

**A Study of the Parables of our Lord; Session # 1 – “Why Did Jesus Use Parables?”,
presented by Pastor Paul Rendall, on February 20th, 2022,
in the Adult Sunday School Class.**

I thought that it would helpful to many for me to step aside from teaching our Confession of Faith for a time, and take up a study of the Parables of our Lord. My object in this is to bring greater clarity to our minds in regard to the mysteries of the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom of God is the spiritual kingdom over which God rules. It is composed of those persons who are consciously submit to His righteous rule over their life.

The kingdom of heaven is composed of those persons who have believed in the gospel of Jesus Christ; those who by faith have entered His spiritual and everlasting kingdom, and they are traveling on the path of life to the celestial glory. It will be good for us as Christians if we can look at our life and see that we are bearing fruit to God, and bringing glory to His holy name. We will be able to do this by always remembering the sovereignty of His grace in relation to our living our Christian life, and in relation to our laboring for the furtherance of His kingdom. A study of the parables will help us, I believe, in this regard.

I want to begin this study with you today by reading to you Matthew Chapter 13, verses 1-23. In this parable Jesus gives us some of the main reasons why He taught the people in parables. In Mark chapter 4, verse 13, Jesus said – “Do you not understand this parable?” “How then will you understand all the parables.” So this particular parable of the Sower and the Seed will help us to unlock all of the parables in certain particular ways.

Matthew 13: 1-23 –

- (1) “On the same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the sea.
- (2) And great multitudes were gathered together to Him, so that He got into a boat and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.
- (3) Then He spoke many things to them in parables, saying: "Behold, a sower went out to sow. (4) And as he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them.
- (5) Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth.
- (6) But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away.
- (7) And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them.
- (8) But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.
- (9) He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"
- (10) And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?"
- (11) He answered and said to them, "Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given.
- (12) For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him.
- (13) Therefore I speak to them in parables, 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.'
- (16) But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear;
- (17) for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see 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:
- (19) When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside.

(20) But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy;

(21) yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles.

(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 riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful.

(23) But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."

Let me raise a couple of questions to begin our study.

Question 1. What is a parable anyway?

Well, A parable is, very simply, an earthly story with a heavenly or spiritual meaning. It was Jesus using earthly observational truths, truths that would be easily understood by anyone, to give instruction concerning spiritual truths and realities which would be more difficult to understand if He had not put them side by side. This is what the word παραβολή in the Greek means – To place side by side, and to compare.

To build upon this definition, as we consider the parables of our Lord, we can say that a parable is an earthly story with a spiritual meaning that better explains the truth of man's need of a new heart and Divine grace. On a greater level, some of Christ's parables also better explain the advance of Christ's kingdom amidst much opposition from Satan and wicked men.

**Question 2. Why did Jesus use parables in His teaching?
(The reasons are given to us in the parable itself)**

Let me point out to you 5 Reasons –

1st – So that people might be saved. The Lord Jesus told parables because He knew that people need good spiritual illustrations of the truths of the gospel and His grace. This is why we want to study parables at this time. It will help us to understand God's purpose and His work in salvation better. The sower went out to sow. Who is the sower? It is the Lord Jesus Christ. What is He sowing? He is sowing the word of the kingdom. It says in verse 19. The gospel of Christ is strewn through all through the Scriptures. It tells us how to enter His kingdom; the gospel which tells us that we all have need of Christ's grace and truth. It tells us that He is full of grace and truth, and that we by nature do not have grace, neither do we know God until we believe in Christ. Jesus knew that this truth concerning Himself would be better communicated to the Jews of His day by means of parables. (verses 3-7)

But the same is also true for us as Christians. Are you and I, as Christians, sowers of the seed of the word of God as well? Yes, for in Ecclesiastes 11, verse 6, it says – "In the morning sow your seed, and in the evening do not withhold your hand; for you do not know which will prosper, either this or that or whether both alike will be good."

