak Falls Barrow. The player discovers a Word-Wall in the process, learning their first "Thu'um", the shouts used by the ancient Nords to battle the Dragons.
 - b. Americans love the mythology surrounding the concept of kingdom.
 - 1) Example: My daughter longs to be a princess.
 - 2) But this is because of the influence Disney had on her.
 - 3) We're so far removed from the injustices of kingdom, we only see the positive.
2. Throughout the New Testament, there is a lot of kingdom imagery.
 - a. In Mark 4, Jesus will continue with parables, offering four more.
 - b. The theme of these parables is concerning a kingdom that's hidden.
 - c. What lessons can be revealed about the hidden kingdom?

VERSES 21-23

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 them hear."

1. Obviously, there was no electricity, so lamps were important.
 - a. Neither was there any Yankee Candles for décor. Lamps were a necessity.
 - b. A lamp stand would project the light at a high, safe level.
2. In the Hidden Kingdom, all things will be exposed.
 - a. People get away with a lot and we tend to cry out for justice.
 - b. In the kingdom ushered by Jesus, all deeds will be held accountable.
 - c. **John 1:5** *"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."*

VERSES 24,25

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 they have will be taken from them."

1. The entire trade market was a profession based on faith.
 - a. Measures were the only means by which you could judge fairness.
 - b. You were trusting others' honesty when you traded with them.
 - c. This is a repetition of the previous parable: you'll be discovered.
2. In the Hidden Kingdom, how you treat others matters.
 - a. Ours is not an internal faith measured by personal attitude. Actions matter.
 - b. Those who have it taken from them are those who have acted falsely.
 - c. **Luke 6:38** *"Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap."*

VERSES 26-29

²⁶ He also said, "This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. ²⁷ Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. ²⁸ All by itself the soil

produces grain—first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. ²⁹ As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come."

1. Things grow all the time. If you have a yard you know this: weeds never stop appearing.
 - a. We know that the process of photosynthesis enables this.
 - 1) Absorbed sunlight is converted to chemical energy.
 - 2) Energy is used to incorporate carbon dioxide and water into carbohydrates.
 - 3) But why? Science can replicate process, but we can't create new growth.
2. In the Hidden Kingdom, growth is mysterious.
 - a. This drives us absolutely crazy because of our scientific society.
 - b. We want to know "WHY" about everything, but it's sometimes mysterious.
 - c. Find comfort in knowing that you can't know everything.
 - d. **1 Corinthians 3:6** "I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow."
***There's much we can do, but we can't make things grow.

VERSES 30-32

³⁰ Again he said, "What shall we say the kingdom of God is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it? ³¹ It is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds on earth. ³² Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds can perch in its shade."

1. We need to look at a picture of Mustard Seed
 - a. There are almost the size of sesame seed, but grow like weeds.
 - b. Mustard seeds were not perchable plants; Jesus is using exaggeration here.
 - c. But it's purposeful exaggeration to introduce the spread of the gospel.
 - 1) Christianity spread like no other thought in human history.
2. In the Hidden Kingdom, things aren't always what it seems
 - a. 1 Samuel 16:7 says man looks on the outward: we're limited by sight.
 - b. **1 Corinthians 15:51,52** "Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed."
 - c. The process of discipleship is the revelation of the kingdom.
 - 1) Dedicate yourself to growing in him.