

The Parable of the Kingdom of God



Matthew 13:1-58

- In the early part of Jesus' ministry, He didn't use parables as a form of teaching to illustrate a divine truth.
- According to Mark 4:34, "Jesus did not say anything to them without using a parable and when He was alone with His disciples He would explain what He meant."
- In Matthew 13:10, Jesus began using parables to teach about the kingdom of heaven. His disciples noticed the change in His method of teaching, and asked Him the question, "Why do You speak to them in parables?"
- Purpose: to assist us in growing in our understanding by exploring these divine truths found Christ's teaching. To teach us what they mean and how they relate to our present and future life in Christ Jesus.
- Goal: to allow the Holy Spirit speak to our hearts and draw us closer to Jesus Christ.
- Spiritual Principles: Authority, Organization, Obedience, Stewardship, Agreement, Grace, Faith, Unconditional love

A. What is a parable?

1. It is a simple yet powerful story that Jesus used to illustrate a great truth. Jesus used parables to help His followers understand spiritual truths.
2. The word "parable" is taken from the Greek word that literally means to cast or throw alongside.
 - A parable is thrown in to illustrate something abstract.
 - Parables were stories that were "cast or thrown" alongside a truth in order to illustrate a divine truth.
 - Parables were also used as teaching aids and can be thought of as extended analogies to draw comparisons between the natural world and the spiritual world.
3. Parables are found in both the Old Testament and the New Testament. There are at least 250 Parables found in the Bible. Here are some examples found in the Old Testament:

- A prophet named Nathan used a parable of The Rich man and The Poor man and his little ewe lamb to show King David his guilt of adultery with Bathsheba and having her husband Uriah killed. (2 Samuel 12:1-10)
 - The prophet Jeremiah used a parable known as The Potter and the Clay to illustrate the Lord message of judgement and restoration to nation of Judah. (Jeremiah 18:1-11)
 - There was an unnamed woman who told David a story to convince him to bring his banished son Absalom back to Jerusalem. (2 Samuel 14:1-23)
 - King Solomon used a parable of The Poor Wise man to illustrate that a person doesn't have to be rich and powerful to influence the world around them. The wisdom of God has the ability to change our lives and the world around us. (Ecclesiastes 9:13-18)
4. There are at least 39 Parables that are recorded in the Gospel of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. There are no parables found in the Gospel of John.

B. Why did Jesus speak in Parables? Jesus spoke in parables for several reasons. (Matthew 13:10-17)

1. Jesus spoke parables to simplify His message to help His followers to understand what He was saying and apply what they were being taught to their lives.
 2. Jesus spoke in parables to effectively communicate His message and accomplish His mission; regardless of their age, culture or language.
 3. Jesus spoke in parables to sow spiritual seeds in the hearts of His disciples that would later grow and become fruitful in their lives after His resurrection.
- After Jesus was crucified and raised from the dead, He appeared to His disciples during that time for forty days speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. (Acts 1:3)
 - Jesus spent three years teaching and training His disciples, yet they still didn't fully grasp everything and still had questions they wanted answered. (Acts 1:4-8)

4. To reveal the significant role of the Holy Spirit in their lives and the life of every true believer. (Acts 1:8)
 - The Holy Spirit's involvement in our daily lives is both needed and necessary to our spiritual understanding of who Jesus Christ is and His purpose for our lives. (Matthew 16:13-21)
 - The Holy Spirit reveals Jesus Christ and increases our understanding of the Word of God. (John 16:7-14, 14:16-27)
 5. To both reveal and hide the mysteries or secrets of God's kingdom. (Matthew 13:10-11)
 - The "mysteries or secrets" of the kingdom refers to those things that were hidden in the Old Testament and are revealed in the New Testament in the coming of Jesus Christ.
 - The disciples had the privilege seeing and hearing Jesus Christ firsthand. The disciples witnessed His miracles and heard His powerful teachings.
 - The prophets and righteous men of the Old Testament longed to witness the arrival of Jesus Christ.
- C. Jesus explained that His use of parables had a two-fold purpose. (vs. 10-11)
1. Jesus used parables to reveal the secrets of His kingdom to those whom He wanted to know them and hide those secrets from those whom He didn't.
 - In Matthew 12, the Pharisees had publicly rejected Jesus Christ as the Messiah and continued to plot against Him, how they might destroy Him.
 - They had fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy of a hardhearted and spiritually blind people (Isaiah 6:8-9). Jesus quotes from the Book of Isaiah (Matthew 13:13-15).
 2. To prevent Satan from interfering with His plans. (1 Corinthians 2:7-8)
 - Satan remained in the dark until God's purposes were revealed and accomplished through the His Son Jesus Christ.

