

The Parables of the Kingdom

Matthew 13:24-43 Mixture

Last week we began a series of studies on the Parables found in Matthew's gospel

Began in Chapter 13 – Parables of the Kingdom

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**" **Comparable**

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 in order to make an illustration –

Parables are illustrations and analogies who's purpose is to make a spiritual point – paint a picture

Not to be used for doctrine -

These are called the Parables of the Kingdom because – they use this phrase – the Kingdom of heaven is like

A) Noted last week – need to realize **when talking** about the Kingdom of heaven Jesus was not referring to heaven itself – He had something broader in mind

B) The Phrases Kingdom of God and Kingdom of heaven – don't show up in the Bible until Matthews Gospel – strictly NT terminology

1) Describing what God is doing in the world – thru the coming of His son JC

C) God has never quit being King and Sovereign in the world – OT declares clearly – the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof.

1) God has always been King of the Universe

D) Within that kingdom, the Lord obviously allows Satan a certain amount of freedom.

In the garden man sinned forfeited the oversight of the world into the hands of the Devil – he was called the God of this world – the Prince of the power of the air.

Man's authority forfeited, not God's – God is still in Control Satan still answers to God – Satan is living on borrowed time – But at this present time God allows Satan & sinners a certain amount of freedom.

Jesus came as a man to redeem for man that which was lost in the garden

It is not like God in the Garden abandoned man – No, it was after the fall that God set in motion a rescue mission to redeem man – from the power and bondage of sin and the devil and to reclaim the earth for his purposes

A) That rescue mission involved the chooses of a man Abe – from which would come a seed a race – from which would come a savior – thru which all the nations of the world would be blessed.

B) All of the events of the OT were leading up to the coming of Jesus – the establishing of his kingdom a visible representation of God's kingdom in the earth

C) The Disciples of Jesus were interested in this Kingdom – And yet they only saw it in one form - Messiahs ruling and reigning - Conquering messiah

Even after Jesus died on the cross, they were still curious about the kingdom. it led them to ask Him in the first chapter of Acts and verse 6, "*Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom?*" Is this the time? Where you are going to set things back in order – like in the garden.

They were hoping Jesus was going to take over by force

but He wasn't looking for forced robots – but for willing subjects -

so his kingdom would begin with a spreading and a gathering Not by force but by love

Kingdom age started when Christ came to the earth and will carry thru – His 2nd coming and the millennial reign

So that is what Jesus is referring to when He is talking about the Kingdom of heaven

The expansion of God's rescue mission in the earth – the gathering of saints throughout humanity -

We looked at the first of these Parables of the Kingdom last week – Parable of the soils - today we are going to consider 3 more

It is important to note that these parables were all taught on the same day and the first 4 in the same location down by the water at the sea of Galilee

RD V.24-30

Here we have the first of 3 parables – Jesus is going to tell the disciples the interpretation in v.36 – but before we go there lets lay out the basic frame work

A) A man sows wheat.....

B) Then verse 25, "While men slept," and this indicates that he had a crew to help him, he must have been a wealthy man, he had a lot of folks helping him with the sowing. ..and they were sleeping."

C)It isn't because they were lazy, it's because it was night and a man who works hard has the right and the privilege to enjoy his sleep.

D)And so at night, "... his enemy came and sowed tares," literally zizania, they knew it as a darnel, which is the common term for it ... rather than tares.

But he sows darnels among the wheat...and the word among there is in a very strong Greek expression, I mean, he sowed them all throughout, and then went his way.

Note the Darnel looked so much like wheat- they used to call it **bastard wheat** you can't tell it apart from wheat. It looks exactly the same until the head finally matures

This was such a common problem in that day – enemies trying to destroy their rivals by planting tares amongst the wheat that the **Romans passed a law against it!**

So that is what happens here – the tares are secretly planted -

Time goes by the tares and wheat grow and it becomes obvious what happened the servants offer to pull out the tares – the owner says – no we will wait for the harvest lest we uproot some of the wheat – we will let the harvesters separate the tares from the wheat

A very simple story, easy to understand. But what does it mean? Well, that's what the disciples wanted to know. Skip to v.36 and read

Note "Jesus sent the multitude away." Now that is most important. He sent the multitude away. Why did He do that?

If Go back to verse 10. The disciples had said to Him when He began to speak in parables, "Why are You teaching in parables? REVEAL AND CONCEAL

All these things Jesus spoke to the multitude in parables; and without a parable He did not speak to them, 35 that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying:

**"I will open My mouth in parables;
I will utter things kept secret from the foundation of the world."**

Clear idea that How God was going to set up His Kingdom was a mystery to the ages that Preceded them- Now the mystery was being revealed in Christ

Jesus was revealing that Mystery to His true followers - - SO they head to a house where Jesus is going to give them the interpretation

Notice in their question how they identify the story The title they gave it was the parable of the tares, they knew that was the main feature.

