

Rev. Dustin Daniels | River Bible Church  
**Jesus, Parables, and 'Plan B' | Matthew 13:1-3**  
Sunday February 25, 2024

**WELCOME:**

- Please turn your Bibles to Matthew 13.
- Bibles in the back—our gift to you.
- Notes are in the foyer. Take them home with you.

 **REVIEW:**

For the past nine weeks, we have seen Jesus Christ, the Son of God AND the Son of Man, minister to religious people known as the Scribes and Pharisees.

Jesus has taught with perfect clarity from the OT Scriptures.

Jesus has displayed His incredible mercy by performing miracle after miracle.

Jesus has revealed His divine power by casting out demons.

Yet, none of those things Jesus did was good enough for the Scribes and Pharisees to believe.

Rather than believing, they spent their time with Jesus arguing.

They were enraged by His mercy.

And they even attributed Jesus' divine power to Satan.

How far away from God can you possibly be to watch Jesus give the blind sight, give the deaf hearing, and raise the lame so that they can walk—

And say—that all of those good things that Jesus did for people, were done by the power of the *Evil One*.

Even Satan was shaking his head in disbelief with that accusation.

Yet, these men who charged Jesus of being Satan (or at least having demonic powers) were the pastors, priests, and ministers of Jesus' day.

So what is Jesus to do when there is nothing else to do?

"You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink."

When all the options have been exhausted, what is Jesus to do now?

Despite Israel's rejection of Jesus, Jesus still has a mission to complete.

## INTRODUCTION:

Today, we see that nothing will thwart, stall or frustrate God's plan of redemption.

Redemption is the buying back or rescuing something/someone that is lost.

Jesus had two primary objectives for His original plan to redeem sinners.

The first is to teach and preach the good news of the Gospel.

The second is to pay for the sinner's sin Himself.

How did Jesus make this sin payment? How did Jesus pay our sin debt?

Answer: By dying on a Roman cross, buried for three days, and then resurrected back to life.

We know this now—but hindsight is always 20/20.

Back then, Jesus has had a problem for the past nine weeks.

The very people that Jesus came from Heaven to save don't want Him.

So once again—*What is Jesus to do with this rejection?*

*How does Jesus now redeem sinners?*

Today is exciting because it marks a major transition in the life of Jesus' ministry.

Jesus has a purpose and He will not fail.

But, we're going to see Him change a few things along the way.

In other words, today, we learn that even Jesus has 'Plan B.'

So we're going to learn about *Jesus, Parables and Plan B* today.

Have you noticed that we (sinful human beings) seem to always mess up God's 'Plan A?'

Examples:

- Oops, Eve ate the fruit—God says, "Don't worry, I got Plan B."
- Oops, Abraham slept with Hagar—God says, "Don't worry, I got Plan B."
- Oops, Moses got angry and broke the Ten Commandments—God says, "Don't worry, I got Plan B."
- Oops, Joshua's spies are so scared of the giants in the Promised Land that they refuse to enter—God says, "Don't worry, I got Plan B."
- Oops, King David slept with Bathsheba and murdered her husband—God says, "Don't worry, I got Plan B."

Pause—as you look over your life, aren't you grateful for all the 'plan B's' in your life.

All those silly, stupid things that we did—and God—being so rich in his grace and mercy—bailed us out time and time again.

In every book of the OT, we'll see a 'Plan B.'

And when we flip to the Gospels, we see God's Plan B regarding the redemption of our sin.

The Scribes and Pharisees have officially rejected Jesus as their Messiah and Savior.

And Jesus says, "Fine, I've got Plan B.

Jesus now has a new focus on how to complete His mission.

Now, what would you recommend if you had a suggestion for Jesus on how to complete His mission?

I would suggest Rambo or, at the very least, Jason Bourne.

But killing everybody and starting over didn't work the first time—just ask Noah.

So Jesus does something unthinkable today.

What is it, and how does it apply to you today?

*\*Please stand for the reading and honoring of God's Word.\**

**SCRIPTURE:**

**Matthew 13:1**—On that day, Jesus went out of the house and was sitting by the sea.

**Matthew 13:2**—Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat down, while the whole crowd stood on the shore.

**Matthew 13:3**—Then he told them many things in parables,

*These are the very words from the authoritative, inerrant, inspired, and infallible Word of Almighty God.*

### **PRAY:**

*Make your ways known to me, Lord; teach me your paths. Guide me in your truth and teach me, (Psalm 25:4-5)*

### **EXEGESIS:**

**Matthew 13:1**—*On that day, Jesus went out of the house and was sitting by the sea.*

Matthew 13 begins with three words—“on that day.”

