

Life and Ministry of Jesus Christ
Kingdom Parables
Parable of the Sower, Part 1

Last time...

- 3 parables to a wicked generation (people vs time period) when they insincerely, even maliciously, demand a sign for Jesus to prove He is the Messiah
- Jesus redefines “family”: whoso will do the will of My Father in heaven.
i.e. our choice in response to His choice to do the will of His Father:
to give Himself to deliver us from this present evil world (Gal 1:4)

Now, by faith, those who believe/do the will of the Father (love Him),
we are crucified with Christ: nevertheless we live; yet not us, but Christ lives in us and the life which we now live in the flesh we live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved us, and gave Himself for us

We are, by faith,

- born again of the Spirit of God
- new creatures in Christ
- children of God
- near to God by the blood of Christ
- heirs of God thru Christ
- joint-heirs with Christ
- citizens of the Kingdom of God

This time...we start the Kingdom Parables

Sequentially after SoM, this is Jesus’ next great sermon
Subject: the kingdom of heaven/God

First up – the Parable of the Sower

We will be in Matt 13, Mark 4, and Luke 8

We will get the complete teaching by looking at all 3 perspectives,
There are no contradictions between the 3 accounts...the 3 accounts give the complete picture (the whole is a sum of the parts)

Why it is so valuable to study the 4 Gospels concurrently and sequentially

Since Matt 13 has more Kingdom Parables than Mark and Luke

(Matthew records more of this sermon than Mark and Luke),

Matt 13 will be our baseline, from which we will jump to Mark and Luke as we make our way thru this sermon

v1-2 The same day:

A very busy day thus far for Jesus!

- cast out the mute demon
- called a child of the devil by the scribes and Pharisees
- declared the folly and wickedness of their accusation
- taught 3 parables in response to their demand for a sign
- redefined “family”

Now, His next sermon

- Parable of the Sower (first of the Kingdom Parables)
- another great multitude, due to His immense popularity and influence
- on the northern shore of Sea of Galilee
- so crowded Jesus is forced to teach the standing-room-only crowd from a fishing boat

Luke 8:4

People came “out of every city”

v3-4 He spake many things unto them in parables:

The words Jesus spoke are...the words the Father gave Him to speak

Jesus continues to teach the people, but the “new normal” is in parables

Matt 12:24 was a turning point in His ministry – now He will teach exclusively in parables

Teaching in parables is not a new form of teaching to the Jews

In fact, it may have been the most common form of teaching used by the teachers of the Jews

But there is a distinct difference between the parables taught by the Jews and the parables taught by Jesus

Jews

illustrations of what was taught

“light of earth” (man’s) sent to heaven
man-centric, humanistic
Israel-centric, nationalistic

Jesus

they themselves were the teaching
shadows of eternal truths

if believe, will get understand
if don’t believe, left wondering

“light of heaven” (God’s) sent to earth

God-centric

spiritual realities that cast shadows
on earth

First Kingdom parable of Jesus: Parable of the Sower

“Shadows” to note and understand:

- Sower: Farmer or husbandman, if you will
- The way side
- Fowls (birds) devouring the seeds
 - If you have a lawn and plant winter rye, you get the picture!

Mark 4:3-4

Hearken: Listen up! Hear and understand.
of the air: spiritual reality casting a shadow on earth

Luke 8:5

his seed: the sower sows...seeds
Why does a sower sow? For a harvest
trodden down: trampled, tread underfoot by road traffic
(men – travelers, commerce)

v5-6 Some fell upon:

“Shadows” to note and understand:

- stony places
- deepness of earth
- the sun
- no root
- withered away

Mark 4:5-6

Stony ground where it had not much earth: a thin layer of soil covering
stones and rock
Immediately it sprang up

Luke 8:6

Upon a rock: thin layer of soil covering a rock
Withered away because it had no moisture, moisture quickly evaporated

v7 among thorns:

“Shadows” to note and understand:

- thorns
- choked

Mark 4:7

The thorns grew up
The seed yielded no fruit, no harvest

Luke 8:7

with it: the seed and the thorns both sprang up, roots intertwined

v8 into good ground:

“Shadows” to note and understand:

- good ground
- fruit
- yield of 100/60/30 (order is from greatest to least)

Mark 4:8

increased

yield of 30/60/100 (order is from least to greatest)

Luke 8:8a

100: no mention of 30 or 60

v9 ears to hear, let him hear:

The conclusion to the parable is a heart-stopping, breath-taking warning
Those who heard (from every city) are now accountable before God to
know and understand Jesus’ teaching

Mark 4:9

Ditto

Luke 8:8b

Ditto

The same warning from God to all audiences: Jews (Matt), Roman (Mark), and
Greek (Luke)

v10 Why speak unto them in parables:

To whom did Jesus speak this parable?