They knew the story was about those things that didn't belong in the field and how in the end they were going to get burned up.

They knew that. That was the feature that they attached importance to. And so after they are together and they ask the question, the Lord answers the question. RD V.37-43

The Sower is Jesus – the Son of man - Messianic title Dan 13

The field is the world – the seed sown are believers sons of the kingdom

So the Parable is teaching us that Jesus is planting believers – those who respond in the right way to the gospel – He plants them throughout the world

Some want to argue that the field represents the Church – Jesus is planting true believers into his Church AND Satan is planting false believers – the reason they say the field is the Church is because the world is already full of false believers why would Satan need to plant more -

But Jesus clearly stated the field is the world – and He is planting true believers into the world – and they collectively make up His Church –

Jesus has put his Church in the world – for a reason to shine as lights in the darkness – influence those who are lost in sin.

Jesus is speaking about the establishing of His Church in the world – the Church is one body – made up of individuals.

1st point of applicaton

Wherever you are, as a child of God, as a son of the kingdom by faith in Jesus Christ, you have been put there by the Lord Jesus. It is so important to understand that he has sown you and put you where you are.

The church, you see, is to gather together for worship, for instruction, and for mutual fellowship, but then it is to go out. **There is a kind of a rhythm of life within the church -- it comes together, then goes out again, scattered out into the world.**

And where you are out there is where the word of witness is given, where the truth of the word is promoted. That is what the Lord has in mind here.

The field therefore is the world, the human race, society, as we normally term it. In that world of humanity the Lord Jesus has scattered his own.

Careful today Christian schools and Homeschools Protect – Aaron public
Our goal is not just to protect but to train up to send out

Now into that same field, Jesus says, there came an enemy sowed tares – the sons of the wicked one - the enemy is the devil –

A) Now it doesn't make sense that the point is merely that the enemy is sowing more unbelievers into the world – the world was full of them.

B) Key word in v.25 is among - Satan is planting tares among the wheat!

1) The field is the world – and Jesus is planting his sons – sons of the kingdom – true believers into the world – to establish his church

C) The enemy is trying to counteract that – by planting his sons among them

1) Where the true believers are – which definitely could mean the Church

One of Satan's major strategies is imitation – counterfeit – Paul said of Satan in 2 Corinthians 11:14 – he masquerades as an angel of light –

A) His first approach against the Church was going to be to persecute it – He was going to try to destroy it thru violence and intimidation

B) But that backfired – the Church only grew in # - and spread – the persecution of the early Church only forced the spreading of the gospel into Judea Samaria and the uttermost parts of the earth

C) When Satan saw that the Persecution wasn't working – He said – well if you can't beat them join em –

1) That is when he sought to infiltrate the Church thru false teachers that Paul battled in his ministry

Paul warned the Church at Ephesus of Wolves..... after his departure

THE PARABLE TEACHES that we must beware of Satan's counterfeits.

2 Cor. 11:26 He has counterfeit Christians

Gal. 1:6-9 They believe a counterfeit Gospel

Rom. 10:1-3 He encourages a counterfeit righteousness

Rev. 2:9 He has a counterfeit church

2 Thes. 2:1-12 At the end of the age, he will produce a counterfeit Christ

In the 20th and 21st century Satan has been trying to infiltrate the Church in a variety of ways –
New age movement Again with Oprah's new thing –
Psychology –Self help methodology – Philosophy Worldly practices that rely on marketing
strategies and growth strategies rather than the power of the Holy Spirit –

Today what is known as the emerging Church – Denies truth and some of the basic foundational
tenets of the faith – and yet is still widely accepted as Christian

Denies the deity of Christ by questioning the virgin birth

So this has always been one of Satan's strategies – to mix – wrong with right – false with what is
true -

**Reason is twofold – #1He knows that he can't destroy the Church – but his hope is to weaken
it – take away it's power by reducing it's purity!**

#2 He wants to make it's need cloudy – so gray – that people wonder what the need of it is anyway.
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Now in the story the workers ask – do you want us to uproot the tares – and Jesus says no leave
them alone – My angels will deal with them at the end of the age – they will separate when the
time is right -

Some pp have tried to say that this contradicts what Jesus taught in Matthew 18 about Church
discipline – or what Paul said in Galatians about those who would preach a false gospel
They interpret this to mean that in the Church we should just allow anyone to say anything never
correct etc – that misses the point entirely

What Jesus is saying here – is a matter of focus – He doesn't want his followers focused on
combating what is wrong in the world as He wants us sowing what is right

Our job is sowing the gospel – the goodnews – our job is modeling what is right – that is to be our
primary function in the world –

**Satan is going to try to sow counterfeits all along the way – our job is to keep spreading the
truth – keep seeking to win souls – not spend all of our energy taring down tares – because –**

if we are successful in tareing down – one Satan will have 5 more waiting in the wings to take it's
place

Our place in the world is to share and shine – Sow!

