

Matthew 13:1-23

- **REVIEW...**

- o **FIRST** - The Presentation of the King – **Matthew 1-7**
- o **SECOND** – The Ministry of the King – **Matthew 8-18**
- o Seeking a Sign...
 - The Scribes and Pharisees demanded Jesus show them a SIGN...
 - **IRONIC** because Jesus had just **HEALED** a man who was both **BLIND** and **MUTE**...
 - He could have done a **THOUSAND** miracles and they still would **NOT** have believed...
 - So the **ONLY** sign Jesus would give them was the **SIGN** of Jonah...
 - Like the **PROPHET** - Jesus would be **THREE** days and nights in the heart of the earth...
 - Because the **ONLY** sign that could save them - was the **GOSPEL**!
- o Family of God...
 - While Jesus was still talking His Mother and brothers came to rescue Him [crazy]
 - But Jesus questioned - **WHO** was His **MOTHER** or **BROTHERS**...
 - Those who are willing to **HEAR** [queen of Sheba] and **REPENT** [Nineveh]
 - Those who do the **WILL** of the **FATHER** - believe in Jesus - become part of the **FAMILY** of God!

- **1ST – PARABLES... vs. 1-3 /10-17**

- o **1st** - New teaching... vs. 1-3
 - Large Crowd... vs. 1-2
 - On the same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the sea.
 - And great multitudes were gathered together to Him so that He got into a boat and sat...
 - And the whole multitude stood on the shore!
 - Having finished with the **PHARISEES** and **SCRIBES** - Jesus went outside...
 - He sat down by the Sea of Galilee - and a **HUGE** crowd gathered around Him...
 - In order for the **ALL** the people to be able to **LISTEN** - Jesus got into a **BOAT** - **Luke 5:3**
 - The water would **AMPLIFY** His voice [no speakers] allowing the people on the **SHORE** to hear!
 - Telling Stories... vs. 3
 - Then [Jesus] spoke many things to them in parables!
 - Jesus previously had given in depth teachings - **SERMON** on the Mount - **Matthew 5-7**
 - But here He begins to use a **NEW** technique called **PARABLES**....
 - **PARABLE** [παραβολή] - a simple **STORY** with a deeper **SPIRITUAL** meaning...
 - These **STORIES** were commonly used by Jesus in the ministry [over **THIRTY**]!
 - The **PARABLES** are found in all **THREE** synoptic gospels [none in John]
 - **Luke** - has the **MOST** [28] along with the **MOST** unique [15]
 - **Matthew** - in next with [24] with [11] of them being unique...
 - **Mark** - has the **LEAST** [10] with only [1] of them being unique!
- o **2nd** - Purpose of Parables... vs. 10-12
 - Why Change... vs. 10
 - The disciples came and said to Him: Why do You speak to them in parables?
 - The **DISCIPLES** [μαθητῆς] were **CONFUSED** - why did Jesus change His teaching style...
 - **WHY** has He previously **EXPLAINED** the truths of Kingdom to the people...
 - But **NOW** He was using these **STORIES** - that they assumed had a **DEEPER** meaning!
 - Asking Questions... vs. 11
 - [Jesus] answered and said to them: Because it has been given to you to know...
 - The mysteries of the kingdom of heaven - but to them it has not been given!
 - The **ANSWER** - because **ONLY** the disciples could **KNOW** [γινώσκω] the **MYSTERIES** of God...