3. There were those whose hearts were hardened toward Jesus Christ. (John 1:12-13)

- **God both unveiled His secrets to those who genuinely seek after Him and veiled His secrets to those whose hearts are hardened toward Him.**
- **Jesus spoke in parables to give His disciples understanding of spiritual truth, while confounding those who refused Him in their hearts. (vs. 11-12)**
- **The secrets of the kingdom of heaven cannot be understood without Jesus Christ being received in a person's heart.**
- **The Holy Spirit reveals the secret things of God to true believers of Jesus Christ, yet God's truth remains hidden from unbelievers. (1 Corinthians 2:9-16, Colossians 1:26-27, 1 John 2:20)**
- **God will never reward unbelief. He rewards those who truly believe and trust in Him and His Son Jesus Christ.**

D. What made Jesus' parables so powerful and effective?

1. Jesus' parables were relatable, receivable, relational and reliable.

- **Christ's teaching causes a person to begin to view themselves and their situation up close and personal.**

2. Jesus' parables would reveal the Sovereignty of God. (vs. 12-17)

- **God has sovereign rule over everything.**
- **God will always operate according to His plan and purposes. No person can ever force the hand God in anything.**
- **God never depends on the efforts of man, but the work of His Son and the power and presence of the Holy Spirit.**

3. Jesus' parables changed the hearts and lives of those who received the truth of His message.

4. Jesus' parables were effective in condemning the hearts and hidden motives of the religious leaders of His day. (Luke 11:53-54, Matthew 7:6)

5. Jesus' parables cover an entire spectrum of Christian experiences, from our conversion to Christ to the final consummation of all things when Jesus Christ comes to earth for the second time.

- These parables include Christ's death and His resurrection.
 - These parables include the work of the Holy Spirit.
 - These parables also include what happens to us when we die.
6. Jesus would say after telling some of His parables, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!" (Mark 4:9, 23)
- This was significant, because it calls the hearer to listen closely and not just for the sake of listening to any other story; but as one who seeks the truth of God's Word.

The Parable of the Kingdom of God

Matthew 13:1-58

1. Jesus began by using the Parable of the Sower to teach about the kingdom of God. (Matthew 13:3-9, 18-23)
 - The parable of the Sower is centered around a farming illustration. The people could relate easily to this parable due to their agricultural background.
 - Jesus uses this parable to describe a farmer or sower who went out scattered seed that fell on various kinds of soils (hard, stony, thorns, good ground).

2. Jesus uses three symbols in this parable: The Sower (farmer), the Seed, and the Soil. (vs. 3-9)
 - a. The Sower (farmer) did go out. (vs. 3)
 - The Sower (farmer) represents Jesus Christ.
 - It also represents true believers of Jesus Christ who has the responsibility to go out and sow the Word (the gospel of Jesus Christ). (1 Corinthians 3:4-9)
 - b. The Sower (farmer) sows the seed. (vs. 3, 18)
 - The Seed represents the Word of God or the Word of the kingdom. (vs. 3-8)
 - The Seeds that were sown fell on different types of soil. Which could only mean that the results would be different.