It’s a BIG day—a day of divine transition.

Your translation may read, “On the same day.”

*That day* refers to the day Jesus’ mother and brothers came looking for Him (12:46–47).

Matthew also points back to everything we’ve learned in Matthew 12. (12:15-45)

On that day Jesus:

- Taught the Word of God with purity and passion.
- Preached the Good News of the Gospel.
- Healed many people with all sorts of sickness and disease.
- Cast out demons.
- The Scribes and Pharisees called Jesus, “Satan.”
- And Jesus called them a “brood of vipers.”

That all happened on the same day—and you think you’re tired when you get home from work!

“On that day,” Matthew invites us to ponder and think critically about all the problems, disagreements, and arguments that Jesus had with the Scribes and Pharisees and His family.

Let’s think about this— Jesus has performed miraculous signs and wonders that have proved time and time again that He is God.

Jesus is not a magician — Jesus performed miracles to prove the validity of His Gospel message.  
Yet people question Jesus.

More people doubt Jesus.

And the leadership of Israel outright opposes Jesus and wants him dead.

Put yourself in the Disciples shoes.

They have to be confused.

They believe Jesus to be God’s Son and Savior (although imperfectly).

So why, then, do so many people refuse to believe?

Why all this unbelief, tension, and hate toward Jesus?

**+** **Matthew 13:1**—On that day Jesus went out of the house and was sitting by the sea.

While these questions linger in the air— Jesus decides to get some fresh air.

Jesus changes his physical location along with His ministry strategy.

Jesus leaves the house he was teaching out of— at the end of Matthew 12.

Most people believe this was Peter’s house (located in Capernaum) because Jesus didn’t have His own home.

So Jesus leaves Pete's home and starts walking toward the Sea of Galilee—only a few minutes away.

**Matthew 13:1**—*On that day Jesus went out of the house and was sitting by the sea.*

**Matthew 13:2**—*Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat down, while the whole crowd stood on the shore.*

So Jesus continues to do what He's always done so far.

He's teaching and preaching.

And as He does, more and more people show up, so much that the beach gets really crowded.

Luke's Gospel fills in an important detail.

**Luke 8:4**—*As a large crowd was gathering, and people were coming to Jesus from every town,*

Although the leaders of Israel didn't want Jesus—

And although these leaders did speak for the nation from a political standpoint,

The citizens of Israel [and even the surrounding Gentile towns] were still coming to hear Jesus teach and preach.

**Matthew 13:2**—*Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat down, while the whole crowd stood on the shore.*

There are so many people listening that Jesus runs out of personal space.

Jesus is backed into a corner, turns into MacGyver, and turns a boat into a floating pulpit.

**Matthew 13:2**—he got into a boat and sat down, while the whole crowd stood on the shore.

Sitting was the normal posture/position for teachers in the first century while everyone else stood.

The boat gave some distance between Jesus and this large crowd.

Keep in mind that Jesus is the Creator of the cosmos.

With a few exceptions, Jesus is the voice and face of the Trinity.

Jesus is the one who created the water— and knows the properties of both water and sound.

**Illustration:**

I grew up on the water ~~growing up~~.

So, Jesus, as the Master Teacher, got into this boat and sat down to teach— knowing that this is the best place for Him to be seen and heard.

Local tradition says that Jesus was preaching at what was called, the “Cove of the Parables.”

This cove is a natural amphitheater shaped like a horseshoe.

So, the natural acoustics (no need for a microphone) could have carried Jesus’ voice over the length of a football field to everyone listening.

**Matthew 13:3**— Then he told them many things in parables,



Make a note in your Bible that Parables are “Plan B.”

**KEYPOINT 1:**

*Parable: a simple story that illustrates a profound spiritual truth.*

Parables are similar to riddles but have a spiritual meaning.

Parables are the consequences of Israel's unbelief and rejection of Jesus as their Messiah and Savior.

Because Israel had rejected her King, Jesus would not establish <sup>His</sup> ~~the~~ earthly kingdom at this time.

The Jews lost out on the opportunity, privilege, and benefit of seeing God's Kingdom established in their day.

God the Father's "Plan A" for saving sinners was this—

He would send the Second Person of the Trinity as the face of God.

For us to understand that divine relationship, God used the family as an illustration.

God the Father and God the Son—So Jesus is God's Son.

He would be conceived of the Third Person of the Trinity—the Holy Spirit—and born of a virgin to bypass human sin.

Jesus would then live in complete obscurity, living a perfect life—remaining sinless.

Jesus would then reveal Himself to the nation of Israel as her long-awaited Messiah/Savior by teaching, preaching, and healing the country.

The Jewish leaders were to have immediately fallen on their faces, begging for mercy and forgiveness.

Jesus would have then literally established the Kingdom of God at that moment.

The question becomes—how would Jesus pay the debt for sinners, if Israel would have accepted <sup>His</sup> ~~him~~ as their King?

**Question:** What do you think Rome would have done when they found out that Jews were proclaiming Jesus of Nazareth their new king?

Rome had zero tolerance for such threats—there was only one king named Ceasar.

Jesus would have been crucified by the Romans—instead of the Jews.

*The Romans would have killed Jesus that day.*

Jesus still would have died on the cross, shedding His blood for the redemption of sinners experiencing the full righteous wrath of God—thus being the *Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world*. (John 1:29).

Therefore, Jesus still would have been buried and, on the third day, resurrected.

Rather than ascending back to Heaven, where He came from, Jesus would have conquered Rome and established the rule of His Kingdom immediately.

That was His “Plan A.”

But once again, sinful humanity gets in the way— God says, “don’t worry, I can fix that.”

And with that, Parables become Plan B.

A parable— is a story that contains a fundamental spiritual truth.

So I want to spend the rest of our time teaching what a parable is and is not.

Because grasping what Jesus is doing at this moment is crucial as we move slowly through Jesus' parabolic teachings in Matthew 13.

If we don't understand why Jesus is teaching in parables, we won't understand the parables themselves.

Jesus did not invent the parable, but He sure did redefine it.

Parables differ from fables—fables are not spiritual.

Parables also differ from allegories.

*The Pilgrim's Progress* and *Chronicles of Narnia* are well-known allegories to where there is a ton of symbolism.

The Parable is a bit different because it generally has one main point with much less symbolism than an allegory.

Parables are also way shorter than allegories.

So let's dive in!

The Greek term is *parabolē*—and it's is a compound word.

*Para* which is a prefix and means “alongside of.”

Next is the verb *ballō*, which means “to throw, lay or place.”

So when you combine both compound words, we get *Parabolē* (parable).

**Example:**

A paralegal is someone who comes alongside a lawyer to provide legal help.

Para church ministry is a ministry that comes alongside the Church and helps them in a specialized area of ministry.

GriefShare is a perfect example of a para-church ministry we use on Tuesday Nights at RBC.

### **KEYPOINT 2:**

*A parable uses something very familiar placed alongside something unfamiliar.*

Over the next few months, we'll see how Jesus chose illustrations that were very familiar to His first-century audience — and then laid those spiritual illustrations alongside something that was not known or not understood.

And all that was done to make a profound spiritual truth.

Many times Jesus chose words that were very picturesque.

He loved painting these amazing pictures in our minds.

Jesus spoke of:

- (Harmless) sheep among (vicious) wolves (Matt. 10:16),
- (Gigantic) camels creeping through the (tiny) eye of a needle (Matt. 19:24),
- people trying to remove specks from other people's eyes while planks were in their own (Matt. 7:5).
- throwing children's bread to dogs (Mark 7:27).
- He warned against the "yeast" of the Pharisees (Mark 8:15).

Now, the question remains, why are the parables 'Plan B'?

### **KEYPOINT 3:**

*Parables both reveal and conceal Gospel truths.*

Through the process of revelation and concealment, Jesus was ~~bridging~~ <sup>building</sup> a bridge from our natural world to His spiritual world.

His bridge is the narrow gate.

**Matthew 7:13**—“Enter through the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the road broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who go through it.

**Matthew 7:14**— How narrow is the gate and difficult the road that leads to life, and few find it.

Parables have now become the narrow road—and yet is the way for His disciples to grasp spiritual truth.

For Jesus' disciples, truth is revealed.

But for everyone else, Jesus purposely hides the *Kingdom of God* from them.

Now does hiding truth sound like a good ministry strategy to you?

God's ways are not our ways—

**Isaiah 55:8**—For my thoughts are not your thoughts, and your ways are not my ways.”  
This is the Lord's declaration.

**Isaiah 55:9**—“For as heaven is higher than earth, so my ways are higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

**Isaiah 55:10**—For just as rain and snow fall from heaven and do not return there without saturating the earth and making it germinate and sprout, and providing seed to sow and food to eat,

**Isaiah 55:11**—so my word that comes from my mouth will not return to me empty, but it will accomplish what I please and will prosper in what I send it to do."

Isaiah's passage points to God's sovereignty over salvation.

Parables are a form of judgment against the nation of Israel

Why? Because of their unbelief.

Did Yahweh God know that Israel would reject Him? You bet!

The Psalmist even prophesied it.

At one level, Jesus speaks in parables because of a sovereign decision that was already made in the past.

**Psalm 78:1 NLT**—O my people, listen to my instructions. Open your ears to what I am saying,

**Psalm 78:2 NLT**— for I will speak to you in a parable.

**Amos 8:11**—Look, the days are coming—when I will send a famine through the land: not a famine of bread or a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord.

Now, in the parables of Jesus, not every detail has a meaning (allegory).

Trying to force meaning into each detail of the story is dangerous—and may lead to false teaching and false doctrines.

Especially for the parables that follow in this chapter—these parables are unique—known as *Kingdom parables*.

They are different from:

- the prodigal son (Luke 15:11–32)
- the good Samaritan (Luke 10:25–37)
- the Pharisee and the tax collector (Luke 18:9–14)
- the wedding banquet (Matt. 22:1–14; Luke 14:15–24)
- the sheep and the goats (Matt. 25:31–46)

All those are familiar parables, but these in Matthew 13 special and specific because they point to Heaven.

Looking ahead...

**Matthew 13:24**—“The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field.”

**Matthew 13:31**—“The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed...”

**Matthew 13:44**—The kingdom of heaven is like treasure, buried in a field.

**Matthew 13:45**—Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls.

**Matthew 13:47**—the kingdom of heaven is like a large net thrown into the sea.

**Matthew 13:51**—“Have you understood all these things?” They answered him, “Yes.”

From this point on, one third of Jesus’ teaching in the synoptic/similar Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) comes through parables.

All of these parables have one consistent over-arching theme—The Kingdom of God.

This is no accident—especially in Matt’s Gospel.

Our ~~gospel writer~~, Matthew, has been revealing how Christ is the King of kings.

Last week, we discussed the importance of our Spiritual family as the church.

Matthew 13 is the beginning of a new age in church history.

We call this the ‘Church Age’—it’s a term not found in Scripture but a description of the timeline that God has us on.



**KEYPOINT 4:**

*Attitude/outlook*

Parables reveal the nature and disposition of the Church between Jesus' first and second coming.

And next week, Jesus begins with THE most crucial parable—The parable of the Sower and Soils.

Jesus told His disciples that if you don't understand this parable, you won't understand any of them.

*And next week, we'll begin our study of this parable looking AT the first Three Soils.*



**PREACH:**

One of our keypoints for today—Parables both reveal and conceal ~~truth~~ Gospel truths

The difference between the two is the state of our hearts.



So here's a question to ponder this week—*What's the state my heart?*

Is it hard? Am I unteachable? Or, is it soft to where I am teachable?



Am I going to see this next chapter of God's Word as exciting—like a treasure hunt?!

Or am I going to tune out because Jesus is just talking about silly stupid stories that have no real application to my life?

### **3 Reasons Jesus Spoke In Parables:**

#### **1. To sow spiritual seed.**

Jesus has a long term purpose—He's not addicted to speed like we are.

We, as the Church, are to sow spiritual seed (the Gospel) so that it would later grow and bear fruit.

He calls this the Great Commission in Matthew 28.

Jesus allows for a delayed understanding of His teachings—do we?

#### **2. To safeguard the secrets of God.**

God let's us in on a secret—primarily *that God has secrets!*

God can keep a secret, but He can also ~~choose to~~ reveal secrets to people of His choosing.

God's Word is so powerful that it can reach those whom God has chosen and be hidden to those that God has passed over at the same time. (Rom. 9:13).

Think about the last time you had a Gospel conversation with two people—one gets it and the other doesn't!

#### **3. To highlight God's Sovereignty** (God's absolute right to do all things according to His own good pleasure.)

God has the right to either give or withhold mercy.

The apostle Paul refers to a conversation that Moses had with Yahweh God...

**Romans 9:15**—For he tells Moses, I will show mercy to whom I will show mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.

**Romans 9:16**—So then, it does not depend on human will or effort but on God who shows mercy.

Fast forward to us today, the Holy Spirit plays the biggest role for us to understand God's mercy.

Jesus told a Pharisee named Nicodemus—

**John 3:7**—Do not be amazed that I told you that you must be born again.

**John 3:8**—The wind blows where it pleases, and you hear its sound, but you don't know where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."

We can't make ~~us~~ God save or heal anyone—those things have already been predetermined and predestined before Jesus spoke the cosmos into existence.

But what we can do is join God in His work—and by doing so He will sanctify and reveal the secret things of God along the way.

**Psalm 25:14**—The secret counsel of the Lord is for those who fear him, and he reveals his covenant (promises) to them.

So, our questions remains for this week—*How's your heart?*



**PRAYER:**

**LORDS SUPPER:**

**BENEDICTION**

*(May you) grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.  
To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen. (2 Peter 3:18)*

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