Why They Don't Come To Church Any More

MARK 4:1-20

Intro. A. Jesus taught many things that are hard
to accept and practice.
   1. It costs nothing to hear.
   2. It costs nothing to say.
   3. The third thing is difficult, doing.

B. In the verses preceding chapter four,
   Jesus informed us of a difficult truth.
   1. There are some things more important
      than Mama or Daddy, or friends.
   2. God, Jesus, and the truth make
      first claim on our love, our energy, our time.

C. In the verses we are going to study
   at this time, we will learn other difficult truths.
   1. Some hear and respond to spiritual
      information and others don't.
   2. Some hear and respond to it but
      for different reasons abandon its claims.
Matt. 7:13-14 3. Only a few truly and for a life
time enter the "narrow way.

I. Jesus Taught Multitudes Of People.

A. He taught them by the sea side.
   Vs. 1 1. They gathered in great crowds.
   2. He entered into a boat.
   3. He taught them from the boat.

B. He taught them in parables.
   Vs. 2 1. He taught them many things by parables.
   2. In these parables are His teachings.
E. The Warning of Jesus.

Vs. 9. 1. "He that hath ears to hear,..."
2. "Let him hear."
3. "If your ears hear the sound then let your brain grasp the meaning.

II. His Introduction To The Interpretation.

A. The Request of His disciples.

Vs. 10. 1. "And when he was alone..."
2. "...they that were about him with the twelve asked of him the parable."
3. "...we must accept what He says, not what we wish He had said or want it to teach.

B. Why did He speak in parables?

Vs. 11. 1. The Apostles and other intimate and trusted students would understand and accept the truth of His Kingdom. The casual listener and the mildly curious would only be further confused.
2. "Given" = στηρίζω = to give, to present (with implied idea of giving freely unforced) therefore to yield, deliver, supply, commit.
3. "Mystery" = μυστηρίων = a secret, not necessarily difficult to comprehend but impossible to know until its meaning is confided.
4. "To those who are outside this group, without special instruction, who could not handle the truth, those who would stumble at it because of spiritual immaturity, because of them I speak in parables.

C. Those "outside" and the truth.

Vs. 12. 1. "That seeing they may see, and not perceive.
**B.** The seed sown by the wayside.

Vs. 15.
1. The word, (the truth) is sown.
2. They hear the truth.
3. Satan comes immediately.
4. He takes away the word sown in their heart.
5. "taketh away" = ἀλοῦσθαι = to lift up and carry away.

**C.** The seed sown on stony ground.

Vs. 16+17.
1. "... immediately receive it with gladness..."
2. "And have no root in themselves." The fault is in themselves. They have no character, no commitment, and therefore they; "... endure but for a time..." ἀλλὰ = but + προσκαλεῖν = for a season + ἐκπληκτοῖς = are. They are seasonal in service and attendance.
3. What is their problem? (1) "... when affliction or persecution arises for the word's sake". 
4. ὑλίστημι = "pressure" (because of the truth).
5. διαυμούς = "pursuit by one's enemies".
6. "... immediately they are offended". ὑπεκαθίσθησαν = to lay a trap, to fall or stumble. Instead of the truth becoming a stone to build with it becomes a rock to stumble over.

**D.** The seed sown among thorns.

Vs. 18+19.
1. "thorns" = ἀγανάκτος = a point, a plant with sharp projections on its stems. A noxious weed.
2. "... such as hear the word".
3. What happens to these people? "And the cares of this world = μῆνυμα = dividing or distracting the mind, thoughts that divide one's focus, causing anxiety or fear.
4. "... the deceitfulness of riches..." = ἀλάτη = deceit, esp. by false statements, here it is self deception.