

# Mark 4:34

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But without a parable spake he not unto them: and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples.

## Analysis

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Mark explains: 'But without a parable spake he not unto them: and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples.' Public teaching used parables exclusively; private instruction provided explanation. 'Without a parable spake he not' ( $\chi\omega\rho\iota\varsigma$  παραβολῆς οὐκ ἐλάλει) indicates consistent method during this period. 'When alone' ( $\kappa\alpha\tau'$  ιδίαν) Jesus 'expounded' ( $\acute{\epsilon}\pi\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\upsilon\epsilon\nu$ —interpreted, explained) to disciples. This two-tier instruction—public parables, private explanation—characterized Jesus' pedagogy. It fulfilled Isaiah 6:9-10 (revealing to some, concealing from others) while preparing apostles for post-resurrection ministry. Disciples' privileged access entailed responsibility: receive explanation → proclaim truth.

## Historical Context

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Ancient Near Eastern teachers often gave public addresses followed by private clarification to inner circle. This established hierarchy of understanding: casual hearers received stories; committed disciples received interpretation. Jesus' method prepared apostles to become authoritative teachers after Pentecost. Their understanding, preserved in New Testament, authoritatively interprets Jesus' teaching for church. Early church maintained catechetical instruction—public evangelism, deeper teaching for believers. Church history distinguishes exoteric (public) and esoteric (private) instruction, though this distinction can be abused if suggesting secret knowledge unavailable through Scripture.

## Related Passages

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**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

**James 2:17** — Faith and works

## Study Questions

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1. How does Jesus' private instruction to disciples demonstrate the value of intensive discipleship and mentoring?
2. What responsibility accompanies privileged understanding of biblical truth?
3. How can the church balance public accessibility with deeper instruction for committed disciples?

## Interlinear Text

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χωρὶς δὲ παραβολῆς οὐκ ἐλάλει αὐτοῦ κατ'  
without But a parable he not spake unto them G2596  
G5565 G1161 G3850 G3756 G2980 G846

ἰδίαν δὲ τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ ἐπέλυεν  
when they were alone But G3588 disciples unto them he expounded  
G2398 G1161 G3101 G846 G1956

πάντα

all things  
G3956

## Additional Cross-References

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**John 16:25** (Parallel theme): These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father.

**Mark 4:10** (Parallel theme): And when he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve asked of him the parable.

**Luke 24:27** (Parallel theme): And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

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