- the great multitude
- His disciples

The turning point in His ministry, now teaching in parables, includes to
His disciples

The shift resulting from Matt 12:24 was not announced by Jesus to His disciples,
they were not given a “heads-up”,
Jesus did not have a “staff meeting” to discuss and/or vote on

They are accustomed to Him teaching plainly, directly...now He is teaching

- in parables
- in shadows, not in illustrations like the rabbis/scribes/Pharisees

The disciples are surprised and ask Jesus what is going on –

Why are You teaching in parables?

Mark 4:10

when He was alone: after the teaching of the parable, the multitude is dismissed (That's all, folks)

This was a much shorter sermon for them than SoM they that were about Him with the twelve: the 12 disciples + others who did not leave, wanting more than this from Jesus

Luke 8:9

What might this parable be: What does this parable mean?

They would have understood a parable taught by the Jews, but they do not understand this different kind of parable taught by Jesus

The 12 + an unknown number of others ("12 + X") ask Jesus: Why and What

v11 Because it is given...not given:

Jesus answered first their "Why" question, citing

- 2 audiences
- 2 reasons

1st audience: "you"...they that were about Him with the 12 (Mark 4:10)

2nd audience: "them"...all others, the great multitude

1st Reason for teaching in parables:

1. given:

- to you, those interested in the spiritual truths of God, those who are spiritually discerned (1 Cor 2:14)
- to know/understand the mysteries (something heretofore not known that is being revealed) of the kingdom of heaven (Jewish audience) which is the subject of the Parable of the Sower and those parables that follow in this sermon

2. not given:

- to them, the dismissed multitude who were looking for a military and political Messiah to throw off the yoke of Rome and re-establish the Kingdom of Israel as it was under David and Solomon
- to know/understand the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven

Notice: these things are binary, the things of eternity are binary

What is the difference between
you, those given to know the mysteries of the kingdom
and
them, those not given to know the mysteries of the kingdom?

Faith in God's Messiah...one believes, the other does not believe

The wisdom of God in the ministry of Jesus Christ (Deut 18:18-19):

- a. the Lord taught plainly and directly
the hearers believed or did not believe
- b. The Lord was blasphemed by those most accountable to know
- c. the Lord teaches in parables
 - the believer is given understanding and knowledge
(by a plain, direct teaching from the Lord)
Ps 25:14 The secret of the LORD *is* with them that
fear Him; and He will show them His
covenant.
(Note: New Covenant of Jer 31:33)
 - the unbeliever is not given understanding and knowledge but
remains in their darkness and confusion
 - "What did He say?"
 - "That makes no sense."
 - "I don't understand."
 - Left to discuss among themselves to try to figure out
the teaching vs attacking the Teacher as have been

Mark 4:11

the kingdom of God: Roman/Gentile audience, the kingdom is for
Jew and Gentile, whosoever believes

them that are without: the vast portion of the multitude, those who are

- not genuine followers
- hearers only but not doers/believers
- sincerely interested in the "popularity" sense...Jesus makes for
a good show for the curious, selfish thrill-seekers
- insincere in the "influence" sense...what Jesus teaches makes
no impact on their lives, does not penetrate their hearts
- as unbelieving, remain outside the kingdom of God

all things are done in parables: because of the unbelief of the vast
majority of the people

Luke 8:10a

you...others: followers/learners/disciples
vs non-followers/non-learners/non-disciples
kingdom of God: Greek/Gentile audience

v13-15 I speak in parables because:

2nd Reason for Why He is teaching in parables

Because

- seeing see not: the sighted have spiritual blindness (unbelief)...
walk by sight vs faith
- hearing they hear not: hearts dull to spiritual truth, “heavy” ears
- neither do they understand: relying on human reasoning and wisdom
rather than the wisdom of God (His Word, Prov 1-8),
they don’t get it, don’t understand/know, and are foolish

Then Jesus quotes Is 6:9-10...on the heels of Is 6:1-8!!!

