

The Parables of the Kingdom

Matthew 13:1-23 Parable of the Sower and the Soils

Intro: At this point in the ministry of Jesus He is very very popular! Gargantuan popular

A) Notice the description in v.1-2 of the kinds of crowds and the size of the crowds that are following Him

B) Not just a multitude or even a great multitude – but it is great multitudes Plural

C) So there is no place that Jesus can go at this point w/out attracting large multitudes

D) He is in some city near the sea of Galilee – beautiful Pastoral setting in Israel

1) Large lake surrounded by farms and villages

Busy day of ministry: On the same day heads down to the beach – Catch some waves – do some thinking and praying { My Fav things to do fav place

A) But it doesn't take long for the crowds to follow –

B) Pretty soon the crowd is so large that they are pressing in on Jesus to the point that they are almost driving Him into the water

C) That is when He seeks relief in a boat – launches out a short ways and begins to teach – them about the Kingdom of Heaven{ Water natural Amph

Now it is at this point in the ministry of Jesus that He begins to speak to the people in what is called Parables - Hasn't really done this up to this pt

A) THE WORD "PARABLE"... Greek "parabole" (para-bow-LAY)

Means "to place beside, to cast alongside"

As defined by Vine's Expository Dictionary of N.T. Words, it "signifies a placing of one thing beside another with a view to comparison"

B) Wiersbe's description of a parable... As "a story that places one thing beside another for the purpose of teaching"

"It puts the known next to the unknown so that we may learn"

C) What Jesus was doing in these Parables is:

He was taking something that was very familiar in the Physical realm and throwing it alongside of something in that was unfamiliar in the Spiritual realm

Now the Parables in Matthew 13 are known as the Kingdom Parables –

A) Jesus is talking about the Kingdom of heaven – theme – The kingdom is like { 7 Parables in this Chapter

B) The Kingdom of heaven is a theme of Matthew's gospel – Present Jesus as the King – as the Sov one!

Bb) Sovereign over nature - / Sovereign over disease / Sovereign over the religious establishment

C) Focus less on the individual circumstances than the other gospels and more on Jesus – how each situation only magnifies His power & authority

(Ch. 1-4) We see the coming of the kingdom in Christ.

(Ch. 5-7) we see the character of the kingdom in the Sermon on the Mount.

(Ch. 8-12) we see the call to the kingdom in the preaching and miraculous works of Christ.

D) Now Jesus begins to explain the kingdom through parables.

Here is something I want you to understand – When He talks about the Kingdom of heaven – He is not talking about heaven itself

A) His Kingdom is where He is at – at this point – He is on the earth

The kingdom of God is among you.

B) Wherever the King is – those who are following Him are a part of His Kingdom

C) The Kingdom of heaven describes God's intervention from heaven in the affairs of men.

D) It is the intertwining of that which is supernatural with that which is natural.

E) That connection initially takes place in the person of Jesus Christ and after His resurrection and ascension, it is carried out through His spirit living in the life of His Church.

So He begins to speak to them about His Kingdom – but He does so in Parables – Why? Why Parables?

A) V.10 The Disciples ask that very question ! Why Parables?

B) In v.10-17 Jesus reveals a twofold reason:

To reveal and to conceal

C) This was the purpose of the parables – For those who were eager to learn for those

who were following Jesus for the right reasons

1) The parables were meant **to arouse** in them a **Hunger or a curiosity** concerning the things of God

D)The Parables were to create in them a desire to dig deeper/ to ask questions { to press in & to draw near

1) Which is exactly what the disciples do – Please explain – they were intrigued stirred up stimulated by the parables

E)V.17 They will discover things that the OT saints longed to see and understand, but were not able because those things were only fulfilled in Christ.

So the Parables are meant to Reveal – to those truly seeking!

But the Parables were also meant to conceal! For all of those pp who really didn't want to learn – who really weren't interested in Knowing God

A) See, there were many pp following Jesus – side show- **Next miracle** – next **demonized person released** – next **confrontation** with the religious leaders

B) And you had the religious leaders who although for the most part were polite listeners – they were always looking to trip up Jesus

1) Always looking for a reason to accuse Him!

C) They could appear polite on the outside – but inside – seething – Jealous – already plotting His death

HERE'S THE POINT that Jesus is making - If a man wants to know the Word of God, he can know it.

If a man wants to know the truth, he can know it.

But you can also shut your ears to it.

There are multitudes of self-proclaimed *broadminded* people who shut their ears to the Word of God. { They don't want to listen to it.

My kids were younger - Aaron is sharp - sometimes tries to give / Amy advice / Amy can be stubborn - fingers in her ears *I am not listening* -

1) We do that same thing w/ the Lord

Interesting now that she is older she really values the opinion of her brother

KEY OBSERVATION: As we follow Jesus through this chapter we are going to find Him using the word *hear* some SEVEN times.

A) **In the Bible *hearing* means much more than simply listening to words.**

“*Hearing*” means listening with spiritual understanding and receptivity.