- c. The Soil (the ground) represents the hearts of the individual hearer or the spiritual state of those in world. (vs. 19-23)
- A. There are Four Things that are significant about this Parable and how it relates to each individual. Notice that the seed fell on four types of soil. (vs. 3-8)
1. The Sower (farmer) – some seed fell by the wayside and where eaten by the birds. (vs. 3-4, 18-19)
 - a. The wayside (hard pathway). These paths were formed due to public travel causing the ground to become very hard.
 - Jesus is referring to a person who hears the Word when it is sown, but because their heart is hardened with sin – the word is rejected.
 - They are presented with the gospel, they refuse to hear it and allow it to permeate in their hearts.
 - The hearer will have the choice to do four things with the Word: (1.) Reject it, (2.) Accept it, (3.) Obey it, (4.) Share it.
 - b. The birds came and devoured the seed. (vs. 4, 19)
 - Jesus Christ is referring to the evil one (Satan, the devil) who comes and snatches away the Word that was sown. (John 10:10)
 - The enemy (Satan) will use anyone or anything to target those in which the Word of God remains on the surface of their hearts.
 - This is a person whose heart remains closed toward the Word, and become an easy target for the enemy.
 2. The Sower (farmer) – some seed fell on stony places where there was only a thin layer of soil (ground). (vs. 5-6)
 - a. The seed immediately sprouted (began to grow), but it had no root and was scorched by the sun and withered away. (vs. 5-6, 20-21)
 - Jesus is referring to a person who hears the Word and appears to accept Christ in their hearts with joy and excitement.
 - They never allowed the Word to take root in their heart, which caused them to immediately stumble (falls away, desert or distrust) Jesus Christ. (James 1:21-25)
 - They appear to be growing for a season, but then their faith and growth in Christ begins to die out (they begin to die spiritually).

- They endure for a season, but when trials, temptations, tribulations, persecution came they immediately wither under pressure. (Galatians 6:9)
3. The Sower (farmer) – some seed fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them. (vs. 7, 22)
 - a. The Sower (farmer) – some seed fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them. (vs. 7, 22)
 - Jesus is referring to a person who hears the Word, but the thorns (cares of the world) and deceitfulness of riches) ends up choking the Word (the good seed, imperishable seed) right out of them. (1 Peter 1:22-25, Mark 8:36-37, 1 John 2:15-17)
 - This person becomes easily detached from the truth of God’s Word, due to being attached to the things of this world.
 - Their lives eventually become spiritually unfruitful and barren. (John 15:8-10, 18)
 - b. How does Satan use the deceitful riches of the world to distract a person hearing from Jesus Christ and His Word? (2 Timothy 6:6-10)
 - He deceives a person into becoming self-confident and self-independent. It causes their hearts to trust and rely on their riches rather than putting their faith and trust in God and His Son Jesus Christ. (Matthew 6:24)
 - He deceives a person by luring them deeper into a world of sin and lustful pleasures. (James 1:13-15)
 - He deceives a person into having a false sense of hope and security in the riches in the world. God should always be the source and security of every believer’s life. (Proverbs 3:5-8)
 4. The Sower (farmer) – “But other seeds fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.” (vs. 8, 23)
 - a. Jesus is referring to a person who heard and received the Word out of a good, tender or pure heart.
 - This is a person who allows the Word of God to take permanent root in their heart. (Luke 8:15)

- This is a person who hears the Word of God and understands it. Their spiritual hearts and ears are open attentively to the voice of God.
- This is a person who remains in state of readiness to hear and obey the command of God's Word.
- b. Jesus refers to this person being spiritually fruitful and productive. (Galatians 5:22-23, John 15:5, Isaiah 55:11)
 - They bear the fruit of God's Word and the Holy Spirit in their lives.
 - They continue to reap the blessings and benefits due to their unwavering commitment to Jesus Christ and His Word.
- c. Jesus makes it clear that the condition of their heart will determine the Word's effectiveness in a person's life. (vs. 23)
 - Notice that these believers didn't receive the same return from the Word that was sown in their hearts.
 - Some received one hundredfold, some sixty and some thirty.
- d. Jesus would say to them after telling some of His parables, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!" (Mark 4:9, 23)
 - This was significant, because it calls the hearer to listen closely and not just for the sake of listening to any other story. But as one who seek the truth of God's Word.