We will talk more about this in our next session, but – The greatness of all mankind's need to have and receive grace from God and Christ, and to believe and to be saved, is shown by what happens when the gospel is preached to people. This parable portrays the major different reactions and responses of people when they hear the gospel and the word of God. Some of the seeds fall by the wayside and the birds devour them. Some fall on stony places where there was

not much earth; and they immediately spring up because they had no depth of earth. And some fell upon the thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked the seed. And finally, some seeds fall on good ground. We will think about these things in greater depth in our next Session. With the time remaining I want to give you some of the other reasons why Jesus taught in parables.

2nd – So that people might understand the mysteries of the kingdom of God better.
(verses 8-11)

He is talking about the “planting principles” of the gospel and also the Church, the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is a mystery how grace is planted by God in the heart, and how it grows in wonderful and glorious ways in the heart of the believer. His kingdom’s advance and the fulfillment of the Father’s purposes in the world in relation to the Church are being hinted at, here by our Lord. Jesus knew that even those people who have saving grace would become more mature Christians by their being able to see that they are part of a kingdom of the Father’s purpose in relation to the election of grace. That they are a part of a spiritual kingdom composed of many people whom God would save. He knew that those believing in Him should understand that when they are saved they are brought into a kingdom which is bigger than just themselves and their own selfish interests.

3rd – So that the truth of man’s absolute need of Divine grace would be established.
(verse 12)

“For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him.”

The question that we should ask ourselves in relation to this verse is – What is it that the person has, which he will be given more of, and have an abundance? What is it that he has? He has the spiritual understanding of his having received wisdom and grace from Christ; not only to be saved, but also in order to live the Christian life to the glory of God. If a person has Divine grace given to them in the New Birth, given to them in the seed of righteousness planted in their heart, given to them by their having been given the Holy Spirit to dwell in their mind and their heart, then they will receive more. Whereas, the person who does not have Divine grace, even what they think that they have, in terms of their supposedly understanding spiritual things, will be taken away from them because they have not seen that to be truly spiritually minded requires that they see their need of Christ’s grace, and that they have received all that which is offered freely to them in the gospel.

4th – So that those who were rejecting Christ and their need of Divine grace would be judicially blinded. (verses 13-15)

As we go through this study, we will also come to understand that the parables which were spoken by the Lord Jesus were intended both to reveal and to conceal the truth, depending on who was hearing them. For those of the Jews who were really hearing these parables, they were understanding them because they had faith in Christ. And this was because they had good ground in their hearts; that is, that Divine grace had gone before them, given them something vitally important; the and made their heart good ground. Having a heart which is good ground shows a work of Divine grace has commenced and will result in salvation.

When it came to the Jews of Jesus’ day, those who were rejecting Him as their Messiah, He spoke to them in parables so that seeing physically they would not see spiritually, and hearing physically, what He was saying, they would not hear, nor would they understand it. His

speaking to them in parables, in their case, was a judgment placed upon them because their hearts had grown dull, their ears had grown hard of hearing, and their eyes they had closed, lest they should understand and be healed spiritually. Because of their rejection of Christ and the purpose for which He had come, to bring salvation to all men by His gospel being preached to them, since they rejected that purpose, then God brought upon them this judicial blindness.

5th – So that we might greatly rejoice in the God’s having given to us grace, and spiritual understanding. (verses 16 and 17)

Jesus says here – “But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear; for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.” Let me ask in closing, do you realize, dear Christian just how privileged you are to have grace to be able to understand the parables? People who believed in God in Old Testament times had looked to see their Messiah, and he didn’t come in their day. The apostles and disciples of the Lord in the days of Jesus’ earthly ministry did hear Him and see Him.

A picture is worth a thousand words. Seeing Jesus and hearing Him in Person was a great spiritual privilege. Your being able to understand the word pictures in this parable, and your understanding that it pertains to your having been personally given grace, eyes to see and ears to hear, this is worth more than everything else which you could attain to by your own industry in terms of earthly wisdom and learning. Blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear is a very great statement. Let us greatly rejoice in all that God has given us. He has given us truth in parables that will show the greatness of the gift of grace which we have found in Christ. Let us rejoice in the Lord always that we have heard these things and received grace.