Now that doesn't mean that in the Church we are not to deal with error and false teaching – that was a major part of Paul's ministry in the epistles – everyone but Phillipians he is writing to correct error that had crept into the Church.

The focus here is in the world as a whole – there is going to be error – there is going to be mixture – there is going to be that which sounds Christian but really isn't – there is going to be those who looked like real believers who really are not

Don't make it the major focus as a church to battle the tares - - Point out

Charlie – mainly to warn the true sheep

God is going to separate it in the end – Angels are reapers Matthew 16, 24
Book of Revelation – agents of Judgment

So, He says to these guys in the parable - You're the sowers, I've got some other folks for reapers.

Note v.42 Again – the plight of those who are not true believers is not good- cast into the fire to be burned – there are weeping and gnashing of teeth

2nd Application: Are you a true believer?

Now I want to finish up by considering the other two parables V.31-33

Now it is significant that these two parables are bracketed by the Parable of the Devil sowing tares among the wheat and Christ explanation of that parable.

This structure suggests that they should be taken not as teaching something entirely different from the parable of the tares, but as expanding upon it.

I say that because there are some Bible teachers and commentators who try to put a positive spin on these Parables.

A)It is the popular practice of those who hold a ammillennial view or a post millennial views of eschatology – since it fits into their view of the kingdoms triumph in the world prior to Christ return- (No rapture)

B)Now I have to say had Jesus waited to teach these two parables until after he takes a break and gets alone with the disciples and gives them the explanation of the parable of the tares – I might be able to buy the interpretation that he is describing something different with less problems

C)For instance that is clearly the case in v.44 – He gets very positive

D)But by placing them at this spot – I think clearly shows he is expanding on the parable of the tares and is still talking about mixture here.

Now there is a Positive aspect to the parable of the mustard seed – clearly a picture of abnormal growth –

A)Mustard seed is small – smallest at time in their region – Orchard now

B)Mustard seeds don't grow into trees – More of a shrub – birds don't nest in it

C)The sower is Jesus – the field is the world – Seed sown is believers –

1)Establishing of the Church – abnormal growth – 12 disciples /120 – few days
5,000 – spread throughout the world

D)Birds come and nest in it's branches – Here is the negative – who are the birds

1)Few minutes before – 1st Parable Jesus defines the birds {Satan evil one snatches away the seed.

E)Not believers from all over the world –

See for Jesus to suddenly Change his def w/out any explanation would be inconsistent and confusing

A)Note he changed the meaning of what the seed represented from the first parable to the 2nd – but He gave us an explanation

B)He doesn't do that here – so following the rule of expositional consistency we have to conclude that the birds represent evil and that he is again describing mixture – Satan's attempt to infiltrate

The Parable of that Leaven that follows makes this really clear –

A)Really have to ignore Scripture to make this a positive thing – because leaven always in scripture speaks of sin when used methorically

KEY INSIGHT: *three measures of meal* was a very familiar thing to the Jews!
three measures of meal was the exact amount customarily used in a grain offering to God

leaven had absolutely no place in a grain offering to the Lord

Throughout the Bible, *leaven* is a symbol of evil.

It had to be removed from the Jewish homes during Passover (Ex. 12:15-19; 13:7).

EXAMPLE: When we were in Israel at Passover we always looked for Non-Kosher Restaurants just to get unleavened bread.... Some of our favorite eating places were closed because the Food vendors HAD TO CLEANSE their premises from any leaven.

The idea of hiding leaven in three measures of meal would have offended any observant Jew.

THUS - making the growth of the leaven a picture of the spread of the Gospel throughout the world would violate the meaning of this important symbol of *leaven*.

This certainly isn't a picture of the church gradually influencing the whole world for good.

Jesus used *leaven* to picture

hypocrisy (**Luke 12:1**)

false teaching (**Matt. 16:6-12**)

worldly compromise (**Matt. 22:16-21**).

Paul used *leaven* to picture

carnality in the church (**1 Cor. 5:6-8**)

false doctrine (**Gal. 5:9**).

CRUCIAL POINT: While the parable of the tares and the *mustard seed* illustrates the Outward expression of **Satan's attempt to infiltrate the Kingdom**

the *leaven* illustrates the *inward DECAY* of the Church by way of **false teaching** and **false living**.

Sin is like leaven It quietly grows, and corrupts by way of **ROTTING**... and it "puffs up" (**1 Cor. 4:18-19; 5:2; 8:1**).

Notice how the teaching ends V.43 To him who has ears

Let him hear

A) Listen up – Be on guard – last days Satan is seeking more and more to cloudy the water

B) Lessen the impact – blend the lines

C) Be on guard – but also examine my own heart

Leaven- Carnality – Materialism – Legalism

*1 Thes. 5:21 “Prove all things; **hold fast** that which is good”*