The object of interest in the Lord’s word to Isaiah: the heart of the people,

- which is
 - thick and hard
 - distracted and sleepy, blind to Him
 - disinterested and deaf to His Word
- but should be
 - believing (Matt 22:37...believe = do = love)
 - converted (Matt 18:13)
 - healed, made whole (Eccl 12:13-14)

This portion of Is 6 is a shocking, almost a last-ditch effort, by the Lord to get Israel’s attention...telling them what they would not expect to hear in order to get their attention regarding the deadly peril they are in – the righteous judgment of hard/unbelieving hearts

In quoting this portion of Is 6, Jesus is doing the very same...trying to get Israel’s attention, given the deadly peril they are in – the righteous judgment of hard/unbelieving hearts

John 9:39 For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not (don’t understand but desire to, teachable) might see; and that they which see (think they understand but don’t and don’t desire to, unteachable) might be made blind

Mark 4:12

at any time: the Lord is waiting and urging, the choice is theirs
sins should be forgiven: the corrupt, hard, dead heart is healed
when the gift of repentance is received with humility and
submission and sins are forgiven by the gracious God

Luke 8:10b

Not see...not understand: teach in parables so the unbelieving
will not see or understand
Must first believe, then will see and understand

v16-17 blessed are your eyes...and your ears...many prophets and righteous:

Contrasted against the insincere and unbelieving multitude who are blind and deaf
are those sincere and genuine followers, who are blessed with seeing and
understanding

The blessed have something in common with righteous men and prophets: faith

Many prophets...from Adam to John the Baptist...and many righteous (Gen 15:6)
men have desired to see and hear what these have seen and heard

The prophets sent to Israel believed God but did not understand what they
were moved by the Spirit of God to write

- David did not understand Ps 22
- Isaiah did not understand Is 53
- Daniel did not understand Dan 9
- Micah did not understand Micah 5:2

The prophets longed to see and hear the Messiah of Whom they foretold,
they longed to understand the mysteries of God

Ps 40:7-10 (Messianic)

Now, in the fullness of time, the disciples/learners/followers of Jesus Christ see
the Messiah with their very eyes and hear the Messiah with their very ears

Now, with the unfolding revelation of God's Plan of Redemption and the
mysteries of the Kingdom of God thru the Word that became flesh,
the disciples/learners/followers of Jesus Christ are blessed with seeing and
understanding by faith

To understand the truths of God, one must first believe...
have faith in Jesus Christ, the Author and Finisher of faith

Jesus would later say to the unbelieving scribes and Pharisees **John 8:51-59**

Note: not just men of God desired to see, but the angels of God too

1 Peter 1:7-12

Having answered the “Why” question, Jesus will now answer their “What” question...“What does this parable mean?”
The audience is no longer the great multitude , it is “they that were about Him with the twelve” (“12 + X” of Mark 4:10)
We will look at that next week

But to us today...v9 is a warning

We have heard, we are accountable to know and understand Jesus’ teaching
The Lord’s expectation of the hearers: to know and understand
Required to know and understand: faith, to believe
Therefore, the Lord’s ultimate expectation: faith, to believe (John 6:29)

Let’s gather in small groups to pray...in agreement with, in one accord with our Father...
to let the Holy Spirit write these words on our hearts and to transform our lives

1. Understand the difference between a parable of Jesus and a sermon illustration
2. The 2 audiences to whom Jesus is speaking
3. The 2 reasons Jesus taught in parables
 - Reason #1:
 - understanding of the mysteries of God is given to those to those who seek Jesus and believe in Him
 - or even greater darkness for those who do not seek him and do not trust in Him
 - How blessed are we...or how great is our darkness (Matt 6:23)
 - Reason #2
 - Unbelieving eyes blinded and unbelieving ears dulled
 - An attempt to get their attention regarding the deadly peril of unbelief
4. The eternal import of Matt 13:9
 - Are we teachable?
 - Are we hard hearted?
 - Is something hindering our walk with the Lord?

Closing Song