

The Gospel According to Matthew pt 43

(Teaching with Parables)

In the thirteenth chapter of Matthew, our Lord Jesus Christ teaches us the gospel by seven distinct illustrations, called (parables). Illustrations of divine truths drawn from the natural elements of His creation. He calls the teachings of these parables **“the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven”** (Mat 13:11).

Read Matthew 13:1-3

First we must ask; “Why teach in a parable?” look at verses 10-11 of 13

“Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.” Again our Lord makes a distinction between men. There are some **“the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven”** are given to know and others not, hidden as it were!

Remember what we read back in chapter 11; **“At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight.”** (Mat 11:25-26)

Folks our Salvation is of the Lord! all of it! Not one thing can be added nor can it be taken away! We who belong to God, the people of God, the church, the Sanctified, sanctified by the calling of the Holy Spirit, set apart, made Holy by the Righteousness of Christ, Justified by His Blood, are “Saved by Grace, through Faith, (belief), a gift of God, not of works lest man should boast!

And the doctrine of election is so important as to teach us what Grace is!

When we see God choosing to by Grace reveal His truths to some, we can take no glory for our selves and do nothing but praise His name!

The old testament is all about this very kind of teaching; **“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,” (Heb 1:1)**

Jonah was a type in the old testament, a picture, of our Christ, the Messiah; **“And they said every one to his fellow, Come, and let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this evil is upon us. So they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah. Then said they unto him, Tell us, we pray thee, for whose cause this evil is upon us; What is thine occupation? and whence comest thou? what is thy country? and of what people art thou? And he said unto them, I am an Hebrew; and I fear the LORD, the God of heaven, which hath made the sea and the dry land. Then were the men exceedingly afraid, and said unto him, Why hast thou done this? For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them. Then said they unto him, What shall we do unto thee, that the sea may be calm unto us? for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous. And he said unto them, Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you:” (Jon 1:7-12)**

Moses was a type as well, a picture of “The Deliverer” of God’s people as well!

But let us not make the picture more than it is!

Pastor Gene Harmon gave this illustration; *“when I was in the Navy, I carried a picture of my wife and son with me when I was deployed, and he would look upon this picture and feel the love he had swell up inside him, but when he returned home, he held them in his arms and had no need to look to the picture. The picture was good, but reality was better”*

“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son,” (Heb 1:1-2)

Brother Don Fortner wrote; “*When we study the parables, several things need to be kept in mind.*”

We do not build our doctrine upon parables. — Parables illustrate doctrine. They do not establish doctrine. Our doctrine must be built upon the plain statements of Holy Scripture, contextually interpreted.

Parables are earthly stories or illustrations of heavenly truths. — They are earthly pictures of spiritual things. When the Lord Jesus preached the gospel, he gave people pictures and illustrations of his doctrine to fix it in their minds. Yet, he never gave a picture or illustration that was debasing to the gospel, or one that lowered the message of the gospel to make it more palatable to men.

It is not necessary for everything in the parable to mean something, or even be compatible with the doctrine of the gospel. — Like the types of the Old Testament, the parables of the New Testament were never intended to be perfect illustrations of gospel truth. They are just illustrations, and nothing more than illustrations. Yet, they are beautiful, instructive illustrations.

Each parable is designed to illustrate and enforce only one thing. — If we try to make the parables teach many things, we misuse them. Just as a preacher today uses a story only to illustrate one thing, so our Lord used his parables to illustrate, enforce, and drive home one particular thing, not two, or three, or twenty.”

So as we go on in this chapter, let us Keep Christ before us, and Hold fast the Graciousness of our Lord in revealing the things concerning Himself to us through His Word! May our hearts burn within us, at the hearing of His Word!

The Lord teaches us through this parable of the sower (Mat 13:1-23) the necessity of hearing the Word of the gospel with a believing heart; “**Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.**” (Mat 13:9) It is a fact that is verified continually before our eyes. Wherever men and women gather to hear the Word of God preached and expounded, the sayings of our Lord in this parable are manifested to be true. It describes what goes on, as a general rule, in all congregations where the gospel is preached.

But before we look deeper let's consider the Ministry of our savior!

“The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side. And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore. And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow.” (Mat 13:1-3)

Our Lord came to do His Father's will and was relentless in preaching the gospel. This was **“the same day”** in which He had preached the message contained in chapter twelve. He took no rest, though He was as weary as any other man would be after such labor. All who are called and sent of God into the field of harvest should devote themselves completely to their work. I do not mean that pastors and gospel preachers should never rest. Our Savior did, and so must we. But faithful men give themselves wholly to the work of the gospel, as The Apostle Paul instructs Timothy in 1Ti 4:15. Our Master said, **“I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work”** (Joh 9:4). Let all who are called of Him to preach the gospel follow His example.

Notice as well the place of where He preached. He was not now in the temple or a synagogue, but by the seaside. Robert Hawker wrote; *“All places are sanctified when the Holy Ghost makes them so.”* And **“great multitudes were gathered”** to hear him. *How anxiously they gathered to hear the Lord Jesus preach the gospel, “For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes”* (Mat 7:29).

Let every man who stands to speak to eternity bound sinners seek that authority that only God the Holy Spirit can give to deliver God's message to the hearts of those who hear him.

Luke tells us; **“The seed is the Word of God”** (Luk 8:11). In Matthew 13:4-9 we read; **“And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up; Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth;**

And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them; But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.”

