

- Last week we did an overview of Chapter 13. I explained much of commentary between parables and also kept Matthews message before us. Matthews purpose is to communicate to the reader that those who live in pursuit of the kingdom will find it and that it will grow extensively in their lives if they continue to look for and receive it. Kingdom is key to understanding chap 13.
- Matthew 13 is another shift in his book. We call it a narrative passage like chapter 5-7 in the sermon on the mount. Matthew is playing back to us the teachings of Jesus. Chapters 11-12 were short videos of what was happening while Jesus and the disciples traveled. In both Matthew is sending a message.
 - Chapters 11-12 the message was some people receive the kingdom some do not. There are grave consequences for not receiving the Kingdom.
 - Chapter 13 is a group of parables that defines what a persons life looks like who receives the kingdom of heaven.
 - We must remember that parables have one basic truth. That truth is not always obvious. It is hidden just enough to cause the person who wants to find it to be engaged with God. The hearer must participate if they are to gain kingdom understanding.
- As the discourse develops we shall find ample cause to believe that good soil can be found: the kingdom of heaven will grow like mustard seed and penetrate like leaven, and people will rejoice at discovering it as at finding a treasure or a pearl; "hidden things" are meant to be revealed (v. 35). France, R. T. (2007). *The Gospel of Matthew* (p. 509). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publication Co.

I. The Parable

- A. A *parabolē* is an utterance which does not carry its meaning on the surface, and which thus demands thought and perception if the hearer is to benefit from it. Learning from and responding to a *parabolē* is not a matter of simply reading off the meaning from the words, but of entering into an interactive process to which the hearer must contribute if true understanding is to result. France, R. T. (2007). *The Gospel of Matthew* (p. 502). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publication Co. As we interact with this parable, here is what we discover. It God who hides a thing and it is up to kings to search a matter out. Parables are designed to pull us into them for the purpose of discovery. What you discover you keep/won't forget.
1. The Sower is Jesus. He is the one sowing the Word. (vs 37)
 2. The Seed is the Word of God. John6:63
 3. The soils are the those on whom the word of God falls.
 - a) The soil represents the conditions of the heart. 18-23
 - b) Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. Mt 12:34-35.
 - c) Humility is the soil in which the Word of God grows.

- B. The parable is about the great harvest that takes place in the lives of those who receive the Word/Kingdom. But it also lends itself to the contemplation of what happens in the other three soils not prepared to produce a great harvest.
- C. The parables are about how the kingdom of God operates. Therefore understanding these parables is of the utmost importance if you want the Kingdom operating in your life.

II. The Explanation of the Parable

- A. Four scenarios. The explanation of the parable focuses on "the hearing of the message."
 - 1. The seed on the path.
 - a) Symptom of a hard heart. Lack of understanding.
 - b) Cannot receive the Word because of hardness of heart.
 - (1) Seed the path.
 - (2) Seed on the end row.
 - 2. The seed in the rocks.
 - a) The danger comes from not having enough soil for the plant/Word to become rooted. It is a comparison of the initial growth and the inability to sustain continued growth.
 - b) Initial but not lasting growth.
 - 3. The seed among weeds.
 - a) The danger comes not from the inadequate resources in the soil, but from competition. The luxuriant growth of the thorns shows that there is nothing wrong with the soil here; the problem is that it is already occupied and there is no room for a new type of vegetation. France, R. T. (2007). *The Gospel of Matthew* (p. 505). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publication Co.
 - b) Decent growth but crowded out over time by other things.
 - c) It may survive, but will not produce. So concerning the farmer, it is useless.
 - 4. The seed in good soil.
 - a) This is the seed that grows and produces. 30, 60, 100 fold.
 - b) Even though it grows and produces the production varies depending on the skill of the farmer.
 - c) This takes us back to vs 9, ""*He who has ears to hear, let him hear!*"" (Matthew 13:9, NKJV)
- B. In every case the message is heard. What matters is what happens next with what has been heard.
 - 1. Heard but not understood and Satan steals the word.
 - 2. Heard and received with enthusiasm but can't take the 'heat' and withers. Enthusiasm is based on external stimulus...healing, feeding 5k, etc. External stimulus is no guarantee that a person will be able to stand when the pressure of life comes because it is a Word from God not internalized.

3. Heard but choked out. Mt 19:16 Rich young ruler could not follow Jesus. The echo of 6:25-43 (cf. also Luke 21:34) in the word "worries" reminds us of the priorities set out in the discourse on discipleship. France, R. T. (2007). *The Gospel of Matthew* (p. 521). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publication Co.
4. Heard and received and understood. Not just intellectually, but by application to lifestyle. Also we are to note the diversity of production: Disciples are not all the same, and so equally genuine disciples may produce different levels of crop, depending on their different gifts and circumstances.

Conclusion: