

Matthew 13

Matthew 13:1-23 - The King's Secrets!

Scriptures:

¹ On the same day ^Q Jesus ^Q went out of the

Notes:

house and sat by the sea.

Scriptures:

² And great ^M multitudes were gathered

Notes:

together to Him, ⁺ so that He ⁺ got into a boat

and sat; and the whole ^M multitude stood on the

shore.

3 Then He spoke many things to them in

parables, saying: "Behold, a sower went out

G3850 – an illustration that teaches. "parable n. — a short moral story with a symbolic meaning."

to sow.

Notes:

'many things' – this is probably just a eight of the parables Jesus taught during this seaside sermon.

"...a similitude taken from a natural object to illustrate a spiritual or moral subject." (Barnes, 1956) page 139

Parables are tools for illustrating a point or subject. The story the parable tells may not be true. It is the message of the parable that matters.

A parable is designed to make a single point. We must be careful not to look for anything but that one point. Straining the illustration in parables has led many to some strange doctrines and theology. Let the parable stand on the one point. The parable of the unjust judge is a story meant to encourage people to persist in their prayers. Trying to equate the unjust judge with God does great damage to the parable.

It is also important to remember that a parable was best understood by the culture it was given to. We can't try to force it into our cultural reality.

'a sower went out to sow.' Everyone listening to Jesus would understand this image – they all knew what a sower was and knew what they did. It is possible that they all passed by one as they followed Jesus from the house down to the sea.

When a modern preacher tells a story it is to draw the attention of his audience or to clarify a point.

Scriptures:

4 And as he sowed, some seed fell by the

Notes:

'the wayside' = the hard path – the roadway. Because of constant traffic of people walking and carts drawn by animals the ground had become rock hard.

wayside; and the birds came and devoured

G2719 – to eat up.

them.

Scriptures:

5 Some fell on stony places, where they did

Notes:

As the farmer worked the fields, he would encounter stones. Rather than leaving them where he found them, he would cast them into a pile of stones near his field.

not have much earth; and they immediately

sprang up because they had no depth of

G1816 – sprouted.

earth.

Scriptures:

⁶ But when the sun was up they were

Notes:

scorched, and because they had no root they

withered away.

Scriptures:

⁷ And some fell among thorns, and the thorns

Notes:

This is the part of the farmer's field that he has not removed the weeds and thorns from yet.

sprang up and choked them.

⁸ But others fell on good ground and yielded a

Notes:
"Parables are designed to teach some general truth, and the circumstances should not be pressed too much in explaining them."
(Barnes, 1956) page 140

crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some

thirty.

Scriptures:

⁹ He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

Notes:
It is the hearer's responsibility to pay attention and understand.

Scriptures:

¹⁰ And the disciples came and said to Him,

Notes:

"Why do You speak to them in parables?"

Scriptures:
Ephesians 1:7-10 - In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace 8 which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, 9 having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, 10 that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him.

11 He answered and said to them, “Because

it has been given to you to know

G1325 – granted.

G1097 – experientially.

the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but

G3466 – secret.

to them it has not been given.

Notes:
‘mysteries’ = Those things God kept hidden until such time as He deemed the time was right to reveal them to those he chose to receive them.

What are the mysteries they were given? It is those things revealed in the person, words, and works of Christ Jesus (Ephesians 1:7-10).

“Parables have two primary purposes: parables conceal and reveal. First, parables conceal the truth from those who will not submit to Christ and His rule; and second, parables reveal the truth to those who by God’s grace will submit to Christ and His rule.” (O’Donnell, 2013) page 356

The reason some were given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven and some weren’t has to do with their willingness to believe and yield their lives to Christ.

“In these verses we are unashamedly presented with the tension, often given in Scripture, between divine sovereignty regarding election and human responsibility regarding rejection.” (O’Donnell, 2013) page 357

Scriptures:

12 For whoever has, to him more will be given,

Notes:

'whoever has' – has what?

Everyone who encountered Christ were exposed to the same seed as everyone else. The seed is the Word of God. They all heard it but only some received it. To receive means to accept as truth.

and he will have abundance; but whoever

G4052 – to be oversupplied. To have more than enough.

Hiding the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven from those who do not believe is a type of punishment.

does not have, even what he has will be taken

away from him.