- God wanted to GIVE [perfect] them the ANSWERS - but NOT the others...
- This was NOT because the DISCIPLES were special - they were certainly not SMARTER...
- The ONLY difference between the CROWD and the DISCIPLES - was QUESTIONS...
- The MULTITUDES walked away thinking Jesus had given them farming advice [seeds]
- But the DISCIPLES stopped to ask what Jesus meant - so they got to hear the TRUTH!
- The mark of a true DISCIPLE of Jesus - is NOT the one who understands everything...
- It is the one who ASKS because he does NOT understand - QUESTIONS are good...
- If we have a hard time understanding the Word of God - ask QUESTIONS...
- Jesus will take the time to explain the Word so that we do understand!
- Adding and subtracting... 12
 - For whoever has - to him more will be given - and he will have abundance.
 - But whoever does not have - even what he has will be taken away from him!
 - ANYONE [ὅστις] who is HUNGRY for God - those who want to GROW...
 - Because they are SEEKING Jesus - Jesus will [future] give them MORE [abundance]
 - But ANYONE [ὅστις] who comes to LISTEN - yet does not GROW...
 - Even what little they have - Jesus will [future] take away from them!
 - Jen used to have a GARDEN – and was quite frustrated with many of the plants...
 - She weeded and watered – yet most of them REFUSED to bear any FRUIT...
 - But there were a couple of plants that did GROW – encouraging her to keep trying...
 - So she stopped fighting the FRUITLESS plants - and instead focused on the FRUITFUL ones!
 - Jesus is a good GARDENER - and He is looking for FRUIT from our lives...
 - The more we HUNGER and desire to GROW in Him - the more He will give to us...
 - But those who are NOT bearing fruit - will end up with NOTHING!
- o 3rd - The Test... vs. 13-15
 - Hiding Truth... vs. 13
 - Therefore I speak to them in parables - because seeing they do not see.
 - And hearing they do not hear - nor do they understand!
 - That is why Jesus used PARABLES - so people would NOT understand...
 - They could SEE Him - and LISTEN to what He said...
 - But the PARABLE would HIDE the TRUTH from them!
 - This is why PARABLES are some of the most DIFFICULT passages in the Bible to interpret...
 - Unless Jesus gives us the EXPLANATION [like the Seed and Sower]
 - Then we have NO idea for certain what the PARABLE means - they HIDE the truth!
 - Hard Heart... vs. 14-15
 - In them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled which says:
 - Hearing you will hear and shall not understand - and seeing you will see and not perceive.
 - The hearts of this people have grown dull - their ears are hard of hearing - their eyes closed.
 - Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears.
 - Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn so that I should heal them!
 - The question we have to ask is WHY would Jesus want to HIDE the TRUTH...
 - The answer came from the PROPHET - **Isaiah 6:8-10**
 - God asked who would go for US - Isaiah told the LORD - here I am send me...
 - But he was being sent to a people who would NOT believe...
 - They would SEE the miracles - they would HEAR the message...
 - But they would NEVER [οὐ μὲν subjunctive] understand and believe...
 - Because their HEARTS were HARD - and that caused [hiphil] their ears and eyes to CLOSE!
 - Pass or fail...

- The PARABLES were a TEST - to check and see where the HEART was...
- If the people SAW and LISTENED - but did NOT ask QUESTIONS...
- It meant their HEART was HARD - and they could not receive the TRUTH!
- I am blessed to teach the Junior and Senior High chapels at Trinity school...
- One of my favorite classes every year is the Bible Week Question and Answer...
- The students can ask ANY question about the Bible - and we answer them...
- I love it because it gives me a chance to see where the HEARTS of the STUDENTS are!
- It is easy to come to CHURCH - sit down and LISTEN...
- But the question is does the WORD of God get in - do we UNDERSTAND...
- Do we really HEAR - do we really SEE - do we TURN [subjunctive] from our SIN...
- So that God can HEAL [רפא] us - give us NEW life...
- QUESTIONS are the TEST - to see if our HEART is HARD or HUNGRY...
- Therefore we should always want to KNOW - and GROW - by asking QUESTIONS!

o 4th - Blessed eyes... vs. 16-17

- Blessed are your eyes for they see - and your ears for they hear.
- For assuredly I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see.
- And did not see it - and to hear what you hear - and did not hear it!
- [ἀμύν] - there were MANY prophets and godly men...
- Who WISH they could have SEEN and HEARD what the DISCIPLES did - but they did NOT...
- All of the men of the Old Testament were looking forward to Jesus...
- And it was the DISCIPLES who finally got to SEE [indicative] and HEAR Him!
- The nation of Israel heard the WORD of the Lord when Moses came down from the mountain...
- But it did NOT save them - they were NOT allowed to go into the PROMISED land!
- **Hebrews 4:2** - "The gospel was preached to us as well as to them - but the word which they heard did not [help] them - not being mixed with faith in those who heard it."
- The MULTITUDES also heard the PARABLES - but of a hard heart they did not KNOW Him...
- Therefore being BLESSED is NOT just about hearing - it is about BELIEVING!

