

Why Parables?

STORIES OF THE KINGDOM: THE PARABLES OF JESUS [MATTHEW, PART 5] · MATTHEW 13:11-17 · AUGUST 8, 2021 · PASTOR JIM CALER

SERMON OUTLINE:

WHAT IS A PARABLE?

- παραβολή [*parabole*] is a combination of *para* (along-side) and *ballo* (to throw), thus “to throw alongside.”
- “an earthly story with a heavenly meaning”.

WHY DID JESUS TEACH IN PARABLES?

1. To REVEAL truth *“Because the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them.” (Matthew 13:11)*

Two things about this truth the parables reveal:

a. The Kingdom of Heaven is mysterious

“He replied, “Because the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them.”

Jesus says, “the kingdom of heaven is like...” in 13:24, 31, 33, 44, and 45

b. Their understanding is a gift from God (vs 11)

“Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven.” (Matt 16:17).

“What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words. The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit.

(1 Corinthians 2:12-14).

2. To CONCEAL Truth. *“Because the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them.” (Matthew 13:11)*

This is why I speak to them in parables:

“Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand.

In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah:

“You will be ever hearing but never understanding;

you will be ever seeing but never perceiving.

For this people’s heart has become calloused;

they hardly hear with their ears,

and they have closed their eyes.

Otherwise they might see with their eyes,

hear with their ears,

understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.” (Matthew 13:13-15)

LIVE IT OUT:

1. Do the work to discern the meaning of the parable

- Ask God to guide
- Study context (literal and cultural)

- Take note of surprising details
- Take note of stock imagery
- Keep the main point the main point

2. Respond to the truth of the parable with action

3. Don’t lose hope for those you love

- *Hoti* – “Because” (vs 11)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

OPEN UP (everyone answer one of these questions):

- Who is the favorite teacher you’ve ever had? Why?
- Which of Jesus’ parables is your favorite? Why?

DIG IN:

- Pray for God to help you understand and hear clearly what He wants to say to you.
- Read Matthew 13:1-3; 10-17
- What are the first things that stand out to you about this text? (key words, attitudes, etc...)
- What do you think parables accomplish that simple and direct teaching does not? Why?
- When have you experienced this?
- Do you think it is more difficult for us to understand the parables of Jesus than it was for the people who first heard them? Why?
- Jesus said the secrets were given for His disciples to know. What did He mean? How does that bring encouragement to your study of the parables of the kingdom of heaven?
- Jesus promised that those who have, will have in abundance. What is it that they have? What does Jesus promise they will have in abundance?
- What did Isaiah and Jesus mean in talking about seeing but not seeing and hearing but not hearing? Have you ever experienced this in trying to share the kingdom of God with someone? What should you do in a situation like that? Base your response on the words and witness of Jesus and his disciples.
- How do you reconcile the statements/quotes Jesus uses in Matthew 13:13-15 with God’s desire for all people to come to know and love Him? (1 Timothy 2:3-4)
- In verses 16-17, Jesus gives a new “Beatitude.” What have the disciples seen and experienced that the prophets longed to see and hear?
- Are we included in this blessing? Why or why not?
- Which of the keys to understanding a parable is hardest for you to implement? What can help you with this as we begin to study the parables moving forward?

LIVE IT OUT:

- Make a commitment to read each of the parables in Matthew before we study them together in the church services. Start with the parable of the soils (Matthew 13:4-9; 18-23).
- As we continue through this study of the parables of Jesus, consider who you can share what you’re learning with and who you can expose to the truth of the God’s kingdom. Pray for them by name now. If you’re in a group, spend time praying for each other for boldness to share the Good News of God’s kingdom with others.