

Wil Owens
Parables Tell a Greater Story; Matt 13:10-17
GPBC
11.24.19

Introduction – A parable has been defined as an earthly story with a heavenly meaning. The purpose of speaking parables is to illustrate spiritual truth with everyday language. It is a powerful and effective teaching method. People may not remember the finer points of doctrine, but it is easy to remember Jesus talked about 4 types of soils. And if you can remember the 4 types of soils, then you can make the connection to the 4 types of souls. Parables make eternal truths easy to grasp and easy to retain.

But there's more to the telling of parables and the reception of parables than a didactic method. In fact, the very use of parables actually serves to illustrate the first parable of the soils. Either the Word spoken through parable is understood and received or it is not spiritually grasped and therefore tossed aside. Jesus taught by parables in His day to show who of His listeners had good soil and who had unreceptive soil. So parables not only tell the story they tell, they also tell a greater story.

- I. Salvation is by Grace (vv10-12)
 - a. "Why do you speak to them in parables?" In other words, why don't you just speak the truth of the kingdom in clear, plain language? Why don't you just state outright, propositional truth? Anachronistically, we could ask the question this way. Why don't you teach the way the Apostle Paul writes his letters?
 - b. Vv11-17 is Jesus' answer to their question. And if we follow closely, we'll see how Jesus' use of parables actually illustrates the point of His first parable.
 - c. The first part of His answer has to do with grace. Jesus answered, **"To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given."**
 - i. Now let's break that verse down.
 - ii. First, let's recall v23 from last week's sermon. So if you have good soil, if your heart is open and receptive to the Word, if you embrace the gospel, if you have ears to hear, if you get it

and embrace it, if your life has changed and now bears fruit – that's grace! It has been given to you.

iii. Matthew 16:15-17

iv. So if you know Jesus to be the Christ and you have embraced Him as your Savior and Lord, give thanks to God, for it is by grace that you have been saved! III. Thanksgiving!

v. And furthermore, this grace is not given to everyone. Not everyone is given a new heart. This produces 2 responses in the believer: Gratitude and Humility (1) We need to be more grateful for our salvation than we have ever imagined! (2) The only difference between the saved and the unsaved, between the believer and the unbeliever is grace! Believers are not better people than unbelievers. Believers are not more moral, more deserving, more intellectual. Believers are sinners – saved by grace.

d. V12 – If you have been given the grace of a new heart, you will only receive more and more grace!

i. If you have the grace of a new heart, you will have the grace of a new life, you will have the grace of being reconciled to God, you will have the grace of justification and adoption, you will have the grace of Christ in you, the hope of glory, you will have the grace of God's sustaining grace through this life, you will have the grace of life eternal. As Paul says, we are lavished in the grace of God!

e. V12b – If you are not right with God, everything you trust in for your salvation and right standing with God will one day prove to be the false assurance and deception that it is. Whatever you are standing on other than Christ will wash away.

f. The first part of Jesus' answer is the truth that salvation is by grace.

II. Unbelief is Man's Natural State (vv13-15)

a. The second part of Jesus' answer is that man in his natural state is an unbeliever. We are born sinners and we like our sin and we prefer our sin.

i. Eph 4:17-20

ii. Rom 1:21

- b. Vv14-15 – Man’s unbelief is man’s fault. Man’s guilt is man’s responsibility. Sinners should open their eyes and see. They should open their hearts and believe. But they choose to look the other way. They should embrace Christ, but they will not embrace Christ. Sinners close their eyes and they turn their hearts away from God.
 - c. V13 – Jesus says, “This is why I speak to them in parables” – to show that you don’t come to God on your own, by your own works, through your own efforts, from your own spirituality or religious qualifications. To prove that salvation is by grace!
 - d. Jesus taught in parables to demonstrate that salvation is by grace, not by the merit or goodness of man! He taught in parables in order to strip away from man any and everything he might trust in for forgiveness of sin and eternal life other than the grace of God!
 - e. For even what he has will be taken away from him. Parables were not for the purpose of keeping people out of the kingdom; they were for the purpose of showing people there is only one way into the kingdom! -by grace, through faith, in Christ
 - f. The point is simply this: When Jesus speaks, if you don’t get it that’s because you won’t get it. So we must humbly come to God, confess that we are sinners, admit that we don’t know, we don’t have the answers, we are not right with God, and ask that God might graciously save us! That God might give us understanding. That God might give us light.
 - g. John 3:19 – And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. – Unbelief is man’s natural state.
 - h. John 6:65 – This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father. – Salvation is by grace.
- III. Grace Keeps Giving (vv16-17)
- a. Your eyes see, your ears hear – you have been blessed. Cf. Matt 16:15 – God has given to you eyes to see and ears to hear!
 - b. Rejoice! You would not have come to faith on your own, by your own works, by your own way, by your own volition. God gave you seeing eyes and hearing ears. Be thankful! Oh, dear church – with this passage fresh on our hearts, this Thanksgiving service ought to be the

greatest Thanksgiving service Grassy Pond Baptist Church has ever had! We see. We hear. Thanks be to God!

- c. The prophets of old and the believers of the OT days and the inter-testament days longed to see the Messiah come. Longed to know Him. Longed to see God fulfill His promise. Long to know the One on whom they believed.
- d. And we here today, see more than even the disciples to whom Jesus spoke these words. They lived in the days when the Scripture was still being completed. We have the full revelation of God. We have the full counsel of God's Word. We see and we hear more in this day than ever before!
- e. We see the church established. We see the gospel plunging forward into the darkness. We see the people of God rising from every tribe and nation. We see the end is nearer today than ever before. We see eternity on the horizon. It is possible in our lifetime for the gospel to reach every people group. Jesus said this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed to the ends of the earth and then the end will come. Our ears may hear what every believing ear has longed to hear – the final trumpet. Our eyes may see what every believing eye has longed to see – the return of Christ!

Conclusion – I want to answer 1 question, drive home one point, and then answer a final question.

1. Pastor, why doesn't God give everyone this grace? I can't answer that question because the Bible doesn't answer that question but I can tell you this: the question itself presupposes that God owes everyone grace, it presupposes that everyone deserves God's grace – and if either one of those is true, it wouldn't be grace. Salvation is not a right; it is grace!
2. Up until today you may have fallen for the deception that your salvation is entirely up to you. That you can put it off until you've had your fill of sin, and then you'll come to Christ as if you can come to Christ at any time you choose. Don't be deceived. Salvation is of the Lord. You only come if He draws you to Himself.
3. Then Pastor what can I do today if I'm not saved? Ask, and you will receive. For whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. Come, for whoever comes to Him, He will never cast out. Delay no longer! Believe. Repent. Come. Embrace. Be saved today for today is the day of salvation!