

Mark 4:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And when he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve asked of him the parable.

Analysis

When alone, 'they that were about him with the twelve asked of him the parable.' This group includes the Twelve plus wider circle of disciples. Their question demonstrates humility—they admitted not understanding. Privacy allowed honest inquiry without public embarrassment. The phrase 'asked of him' (ἠρώτων, imperfect tense) indicates persistent, repeated questioning. True disciples seek understanding; they don't pretend to comprehend what confuses them. This verse introduces Jesus' private explanation to disciples (vv. 11-20), distinguishing insider instruction from public teaching. Jesus rewards seeking hearts with deeper revelation.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern teachers often gave public addresses followed by private explanation to inner circle. This two-tier instruction—public parables, private interpretation—characterized rabbinical pedagogy. Jesus adopts and transforms this pattern. The disciples' question shows parables weren't immediately transparent even to followers. Private teaching sessions allowed Jesus to unfold kingdom mysteries progressively, preparing apostles for post-resurrection ministry. Early church maintained this pattern: public proclamation and private catechesis for deeper instruction.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How does the disciples' humble questioning model appropriate response to Scripture's difficult passages?
2. What role does community inquiry play in growing biblical understanding?
3. How can you pursue deeper understanding of God's word through persistent, humble questioning?

Interlinear Text

ὅτε	δὲ	ἐγένετο	καταμόνας,	ἡρώτησαν	αὐτὸν	οἱ	
when	And	he was		alone		of him	G3588
G3753	G1161	G1096		G2651		G846	
περὶ		αὐτὸν	σὺν	τοῖς	δώδεκα	τὴν	παραβολὴν
they that were about		of him	him with	G3588	the twelve	G3588	the parable
G4012		G846	G4862		G1427		G3850

Additional Cross-References

Mark 4:34 (Parallel theme): But without a parable spake he not unto them: and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples.