

Parables

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When he was alone, the Twelve and the others around him asked him about the parables. ¹¹He told them, "The secret/mystery of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said/comes to them in parables/riddles ¹²so/with the result that, "they may be ever seeing but never perceiving, and ever hearing but never understanding; otherwise/if they had they might turn and be forgiven!" Mark 4:10-12

Parables, like life, are riddles that either reveal or hide God.

Exodus 14:20, 2 Corinthians 2:16, Titus 1:15

Three riddles...

The farmer sows the word. ¹⁵Some people are like seed along the path, where the word is sown. As soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them. ¹⁶Others, like seed sown on rocky places, hear the word and at once receive it with joy. ¹⁷But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. ¹⁸Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; ¹⁹but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful. ²⁰Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop—some thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times what was sown." Mark 4:14-20

- **Truth:** Satan makes God's Word bad news.
- **Pain:** Hurt can produce suspicion.
"Jesus Christ did not come to take away suffering from the world. He did not even come to explain it. He came to fill suffering with his nearness." Paul Claudel
- **Desires:** We all desire security and significance but our anxiety wants quick fixes.

How do we see God in life's riddles?

"The seeds that fell on the good soil represent honest, **good-hearted** people who **hear** God's word, cling to it, and patiently produce a huge harvest" Lk 8:15

Conclusion: God wants to give us a *new* heart with which to see truth, pain and desires (one that is not hard, shallow or distracted).

I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. Ez 36:26

Connect

- Have you heard any good riddles lately? If so, share it with the group.

Word and Reflection

Jesus often spoke in parables. Parables, like life, are riddles that either reveal God or hide God, depending on the condition of your heart. Truth, pain and desires can either harden or soften our hearts. God wants to give us a new heart with which to see truth, pain and desires – a heart that is not hard, shallow or distracted.

Mark 4:12-20; Luke 8:15; Ezekiel 36:26

- Which part of the message made an impact, caught your attention or challenged you?
- Read Mark 4:14-20. God is a farmer who sprinkles our lives with His truth. What are the three main ways that the truth gets stolen from us?
- According to Luke 8:15, what is the remedy to the three problems described above?
- Read Ezekiel 36:26-27. How are you in hearing God's truth, and dealing with pain and desires? What does God want to give us?

Action

- What is one thing you learned from this message that you can put into practice this week?

Prayer

- Pray for God give you a heart that is tender and attuned to His voice.
- Pray for your group and for those whom you're reaching out to.