

Rev. Dustin Daniels | River Bible Church
Matthew 13:10-17 | The Purpose of Parables
Sunday March 17, 2024

WELCOME:

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

REVIEW:

We have been introduced to the parables of Jesus over the past three weeks.

We have learned why Jesus went from teaching with perfect clarity to now teaching in spiritual riddles called, Parables.

LW KEYPOINT:

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

LW KEYPOINT:

Parables both reveal and conceal Gospel-centered truths.

Two weeks ago, we studied the *Parable of the Soils* and learned why three of the four soils are spiritually disastrous.

Last Sunday, we studied the fourth soil and saw how it led to spiritual abundance.

And in our studies of this first parable, we learned what to do and what not to do to finish life well

As the church, we are divinely commissioned (set apart) to sow Gospel seed and water what has been previously sown by another faithful Brother or Sister in Christ.

Our role is not to take a jackhammer to the hard soil—in other words, we don't beat someone down with the Good News.

We are not to argue or debate with someone with a shallow or thorny heart either.

We are to love them where they are—because that's how God treats us.

And the reason we want to sow the seed here in the Verde Valley is because Jesus is the seed we sow—The Gospel.

Jesus is the seed takes root in us.

Our heart's desire is for people to experience the same forgiveness and hope that only comes through Christ Jesus our Lord and Him crucified.

That's why we share Jesus day-by-day.

And as we share the Gospel and cast those seeds, we fulfill our calling as disciples of Jesus—that calling is called the Great Commission.

+ INTRODUCTION:

Well, today is a theological doozy.

Today, Jesus teaches us about *The Purpose of the Parables*.

And the reason that today's lesson is a doozy is because Jesus talks about his absolute right to do all things according to His own good pleasure.

The words of Jesus today are unsettling, disturbing, and shocking.

His words are so direct and bold many people—including Christians are offended and refuse to believe what Jesus says.

What's He say? Why does He say it? And what does it mean to you?!

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

SCRIPTURE:

Matthew 13:10—Then the disciples came up and asked him, "Why are you speaking to them in parables?"

Matthew 13:11— He answered, "Because the secrets of the kingdom of heaven have been given for you to know, but it has not been given to them.

Matthew 13:12— For whoever has, more will be given to him, and he will have more than enough; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him.

Matthew 13:13— That is why I speak to them in parables, because looking they do not see, and hearing they do not listen or understand.

Matthew 13:14— Isaiah's prophecy is fulfilled in them, which says:

**You will listen and listen,
but never understand;
you will look and look,
but never perceive.**

Matthew 13:15— For this people's heart has grown callous;

**their ears are hard of hearing,
and they have shut their eyes;
otherwise they might see with their eyes,
and hear with their ears, and
understand with their hearts,
and turn back—
and I would heal them.,**

Matthew 13:16— "Blessed are your eyes because they do see, and your ears because they do hear."

Matthew 13:17— "For truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see the things you see but didn't see them, to hear the things you hear but didn't hear them."

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

PRAY:

Our God is in heaven and does whatever he pleases. (Psalm 115:3)

EXEGESIS:

So after Jesus teaches the *Parable of the Soils* without explanation, the disciples get Jesus alone and ask...

Matthew 13:10— "Why are you speaking to them in parables?"

- Why not a three-point sermon like the rest of the Rabbis?
- Why not start with a joke to put everyone in a good mood?
- Why not a heartwarming story to connect with your audience?
- Why not start with a current news story so that you can be relevant?

"Why are you speaking to them in parables?"

The disciples didn't have a problem with Jesus's teaching in parables because that was a common method.

However, the disciples were puzzled because Jesus didn't explain the parables.

The disciples never heard a Rabbi teach and not explain what he's teaching.

Why bother teaching anything at all, if nobody can't understand it?

So, the disciples were asking Jesus a question about His new methodology.

We call this hermeneutics—the art and science of Biblical interpretation.

Matthew 13:11— He answered, "Because the secrets of the kingdom of heaven have been given for you (the 12 disciples) to know, but it has not been given to them (everyone else).

What?! That's not fair!

Is Jesus saying what I think He's saying?

Matthew 13:11— He answered, "Because the **secrets...**

The Greek verb for secrets is *mystērion*.

So, your Bible translation may say *mysteries* instead of secrets.

A Biblical secret is different than someone telling you a secret.

KEYPOINT 1:

A "mystery" would remain unknown had it not been revealed by God Himself.

Now, if you're a part of the Wednesday night Bible Study with Ray Taylor, Ray taught us about the *mysteries* of the Kingdom of Heaven a few weeks ago from the book of Daniel.

