

Resources:

Robertson McQuilkin. *Understanding and Applying the Bible*. Pg. 209-222

This is our third week discussing the topic of Jesus' teaching. We have learned so far regarding Jesus' teaching that His ministry was primarily one of teaching. We also learned that He was a bold teacher who taught the truth of God with no apologies, while at the same time, He communicated a comforting message of grace. Last week, we studied how Jesus taught on different subjects. He had to juggle three distinct dispensations in God's plan for the ages. He taught about the Kingdom and its connection with the Law. He taught about the Church, and He taught about future things.

Now tonight, we are going to wrap up this topic of His teaching by looking at a number of other facts regarding His teaching. To summarize what we can know about Jesus' teaching, we can word it this way:

**JESUS CHRIST TAUGHT ON A VARIETY OF SUBJECTS IN A VARIETY OF WAYS, AND HOW ONE RESPONDS TO WHAT JESUS TAUGHT IS A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH.**

Now tonight we are going to look at 6 more facts about Jesus teaching that would confirm that statement.

**Fact #8** - Jesus taught using parables. **Mark 3:23**

What is a parable? In his book, *Understanding and Applying the Bible*, Robertson McQuilkin gave good a definition of a parable. He said, "a parable is a true- to-life short story designed to teach a truth or to answer a question." He went on to say, "We must distinguish a parable from a historic event. Historic events are often used as illustrations, but the parable is a special story-form designed to teach a particular truth. Although a parable by definition is not the record of a historic event, to be a parable it must be true to life. Thus, a parable differs from other figures of comparison, such as allegory and prophetic symbolism, that may or may not be true to life... In Jesus' teaching the parable had an additional purpose. He told us that one purpose was to obscure the truth from the unresponsive, while making it plain to the responsive."

Jesus told stories to teach lessons. Those stories were true to life, even though He was just making up the story. The parable was designed to teach truth to the people Jesus wanted to teach, and to hide truth from people who would not respond to Jesus.

I'd like to point out that Jesus teaching in parables was predicted of the Messiah in **Psalm 78:2**. This Psalm is also quoted in **Matthew 13:35** to indicate that Jesus' teaching in parables was the ultimate fulfillment of Psalm 78.

Interpreting parables can be tricky. If you are trying to understand a parable, my recommendation is this: #1 - Consider the immediate context of the passage. Who is Jesus talking to in that moment and what might it have meant to that person? #2 - Determine what the central point of emphasis is. Getting lost in the details might make you miss the point of the story. #3 - Review what men of God have said about that particular parable in the past. Read what commentators have said and listen to plenty of other pastors teach on a parable. Eventually, you will learn what the common teaching is and has been throughout church history. #4 - If you think you have discovered something new, it's probably wrong. That is a general reality in Bible interpretation. If it's a new idea, it's probably wrong. People have studied the Bible for centuries. Most likely, what you're thinking of has been considered in the past and has been refuted.

**Fact #9** - Jesus taught using illustrations. **John 10:9-10**

Jesus was the master of illustrations. He spoke in ways that made His teaching understandable. Jesus could use whatever was nearby to create an illustration. He could stand in a vineyard and say, "I am the vine, you are the branches. In order to bear fruit, you must abide in the vine." He could say, as He was teaching outside in a field, "look out at the wildflowers. Watch how they grow and look beautiful. The field didn't worry about what to wear, God provided flowers for the field to wear and now that field looks better than anything the richest man on earth could wear." Jesus could even have a child come sit on his lap and say, "unless you become like a child in your faith to me, you won't enter the kingdom of heaven. You must trust me with simple child-like faith."

**Fact #10** - Jesus taught differently to different people. **Matthew 13:10-17**

What we just read is a scary text of Scripture. What Jesus is saying is that His teaching has different effects on different people. We are learning here that to reject Christ and harden your heart against Christ will cause your ears to be deaf to Him and your eyes to be blind to Him, and it appears that by the word 'granted' in verse 11, it is a gift of God to be able to hear Jesus' teaching and understand it.

God is sovereign over who learns truth and who doesn't. That is a scary thought. The last thing I would ever want is for God to allow my heart and mind to harden against His Word and I start losing the ability to know truth.