The Word of God is the Seed of life; **“Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.”** (1Pe 1:23-25); Or; **“Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.”** (Jas 1:18); Or: **“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth;”** (Rom 1:16); Or; **“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”** (Rom 10:17); and not the least but; **“In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,”** (Eph 1:13).

I know this. –a sinner cannot be born again without the Word of God. Why? Because God has so ordained it; **“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?”** (Rom 10:13-14)

We preach the Word, (Christ and Him crucified), but God must be the teacher. Only He can speak to the heart, only He can give life to hear; **“I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.”** (1Co 3:6-7)

You see how wonderous His grace is? Everything about salvation is of the Lord!

Salvation is the sovereign prerogative of God alone. Mat 13:10-17 cannot possibly be read without concluding that there is such a thing as sovereign, distinguishing grace. God gives life, and faith, and understanding to his elect, and does not give it to others; we read; **“And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.”** (Mat13:10-11).

Brother Don wrote; *“When people refuse to walk in the light God gives them, the light that is in them becomes darkness;”* read (Mat 13:12-16).

Luke puts it this way — **“Take heed how ye hear”** (Luk 8:18).

The seeing eye, the hearing ear, and the believing heart are gifts of God. — **“For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them”** (Mat 13:17).

Consider the similarities of these verses; **“So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.”** (Rom 9:16); Or **“And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,”** (Eph 1:19); Or **“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:”** (Eph 2:8); Or **“Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.”** (Col 2:12).

Here is Grace magnified; Most people who hear the gospel preached receive no saving benefit from it. According to this passage before us, the vast majority of people, who hear the true gospel, the gospel of God’s free and sovereign grace in Christ, receive no spiritual, everlasting benefit from it.

(Heb 4:2) For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.

Some are described as seed cast by the wayside; **“Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower. When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side”** (Mat 13:18-19). the gospel has no more affect on their hearts than water has upon a rock. As fast as the Word falls on their ears, the devil plucks it away.

They go out just like they came in, unaffected. Christ crucified means nothing to them; **“Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?”** (Lam 1:12).

When the Lord Jesus speaks of the devil, under the figure of the fowls of the air, catching away that which was sown in the heart, He is talking about man’s preaching of the word, not the grace of God and the gracious operations of God the Holy Spirit, His operations are always effectual and irresistible. Satan does not and cannot take away what is sown by sovereign grace in the hearts of God’s people.

That grace implanted by the Lord can never be taken away. Satan causes graceless hearers to forget what they heard. In them Isaiah’s prophecy in Isa 6:9-10, which, by the way is quoted no less than six times in the New Testament (Mat 13:14-15; Mar 4:12; Luk 8:10; Joh 12:40; Act 28:26-27; Rom 11:8), That prophecy is fulfilled. — **“And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people’s heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.”**

Others are called stony ground hearers. — **“But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended”** (Mat 13:20-21).

These hear the sermon with pleasure. They are quickly excited. The message brings forth a plentiful crop of warm feelings and good resolutions. But the stony ground hearer's religion is religion without depth.

Brother Don writes; *“As soon as the cold blasts of opposition or the hot sun of temptation and persecution comes, their religion withers away. Many love to hear a gifted preacher preach good sermons, who have no interest at all in that which is preached. The mere love of good sermons and good preaching is not a sign of grace”* and he refers us to (Eze 33:32) **“And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not.”**

The sun rising upon the stony ground hearer is not Christ, the Son of righteousness, who rises **“with healing in his wings,”** but the scorching, drying sun of opposition and persecution; **“Look not upon me, because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me:”** (Son 1:6).

The stony ground hearer was never rooted in Christ. The seed did not fall into the ground, but upon stony ground. Because they were never rooted in Christ and Christ was never in them, they fall away in time.

Then our Lord speaks of thorny ground hearers. –**“He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful”** (Mat 13:22).

These people appear to be more hopeful than the others. They hang around much longer. They seem to really love the gospel. It appears that they really want to honor God and do his will. But other things constantly claim their affections. They know the truth. They hope one day to be decided and devoted followers of Christ; but they love the world! How many thorny ground hearers sit in the pews of our churches today? They never make up their minds to **“seek first the kingdom of God.”** with their hearts. They have real struggles trying to have both Christ and the world, not willing to give up either. But, in time, the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches will destroy them.

Yet by the grace of God, He declares there is seed that become “The Fruitful Hearer” as well.

Wherever the Word of God produces life, it brings forth fruit. — **“But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty”** (Mat 13:23). Because every human heart by nature is evil, we know that the **“good ground,”** into which the seed is cast, is meant a heart renewed and made good by God’s sovereign, saving grace.

God’s method and order of grace is set before us in this parable, just as it is throughout the Scriptures. First, He causes the chosen, redeemed sinner to hear the gospel. Then, by the hearing of the gospel, the sinner is born again by the incorruptible seed, the Word of God. And being born again, the believing sinner brings forth fruit unto God. We do not all bear fruit to the same degree. But all believers bear fruit; and the fruit they bear is the same; **“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.”** (Gal 5:22-23); and **“Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain:”** (John 15-16).

All the fruit of Grace is of the same quality, though not in the same quantity. Grace is grace, be it small or great. It is all of Christ, and from Christ, and to Christ.

Grace in the heart produces heart fruit: repentance and faith, love, joy, peace. God the Holy Spirit causes the believing sinner to bring forth the lip fruit of prayer, confession, and praise. And Christ formed in the chosen sinner, being made partaker of **“the divine nature,”** causes the believing sinner to bring forth the life fruit of love and consecration to Christ. **“Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have”** (Luk 8:18).