As a review—King Nebuchadnezzar has a dream, and he calls in all of his magicians, mediums, and sorcerers—

All right boys, I had this crazy dream last night and I need you to tell me the dream and its interpretation.

And they said— *We can't tell you you're dream, but when you tell us the dream — we'll be happy to interpret it for you.*

King Nebuchadnezzar says— *No.*

You will tell me my dream and its interpretation, or you will not only lose your job but your life.

The magicians, mediums, and sorcerers all balk again and say, *No one can do that."*

Well, Daniel gets involved and asks the King for a bit of time before he starts tearing people from limb to limb—and that's where we pick up the passage.

Daniel 2:17— Then Daniel went to his house and told his friends Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah about the matter,

Daniel 2:18— urging them to ask the God of the heavens for mercy concerning this mystery, so Daniel and his friends would not be destroyed with the rest of Babylon's wise men.

Daniel 2:19— The mystery was then revealed to Daniel in a vision at night, and Daniel praised the God of the heavens.

The Hebrew verb *rāz*, is equivalent to the Greek verb *mystērion*.

God's mysteries baffle our understanding.

God's mysteries and secrets are only known to us by His divine revelation.

Humans will never be able to figure/research these things out.

Ray taught us that Yahweh God imparted and entrusted Daniel and his three friends with privileged access to the divine "secret," which the magicians, mediums, and sorcerers could not understand even if they wanted to.

Matthew 13:11— He answered, "Because the secrets of the kingdom of heaven...

~~While~~ ^{How} there are many important themes in the Bible, the Kingdom of God/Heaven is the central theme that ties everything together.

God has a Kingdom and Jesus is King.

God's kingdom has always existed—

Psalms 10:16—The Lord is King forever and ever;

Psalms 145:13—Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom; your rule is for all generations.

In other words, Jesus is King, and He's not running for office!

God's Kingdom is a current reality. *Jesus rules ? reigns today .*

Psalms 29:10—The Lord sits enthroned, King forever.

God's Kingdom is also a future state on Earth...

Zechariah 14:9—On that day, the Lord will become King over the whole earth—the Lord alone, and his name alone.

The expectation of the promised OT King was fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth.

So, Jesus is the King of kings, and there is not a square inch of the cosmos that is not under His rule, authority, and leadership.

The Kingdom of God is not only a spiritual kingdom today for Believers.

It is also a literal kingdom in which Jesus will rule and reign the world from Jerusalem for one thousand years.

Matthew 6:10— *Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*

Isn't that good news? That Jesus Christ Himself will fix all the politics in every city, state and nation.

Matthew 13:10— *"Why are you speaking to them in parables?"*

Matthew 13:11— *"Because the secrets of the kingdom of heaven have been given for you to know, but it has not been given to them."*

That's a doozy of a statement.

Remember Jesus' family standing outside the house, demanding to interrupt His Bible study so they could see Him? (Matt. 12:46-50).

Jesus' family came to rescue Him - they thought Jesus had lost His mind.

We discussed how Jesus' own family was a group of unbelievers (his own brothers were mockers), and because they were unbelievers—they were also outsiders.

So Jesus previously taught us that there are two groups of people:

1. Insiders = Believers
2. Outsiders = Unbelievers

Those who believe are in the Kingdom, and those who don't are on the outside.

BTW there is only one requirement to get in! Believe/Repent/Born again.

Now this "inside/outside" language drips with the doctrine of Election.

KEYPOINT 2:

Election is God's choosing of certain people to save and passing over others.

There is no way to get around *this doctrine in Scripture*

Yahweh God tells Moses...

Exodus 33:19— I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion."

God says, "I will" four times in one sentence - that's important!

And Jesus tells His disciples...

Matthew 13:11— the secrets of the kingdom of heaven have been given for you to know, but it has not been given to them.

Some people believe the doctrine of Election is only found in the books of Romans or Ephesians.

But that's not true. We see it here.

And if we pay close attention as we read the sacred Scriptures, the doctrine of Election appears repeatedly.

It's through Jesus' teaching on kingdom-based parables, right here in Matthew chapter 13, that we begin our struggle with the mystery of God's Election and human responsibility.

The reason many people don't want to think about or discuss Election is because they don't understand the power of sin.

Apart from God's grace, it is impossible for anyone to confess that we are hopelessly a slave to sin— because sin all we know.

We don't know life apart from our sin—even as Believers.

We don't understand the power of sin and how it's corrupted every aspect of our lives, relationships, and God's creation.

An example of God's Election and human sin comes from the Prophet Ezekiel.

Through Ezekiel, God warns the Jewish people of the upcoming destruction of Jerusalem (because of their sin) and calls them to repentance.

Ezekiel 36:22— 'This is what the Lord God says: It is not for your sake that I will act, ... but for my holy name.

In other words, God is saying that you didn't do anything to deserve what He's about to give you. *the Israelites*

But God's going to give it anyway—out of His grace.

Let's look at these gifts of grace from God.

Ezekiel 36:23— I will honor the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations—

Ezekiel 36:24— "'For I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries, and will bring you into your own land.

Ezekiel 36:25— I will also sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean. I will cleanse you from all your impurities and all your idols.

Ezekiel 36:26— I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will remove your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.

Ezekiel 36:27— I will place my Spirit within you and cause you to follow my statutes and carefully observe my ordinances.

Ezekiel 36:28— You will live in the land that I gave your ancestors; you will be my people, and I will be your God.

Ezekiel 36:29— I will save you from all your uncleanness. I will summon the grain and make it plentiful, and I will not bring famine on you.

Ezekiel 36:30— I will also make the fruit of the trees and the produce of the field plentiful, so that you will no longer experience reproach among the nations on account of famine.

Ezekiel 36:31— "You will remember your evil ways and your deeds that were not good, and you will loathe yourselves for your iniquities and detestable practices.

Ezekiel 36:32— It is not for your sake that I will act—this is the declaration of the Lord God—let this be known to you. Be ashamed and humiliated because of your ways, house of Israel!

Ezekiel 36:36— I, the Lord, have spoken and I will do it.

God blesses the nation 25 times in eleven verses!

Not only did they not do anything good to deserve the blessings—they were in a state of rebellion and defiance at that time.

There is no doubt that God chooses His people for His Kingdom.

The apostle Paul confirms this—

Romans 8:28— We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.

Romans 8:29— For those he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, so that he would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.

Romans 8:30— And those he predestined, he also called; and those he called, he also justified; and those he justified, he also glorified.

It's impossible to give God too much credit for the gift of Salvation that comes through Christ Jesus our Lord.

I told you today was a doozy—but in a good way!

We are never told to choose God for salvation—we are commanded to believe God.

If we choose God, that means we can un-choose God.

And God has made His promises established by His own great name—meaning it's impossible for Him to break a promise.

It is an important lesson in humility when we study God's Word through the lens of his mercy and grace looking for the doctrines of Sovereignty, Election and Predestination.

If you have never done that, I would encourage you to do so.

Simply take a special colored highlighter or pen and circle or highlight those precious verses.

Regardless of whether or not we think that God's gift of Election is unfair or not, Scripture never apologizes for it.

And we see that as Jesus continues to answer the disciple's question.

Matthew 13:12— For whoever has, more will be given to him, and he will have more than enough; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him.

Once again, "Is Jesus saying what we think He's saying?"

The Whoever has— refers to those who have been chosen, called, and have been sovereignly given the gift of eternal life, received by faith in Jesus Christ.

So whoever believes—*more will be given*.

What's the more? — The mysteries and secrets of God.

The Believer then receives further wisdom and divine revelation as he matures in the Lord.

But the fate of the unbeliever is just the opposite.

Because of his unbelief, he *does not have* salvation.

Therefore, the little knowledge that he does have will be taken away from him.

When a person says "no" to God, God says "no" to that person.

KEYPOINT 3:

Everyone is either progressing or regressing spiritually.

Nobody remains stationary in his relationship with God.

Standing still is impossible.

Let's look at the passage again—I want you to see God's grace in Election.

Matthew 13:11— ...the secrets of the kingdom of heaven have been **given**...

Matthew 13:12— For whoever has, more will be **given**

KEYPOINT 4:

God doesn't have to give anything to anyone.

And yet God does!

When we first hear this principle of Election— it seems harsh and unfair.

But it actually rests on an undeniable principle—

KEYPOINT 5:

The more truth someone has, the more he can learn.

I hate sports analogies, so let me give you one.

You can't explain football to someone who doesn't know what a line of scrimmage is.

The same goes for cooking—you cannot explain reduction sauces to someone who doesn't know how to boil water.

However, a professional football player and a professional chef can quickly grasp highly sophisticated instructions in their field.

The same truth holds spiritually.

We can't explain the deep, profound, and mysterious truths of the Kingdom of God

(God's Sovereignty, Election, Predestination, Hypostatic Union) to people who deny the very first principle:

Jesus is Lord and King!

At best, unbelievers will call Jesus a teacher or healer.

But if we know the basics—Jesus died for sinners, was buried for three days and was resurrected on the third day—and believe it.

God will add more knowledge until we have this abundance that Jesus refers to.

Matthew 13:13— That is why I speak to them in parables, because looking they do not see, and hearing they do not listen or understand.

Jesus is emphatic and restates the same answer for the third time.