(Rom. 10:17) “*So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.*”

B) **So in reality the Parables only revealed those who had become dull of hearing**

So He begins by telling them a parable about a Sower sowing seed

A) **Again a very familiar picture: All around them were farms**

B) **They spent the better part of their lives – engaged in this practice or at the very least watching it several times a year –**

C) Now understand that Jesus starts with this one for a reason:

1) **Mark 4:13 Jesus makes a statement that understanding this parable is key to understanding all the parables**

Cc) **Expositional consistency:** Something is stated one place in Scripture will most likely be the same in the passages surrounding that place

1) **This is one of two parables that Jesus actually explains**

D) **He identifies things in this parable that will be very useful in helping us interpret the parables that follow.**

3 Key Components to the Parable – The Sower / the Seed / The Soils

A) **Sower goes out to sow**

B) **Farming was different in those days – today – heavy machinery – pp own 1,000s of acres**

1) **In those days – everything done by hand – animals – much smaller – 1 acre two acre – larger might be 5-10 acres**

C) **Jesus is the sower – Sow = to broadcast
Anyone who shares God's Word is a Sower.**

A Sermon A witness to a friend
A letter/ A song

D) Sowing happens at work – home – Sunday school – street witnessing

Radio ministry { Very important to God – Hold His word above His name

V.19 Jesus identifies the seed as the word of God

QUESTION: Why compare God's Word to seed?

1.) Because the Word is *“living and powerful”* (Heb. 4:12).

Unlike the words of men, the Word of God has life in it; and that life can be imparted to those who will believe.

1 Pet 1:23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

2.) Seed bears the BLUEPRINT for life within it.

If you want to grow a Living Plant, you must begin with a seed.

James 1:18 Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth

3.) Like a Seed, the Good News is small, yet Powerful:

Have you ever seen a Seed crack a concrete side walk?

POINT: NEVER underestimate the POWER of the Word of God!

NEVER be ashamed of it..... *because IT IS THE POWER OF GOD UNTO SALVATION.*
(Romans 1:16)

4.) Also like a Seed, God's Word is Extremely Fruitful.
God's Word can produce all kinds of Fruit in our lives.

5.) The Word, like a Seed, must be Planted to do any good. It must be Cultivated, Nurtured etc.

TRAGICALLY today there is a HUGE segment of Christianity that has FAILED to understand this FOUNDATIONAL truth of the Kingdom...

A) They **lay the blame** for the **apparent failure** to reach the multitudes **on the “Message”**... on the Bible itself...

B) They say that obviously we have a message that no one wants to receive... so we have to change our message... or in their terminology... our “story”.

C) **JESUS NEVER changed message.**

1) BECAUSE He... the AUTHOR and the SUBJECT of the message.... understood the nature of the SEED... that it is GOOD seed.

D) He makes it unmistakably clear in this illustration that **the problem is not with** the seed but with the soil!

Now Jesus mentions 4 soils – V.18-23 He reveals that the 4 soils represent 4 different human hearts

A) The 4 Soils reveal to us God’s desire that everyone hear the word of God

B) The 4 soils also reveal 4 responses to the gospel – 4 responses to the word

1) Note 3 of the 4 are not right

C) 4 Soils – 4 hearers – Note today Same 4 hearers in this crowd

In V.4 Jesus describes the first kind of soil as the wayside soil – another translation = pathway.

A) Those days the farms were long strips of land – pathway in between for walking

B) The pathway is impenetrable – Because it is so hard – the seed can’t sink down into the soil – and the birds snatch the seed and carry it away

C) V.19 Jesus defines the pathway soil as the heart that is hardened toward the word of God.

HARD HEART

D) The phrase does not understand is the key to this definition

E) It is not speaking of someone who really wants to understand but just can’t get it

A) No, this describes a person who has determined they will not allow the truth of God’s word to UNITE WITH their hearts.

B) Perfect example of that this past week when the California Supreme court decided to make Homosexual / Lesbian Unions legal

C) They did so completely ignoring the truth laid out in God's word that marriage is supposed to be a union between one man and one woman

1) And that Homosexuality is a sin

D) Now when I say that – not any worse of a sin than – Murder or lying

1) But I don't see anyone trying to legalize those things

So the Pathway soil represents the heart that is just hardened against the gospel – Hardened against the truth of God's word

A) Why are some pp so hard?

B) Many reasons: For some pp it is because they have been turned off to the Lord and His word – because of Hypocrisy

1) Others – Legalism –

C) Failed to see that the Problem is with Pp not with Jesus

Others are hard because – well – John 3 they reject the truth because they love their darkness

A) Others the issue is Pride – they are so convinced that they have it together and they don't need anyone including God telling them how to live their lives

B) So their hearts are hard – the hardness of their hearts doesn't allow the truth to penetrate –

1) And Satan who is represented by the birds in this Parable is all too eager to swoop down & devour the seed

C) See Satan knows the Power of God's word to transform any life that allows it to have it's way – So he looks for every opportunity to thwart that

2nd Soil – Stony ground

A) Israel is a stony place { story that at Creation God assigned two angels the Job of spreading rocks equally around the world

B) First Angel went off and did just that – the 2nd Angel – lazy – dumped all of his in Israel

C) Stony soil looks good on the surface –but underneath limestone rock

1) Sun comes out the soil gets extra warm – because of the rocks – seed germinates

quickly springs up fast

D) Because there is no depth/withers & the plant dies

Spiritually speaking { SHALLOW HEART!