This also makes me think that I need to continually be obedient to God as I see changes I need to make in my life in light of His Word. If I don't live in accordance with His Word, my heart can grow hard and God can see to it that I lose sight of truth.

Jesus taught differently to different people. To some, Jesus explained things in a way that opened people's ears and eyes and they saw and understood truth. To others, Jesus spoke in a way that blinded people who rejected Him.

I'll also note that Jesus was a very flexible teacher, and He was able to connect with all kinds of different people. For example, Jesus did not speak the same to Nicodemus in John 3 as He did to the woman at the well in John 4. Jesus was able to discern who His audience was, and He was able to teach truth that fit the context of His audience.

**Fact #11** - Jesus taught about Himself in the Old Testament. **Luke 24:13-27; Acts 1:1-3**

Jesus taught that the entire Old Testament pointed to Him. He taught that what Moses wrote pointed to Him. That means everything from Genesis through Deuteronomy was pointing to Jesus Christ. He also taught that all the prophets of the Old Testament spoke of Him. Now, I think C. S. Lewis was right when He said that for Jesus, there were only three options.

Either Jesus was the most arrogant liar of all history claiming to be God in human flesh, or He was a completely deceived lunatic, a crazy person thinking He is God in human flesh, or He was right and what He said was true.

There is no chance that Jesus could have been a good man and yet be wrong about what He said. If Jesus is not the divine Son of God, if He did not resurrect from the grave on the third day, and if He is not the true fulfillment of the Hebrew Scriptures, than that would not make Him a good teacher, that would not make Him a good man, that would make Him an evil, deceptive individual and there would be nothing good in Him.

But I believe, in the case of Jesus, He was right. He spoke the truth. He really did resurrect from the grave. And I believe what He said. He said that the Old Testament spoke about Him, and in fact, all of the Old Testament pointed to Him and His work of redemption and salvation accomplished on that cross for sinners.

**Fact #12** - Jesus' teaching was confirmed by His miracles. **Mark 2:1-12**

What Mark described here is that the religious leaders who were listening to Jesus teach were wondering if Jesus was a true teacher. When Jesus taught that faith healed a man, and when Jesus taught that the man had been cleansed and forgiven of sin, the scribes began to think no way is this man Jesus telling the truth. Jesus went on to basically say, "let me prove to you that what I am saying is true. I'll prove it to you by giving you a sign miracle that would signify to you that I a teacher of truth and what I say is absolute truth." Then, Jesus went forward with healing the paralyzed man. Jesus used miracles to confirm the validity of His teaching. This appears to be the case throughout His entire ministry.

**Fact #13** - Jesus' teachings demand a response. **John 12:44-48**

Jesus taught that there is a day of judgment coming. He did not come the first time to judge. He came the first time to die, but there is a day to come where He will judge. Jesus said that for

those who reject Him and do not receive His words, those people will face judgment. It will be Jesus' words that will become the judge of people who refuse to accept what Jesus said.

Jesus was a black and white kind of teacher. He said in **Matthew 12:30**, *"whoever is not with me is against me."* Jesus left no room for people to be unresponsive or on the fence when it comes to responding to His teaching.

We know from **Matthew 7:29** that Jesus taught with a unique authority. His authoritative teaching demanded a response. Either believe Him and believe His words, or reject Him and refuse to accept His words. And Jesus taught throughout His Ministry, your response to His words, your response to His teaching is a matter of eternal life and eternal death. In the mind of Jesus, how one responds to His teaching is very, very serious. Jesus said in **John 8:24**, *"I told you that you would die in your sins, for unless you believe that I am you will die in your sins."* He also said in **John 5:24**, *"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears my word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed our of death into life."*

Jesus clearly and authoritatively, without apology taught that how you respond to what He taught will either give you eternal life or eternal death. It's one or the other. If you believe in Him, you will believe what He says, and you will have life. If you don't believe what He says, you will remain in darkness and eternally die.

So if this is true, if how one responds to Jesus' teaching is a matter of life and death, I'd urge you to pay careful attention to what He said. We don't want to get His teaching wrong.

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