KEYPOINT 6:

Jesus speaks in parables to those on the outside | not to harden their hearts | but because their hearts are already hardened.

Here's more amazing grace—

Since knowledge carries responsibility, the withholding of truth from those who have a hard heart (refuse to believe) is an act of grace—

Because God's desire is not to increase their guilty sentence on the Day of Judgment.

God doesn't want anyone to perish - but all to come to repentance (2Pe 3:9)
↳ but most people won't

Once again, we see God's mercy and grace in Jesus' parables.

Matthew 13:14— Isaiah's prophecy is fulfilled in them (unbelievers), which says:

**You will listen, and listen,
 but never understand;
 you will look and look,
 but never perceive.**

**Matthew 13:15— For this people's heart has grown callous;
their ears are hard of hearing,
and they have shut their eyes;
otherwise they might see with their eyes,
and hear with their ears, and
understand with their hearts,
and turn back—
and I would heal them.,**

God told Isaiah to prophesy in Israel even though few would listen to him (Isa. 6).

The people kept on hearing and hearing and hearing Isaiah, but they never understood him.

As a result, they became hardened to the truth.

The more they heard Isaiah, the more they closed their ears to him.

Here's the thing—they were sure that God would bless them no matter how sinful they were.

So, when Isaiah said judgment was coming, they laughed and refused to listen.

Matthew 13:16— "Blessed are your eyes because they do see, and your ears because they do hear.

By contrast, the disciples are blessed with eyes that truly see and ears that truly hear.

Blessed carries the same sense as in the beatitudes of Matthew chapter 5.

The Lord's goal is to bless his people so we may bear fruit.

↳ Why?

Matthew 13:17— For truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see the things you see but didn't see them, to hear the things you hear but didn't hear them.

The disciples receive a hint of their own blessing.

They can see and hear God's truth, a truth that many prophets and righteous men earnestly hoped to see and couldn't.

God didn't reveal it to them because it wasn't in God's sovereign timing.

Abraham longed to see these things, but he never saw them.

Moses would have given anything to have seen what the disciples were seeing.

What about David? What of Isaiah? What of Jeremiah? What of Amos? What of Hosea?

All those people looked to the future—they looked to the promises that God had given to them.

But they died in faith without seeing and without hearing from God wrapped in flesh and bone—The Lord Jesus Christ.

None witnessed ^{Jesus'} his miracles.

None *heard* his words.

The disciples, however, had seen and heard.

PREACH:

What does all this mean for you? Two things:

First, if you are a born-again Believer—you too have eyes to see and ears to hear spiritual truth.

You also have discernment to hear spiritual lies.

You have the Holy Spirit—which means He is your teacher.

He will teach you the mysteries and secrets of the *Kingdom of God* in His perfect timing.

It also means that you have more than the 12 Apostles—you have God's perfect and complete revelation in your hands.

You have the entire/full console of God — The Bible.

And the primary way for The Holy Spirit to reveal these mysteries to you—

is to you read/listen to the Word of God by the Spirit of God—from cover to cover —over and over.

But reading Scripture by yourself is only half of the equation.

The second is committing yourself to the local church—so that you can hear the Word proclaimed, explicated and explained in a community and with God's chosen people.

Lastly, *The Purpose of Parables* today— is to reveal God's total and absolute right to all things according to His own good pleasure.

That's God's sovereignty.

Question: *How do you harmonize/make sense of God's Sovereignty and man's responsibility?*

How is it that God has revealed secret things to some and not to others?

Let me answer a question with a few more questions:

- *Who is the father of Israel?*
- *Who led the Egyptians out of slavery?*
- *Who wrote the book of Matthew?*
- *Who lives your Christian life?*

Galatians 2:20—*I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.*

The apostle Paul didn't even know!

That's the divine mystery—it's all of God and all of us at the same time.

A divine mystery is a paradox that we can not solve.

A paradox is not a contradiction because there are no contradictions in Scripture.

A paradox is something that seems to be contradictory.

How is it that Scripture says that Believers are kept eternally secure in God— and at the same time are commanded to persevere in our faith?

How is it that Scripture says that nobody is saved unless God sovereignly chooses and calls them— and at the same time Believers must believe in the Gospel and repent from sin?

How do we harmonize all this?

Answer: We don't.

We don't have the mind of God—so please don't expect too much of others and yourself if you demand an answer.

Understanding this paradox—today's theological doozy— is not your problem!

However, the one thing we can't do is deny what Scripture says.

We don't have to understand the secrets of God, but we can trust God with them.

KEYPOINT 7:

God will get all the glory.

And because God get's all the glory, we rest, have peace, and joy in God's sovereignty.

PRAYER

BENEDICTION

Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen. (Rom. 11:33/36)

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