Scriptures:

13 Therefore I speak to them in parables,

Notes:

because seeing they do not see, and hearing

they do not hear, nor do they understand.

14 And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is

fulfilled, which says: *Hearing you will hear*

and shall not understand, and seeing you will

see and not perceive;

¹⁵ *For the hearts of this people have grown*

dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, and their

eyes they have closed, lest they should see

with their eyes and hear with their ears, lest

they should understand with their hearts and

turn, so that I should heal them.'

Scriptures:

16 But blessed *are* your eyes for they see, and

Notes:

Because they were willing to believe and receive God's truth, and because they were willing to receive Jesus as their Savior-King, they were able to see the truth in Jesus' parables. That doesn't mean He didn't have to explain the parables to them so, but they could understand.

your ears for they hear;

Scriptures:

17 for assuredly, I say to you that many

Notes:

We should consider ourselves highly blessed and privileged that we can comprehend the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. We should rejoice and praise God with great enthusiasm.

prophets and righteous *men* desired to see

We must always remember that all we have been given in this life was given to us so that we could give it away. This is especially true of the gospel.

G1937 – longed for.

what you see, and did not see *it*, and to hear

what you hear, and did not hear *it*.

18 “Therefore hear the parable of the sower:

Notes:
'snatches away' = same word we
translate as rapture.

The indifferent hearer.

19 When anyone hears the word of the

kingdom, and does not understand it, then

G4920 – realize to
the point of
insight.

the wicked one comes and snatches away

G4190 – morally
corrupt.

G726 – to seize

what was sown in his heart. This is he who

received seed by the wayside.

Scriptures:

20 But he who received the seed on stony

Notes:
The shallow hearer.

places, this is he who hears the ^{word} and

immediately receives it with joy;

G2983 – “to
receive
(cognitive) v. —
to accept as true
or valid.”

G5479 -

Scriptures:

Acts 14:21-22 - And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, 22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, "We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God."

21 yet he has no root in himself, but endures

G4491 -

G2076 -

Notes:

What is the 'root' that he is missing.

Tribulation is a part of the Christian faith (Acts 14:22).

only for a while. For when tribulation or

G2347 – trouble, distress.

persecution arises because of the word,

G1375 – "persecution n. — the systemic hunting down of adherents of a particular religion to inflict pain or death upon them; especially to destroy the religion by destroying the adherent or by forcing the adherent to renounce their beliefs.

immediately he stumbles.

G4624 – cease believing, fall away.

22 Now he who received seed among the

thorns is he who hears the word, and the

cares of this world and the deceitfulness of

G3308 – anxiety,
worries,
concerns.

G539 -

riches choke the word, and he becomes

G4846 – cause
plants to die.

G3056 - λόγος
(logos)

unfruitful.

G175 - useless

23 But he who received seed on the good

ground is he who hears the word and

understands *it*, who indeed bears fruit and

G4920 -

produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty,

some thirty.”

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Notes:

The responsive hearer.

The key to this parable is understanding God’s Word.

The same sower with the same seed on the same good ground bears variation in harvest.

Fruits of a Godly Life

- Holiness - Romans 6:22
- Christian Character - Galatians 5:22-23
- Good Works - Colossians 1:10
- Winning Others to Christ - Romans 1:13
- Sharing What We Have with others - Romans 15:25-28
- Praising God - Hebrews 13:15

Only one type of soil produced fruit. All others depict those who by reason of unbelief do not receive Christ Jesus as their Savior-King and will not produce good fruit. One of those fruits is eternal life.

Even as believers we must watch out for areas in our heart that might be unproductive for Christ-Jesus. Watch out for areas of indifference, shallowness, or clutter.

We play a role in preparing the soil of our heart. As we spend time in God’s Word, in prayer, in community with God’s people in praise and worship, or in service God will reveal things to us about the state of our heart. Don’t resist God when He does. Trust Him and let the Holy Spirit going about the work breaking up the hard parts of your heart, or pulling the weeds of worldly things, or putting the priorities of life into their proper place. Only God the Holy Spirit can do it, but He won’t do it if you won’t let Him.

By letting God do a work in your heart, He will bear more fruit through your life. That will bring much more glory to God and will result in God’s increased blessing in your life and greater rewards in heaven.