• 2ND - SEED AND SOWER... vs. 3-9 / 18-23

o Answering the Parable ... vs. 3 / 18

- Therefore hear the parable of the sower!
- Having told the disciples WHY He used PARABLES...
- Jesus goes on to EXPLAIN this PARABLE - listen [imperative] to the meaning:
- The SEED - represents the WORD of God - **Mark 4:14**
- The SOWER - represents the LORD or anyone who spreads the WORD of the LORD...
- The SOIL - represents the HEARTS of those who HEAR the WORD...
- It the focus of the PARABLE - because there are FOUR kinds!

o 1st - Hard Soil... vs. 4 / 19

- Not Understanding...
 - When anyone hears the word of the kingdom - and does not understand it!
 - The FIRST soil is the WAYSIDE - the hard packed dirt of a road...
 - ANYONE [πᾶς] who HEARS the WORD of God [kingdom] - but does NOT understand [συνίημι]
 - What they do NOT understand is WHY they need to be SAVED!
 - To be accepted by God - we must be HOLY [שׁוֹמֵר] - **Leviticus 19:2**
 - What does it mean to be HOLY - perfect - never sinning even once...
 - The problem is we are NOT perfect - **Romans 3:23**
 - And the penalty for not being perfect is DEATH - **Romans 6:23**

- God gave us the LAW [613 commands] to show us we are NOT good...

- So that we would UNDERSTAND we need to be SAVED - we need Jesus - **Galatians 3:24**
- Salvation them comes through faith in the FINISHED work of Jesus - **Ephesians 2:8-9**
- Wicked one...
 - Then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart.
 - This is he who received seed by the wayside!
 - ANYONE [παῖς] who HEARS they are a SINNER - and needs to be SAVED...
 - But does NOT believe it - if they convince themselves they are a GOOD person...
 - Then the [birds] satan [πονηρός] comes and SNATCHES [ἀρπάζω] away the WORD...
 - Because the HEART of that person is HARD - so the SEED could not penetrate it!
 - Most people THINK they are a GOOD person [compared to others]
 - Therefore they do NOT think they NEED to be SAVED...
 - This makes their heart HARD towards the Gospel - and the WORD cannot get in!
- o 2nd - Rocky Soil... vs. 5-6 / 20-21
 - No Roots... vs. 20
 - He who received the seed on stony places.
 - This is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy.
 - Yet he has no root in himself - but endures only for a while.
 - For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word immediately he stumbles!
 - The SECOND soil is the STONY ground that does not have much topsoil...
 - ANYONE [παῖς] who HEARS the message of the Gospel - and immediately receives it with JOY...
 - The SEED is able to grow - but there is no ROOM for it to form ROOTS...
 - And when the SUN comes up - they quickly DRY up [καυματίζω] and wither...
 - The TRIALS [θλίψεις] that come in life - cause [passive] them to be STUMBLED [σκανδαλίζω]
 - Because they do NOT understand the reason for SUFFERING!
 - The Gospel is NOT a message of an EASY life - it is about an ETERNAL perspective!
 - Trust in God...
 - **II Corinthians 1:9** - "We had the sentence of death in ourselves - that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead."
 - Because when hard times come - our first reaction is to look to depend on ourselves...
 - But God will turn up the HEAT - till we can no longer handle our problems...
 - So that we would learn NOT to trust in ourselves - but instead trust in God!
 - Strength in Weakness...
 - **II Corinthians 12:9** - "My grace is sufficient... for My strength is made perfect in weakness."
 - Because we like to THINK we are STRONG - that we can handle any problem...
 - But it is in our WEAKNESS that we find true strength...
 - When we realize we are WEAK we learn to depend on the STRENGTH of God!
 - Deep Roots
 - A tree that has never had to face a BREEZE - will have SHALLOW roots...
 - But a tree that faces the WIND - will have DEEP roots - and will NOT fall over in the storm!
 - Because when UNDERSTAND the reason for trials - we have DEEP roots...
 - We be unmovable - unshakable - grounded in our FAITH in Christ...
 - But if our focus is NOT on the eternal - we will not UNDERSTAND the reason for TRIALS...
 - And we will FALL away - give up on Jesus - because we did NOT have DEEP roots!
 - **Colossians 2:7** - "Let your roots grow down into him and draw up nourishment from him - so you will grow in faith - strong and vigorous in the truth you were taught." [NLT]
- o 3rd - Thorny Soil... vs. 7 / 22
 - Double Minded...

- Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word.
- The cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word. He becomes unfruitful!
- The THIRD soil is the ground that is full of THORNS that compete with the WORD...
- The CARES of this life [μέριμνα] - meaning to be DIVIDED...
- People who think about HEAVEN - but are also consumed by the WORLD!
- **James 1:8** - "A double-minded man - unstable in all his ways!"
- I have met so many believers who are miserable – they are tossed about like waves...
- The problem is they think the WISDOM of the world has something to offer them...
- Therefore they are miserable in the Lord – because they are confused by the world...
- But they are also not happy with the world – because they know too much about the Lord...
- They are miserable wherever they go – they CANNOT stand - because they are divided!
- Deceitful riches...
 - The DECEITFULNESS of riches - the LIE that MONEY is the answer...
 - They do NOT understand that we cannot serve TWO masters - we must CHOOSE - **Luke 16:13**
 - Because these things will CHOKe [present] out the FRUITFULNESS of a believer!
 - King Solomon tried everything looking for happiness - **Ecclesiastes 2:1-11**
 - But he learned instead it was ALL vanity – like chasing after the WIND!
 - Looking for happiness – answers to life in this world - is chasing the WIND...
 - It is not about chasing something that is hard to catch - there is NOTHING there to catch...
 - The LOVE of money – CARES of this life – only get us into trouble - **I Timothy 6:9-10**
- Be Content...
 - **Hebrews 13:5** - "Be content with such things as you have."
 - Instead we need to UNDERSTAND we should be CONTENT – with whatever we have...
 - Because God has promised to give us EVERYTHING we NEED – **Luke 12:31**
 - When we came into this world – we had nothing...
 - And when we leave – we are going to take absolutely nothing with us...
 - So why do we waste time trying to get things that do not last - **Ecclesiastes 5:15**
 - When the only thing in life that really matters – is knowing Jesus!
- No Fruit...
 - There is NO question that the HARD soil represents someone who is NOT a saved...
 - It also seems likely that the STONY soil is NOT talking about a believer...
 - Because only those who ENDURE to the END will be saved - **Matthew 24:13**
 - But what about the THORNY soil - what happens if there is NO fruit!
 - Jesus tells us that if we ABIDE in Him - we will bear much FRUIT...
 - But if we are DIVIDED - if we are DECEIVED by money...
 - If we do NOT abide in Him - then we will NOT bear FRUIT!
 - **John 15:6** - "He is cast out... and they gather them and throw them into the fire."
- o 4th - Good Soil... vs. 8-9 / 23
 - Understands...
 - He who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it!
 - The FOURTH soil is the ground that is GOOD [καλός]
 - What makes it GOOD - is the person UNDERSTANDS [συνίημι] the WORD!
 - The GOOD soil understands they are a SINNER - and NEED to be saved...
 - The GOOD soil understands the reason for TRIALS - and has deep ROOTS in Jesus...
 - The GOOD soil understands we cannot have a DIVIDED heart if we want to be FRUITFUL!
 - How much Fruit...
 - Who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold - some sixty - some thirty!
 - The RESULT of being GOOD soil - is we will bear [indicative] a fruit...

- Which brings us to TWO final questions - FIRST how much fruit...
- Good soil bears fruit - some 100 fold - some 60 - some 30...
- How do we know how much FRUIT we should have!
- **Luke 8:15** - "Keep [the Word] and bear fruit with patience [μένω]."
- A branch does not choose how much fruit grows from it...
- It just makes sure it is connected to the TREE - and FRUIT will come!
- The FRUIT is not up to us - our part is just the HOLD onto the WORD [Jesus]
- As we ABIDE [μένω] in Him - He will decide what FRUIT to bring through us!
- **Psalms 1:3** - "[A tree] that brings forth its fruit in its season."
- How to Understand...
 - SECOND - how do become GOOD soil - how do we UNDERSTAND the Word!
 - After the resurrection of Jesus - He met two men walking on the road to Emmaus...
 - They did NOT understand why the Jesus had to die on the CROSS!
 - **Luke 24:45** - "Jesus opened their understanding [συνίημι] - they might understand the Bible."
 - Jesus opened their understanding [συνίημι] - because they were walking with Jesus...
 - It is as we are walking with Jesus - that He opens our UNDERSTANDING...
 - He makes our hearts good soil - so that the Word bears fruit!
- Listen... vs. 9
 - He who has ears to hear - let him hear!
 - To which Jesus finished with a final command [imperative]
 - Anyone who has EARS - make sure to LISTEN to the WORD!
 - I am NOT a farmer - my niche is more in technology...
 - But I can remember teaching this PARABLE when we were in Himamaylan...
 - To a bunch of FARMERS this all made perfect sense!
 - No matter where someone is TODAY - there is HOPE...
 - If we have a HARD heart [wayside] - then we need to BREAK up [plow] the soil...
 - If we have a STONY heart - then we need to pull out the STONES...
 - If we have a THORNY heart - then it is time to do some WEEDING...
 - Because as any farmer knows - there is no such thing as GOOD soil...
 - There is just DIRT that needs to be prepared so that GOOD seed will grow...
 - LISTEN - God is telling us to prepare our hearts - if we are willing to LISTEN!