This describes the person who only allows the word of God to have a shallow place in their lives { Not allowed to go deep

A)V.20 Jesus describes the person who receives the word in the stony place is the one who receives it with Joy – Emotional response

B) But as soon as difficulty comes – as soon as some trials or persecution comes – their faith withers and dies

C) They stick with the Lord as long as everything is going good in their lives
But as soon as difficulty comes

D) As soon as spiritual warfare – like they are not used to starts – they are done !

The deeper problem in this persons life is not the tribulations and persecutions

A) There are million upon millions of believers over the history of the Church who have stood tall in the face of tribulation and Persecution

B) Many who have willingly given their lives for Christ

C) The reason that this group stumbled is because they don't allow the word to go deep enough in their hearts to w/stand the trib & Persecution

Listen, God intends for us as Christians to allow His word to go down deep in our hearts

A) He intends that His word would be the single most influential thing in our lives

B) God intends so that we don't become the 2nd soil – He intends that His word would be the single greatest influence in our lives

1) Determining how we think / Determining the decisions that we make on issues /
Determining what we make our priorities

C) It is God's intent that His word would be more influential in our lives than TV / than family ties & traditions /

1) More influential than any education that we have received or are going to receive
2) More influential than popular opinion in Society

D) John 15:7-8

7 If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. 8 By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

Question is the word of God the most influential thing in your life?

3rd soil Thorns { What grows quicker than anything and without any water – Weeds

A) That is what Jesus has in mind here – weeds – overtake the seed – choke it out

Spiritually speaking: CROWDED HEART

B)V.22 Describes the weeds as two things – the Deceitfulness of riches and the cares of this life – both are dangerous to the intake of God's word

C) Note Deceitfulness of Riches – RICHES LIE – They tell us that meaning Satisfaction and purpose is found in more!

Cc) How many millionaires are miserable – guy who won the lottery – worst thing that ever happened to him

D) How many millions does it take to make a many happy? One more

Riches lie to us

But the other problem is probably more of one that most of us deal with

A) Cares of this life – responsibilities of this life – bills to pay/ things to do Easily distracted

B) How many times has God spoken to your heart – called you to draw near – intent was right –

1) Never happened – because you got pulled away by something

C) Distracted by a phone call – email – a need

My life at 19-21 so simple, Devoured the word – tapes – books No responsibilities

Today it is a different story -

Radio personality Paul Harvey tells the story of how an Eskimo kills a wolf.

"First the Eskimo coats his knife blade with animal blood and allows it to freeze. Then he

adds another layer of blood, and another, until the blade is completely concealed by frozen blood."

"Next, the hunter fixes his knife in the ground with the blade up.

When a wolf follows his sensitive nose to the source of the scent and discovers the bait he licks it, tasting the fresh, frozen blood.

He begins to lick faster, more and more vigorously, lapping the blade until the keen edge is bare. Feverishly the wolf licks the blade harder and harder / So great is his craving for blood that the wolf doesn't notice the razor sharp sting of the naked blade on his tongue nor does he recognize the instant at which his insatiable thirst is being satisfied by his own warm blood.

His appetite just craves more -- until the dawn finds him dead in the snow!"

THE SAME IS TRUE OF THE PERSON WHO HEARS THE WORD BUT IS CHOKED OUT the CARES RICHES & PLEASURES

God wants to begin to UPROOT those things that have been "CHOKING OFF" the Word of God in your life.

1) Thorns - needs to be cleared -

Priorities put back in order

Final soil – Open heart – soft and Pliable – Word goes in and is able to root deeply – unhindered – not distracted BEARS FRUIT

Bearing fruit

Matthew 12:33 for the tree is known by his fruit.

This would include

1.) The fruit of holiness

(Rom 6:22 NKJV) But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life.

2.) The fruit of the Spirit

(Gal 5:22-23 NKJV) But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, {23} gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

3.) The fruit of good works

(Col 1:10 NKJV) that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

4.) The fruit of winning others to Christ

(Rom 1:13 NKJV) Now I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that I often planned to come to you (but was hindered until now), that I might have some fruit among you also, just as among the other Gentiles.

5.) The fruit of giving

(Rom 15:28 NKJV) Therefore, when I have performed this and have sealed to them this fruit, I shall go by way of you to Spain.

6.) The fruit of praising God

(Heb 13:15 NKJV) Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.

SECONDARY APP 4 soils one heart

The Parable of the Sower is found in the first three Gospels, and in each one, the closing admonition is different.

“Who hath ears to hear” (Matt. 13:9)

“Take heed what you hear!” (Mark 4:24)

“Take heed how you hear!” (Luke 8:18)

KEY APPLICATION: It is important that we hear God’s Word, because *“Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God” (Rom. 10:17).*