**The Parables Of Jesus-(Part 02)—Matthew 13-Parables**

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| **REVIEW QUESTIONS**   * What was Jesus’ message? * Why do we need to study Jesus’ parables? * What do we need to understand them? * Why did Jesus speak to us in parables? |

**MISCONCEPTIONS AND DISTRACTIONS**

Too many times, when Jesus’ parables are read and taught, their true meanings are ignored as they are interpreted from a purely human point of view. Now, although such messages derived from Jesus’ parables may not be wrong in themselves, they are nevertheless not the messages Jesus intended to communicate to us through his parables. As faithful disciples, our first and ultimate goal in studying Jesus’ words and parables should be to discover and understand what he meant exactly.

Surely, God cares about us, yet it is important to emphasize that Jesus’ interest in teaching was not to give us a better life, to make us richer and more comfortable and other such things. No! His purpose was to teach about His Kingdom.

For example, it is wrong to think that Jesus was teaching his disciples about

* business and making money in the parables of talents and minas, or
* marriage and weddings when his parable involved weddings or marriages, or
* how to build a house when he spoke about building on the rock and not on sand, or
* quantity surveying when he spoke about counting the cost before undertaking a project.
* Jesus was surely not teaching his disciples to be thieves when he said he would come like a thief in the night nor to add sin to sin like the shrewd manager.

Although some of these parables are built on certain universally acknowledged principles, which would be good for us to master and would be very useful us personally, we must nevertheless understand that teaching us these principles in themselves was not Jesus’ goal. It is good for example to count the cost and plan properly before undertaking any project, but this was not in itself Jesus’ message when he spoke about counting the cost. No, Jesus was teaching us to count the cost of being his disciple so as to be well prepared in heart to make the necessary sacrifices when they were demanded.

Let us not be distracted by any principle upon which the message in a parable rests nor by the practices described in a parable such as wedding, farming, harvest etc. Let us rather ask ourselves, “What exactly did Jesus have in mind to communicate to us?”

Today we will be carrying out class exercises as we study Jesus’ parables in Matthew 13

**MATTHEW 13 PARABLES**

Jesus explained some of his parables to his disciples, and these are keys to understanding the parables he did not explain. There are eight parables in Mat 13, Jesus explained three of these eight parables and these will serve as our guide to interpreting the other five.

* **Parable of the Sower**[Mat 13:3-9 *explained in*Mat 13:18-23]
* **Parable of weeds in a field**[Mat 13:24-30 *explained in*Mat 13:37-43]
* Parable of the mustard seed [Mat 13:31-32 *not* *explained*]
* Parable of yeast [Mat 13:33 *not* *explained*]
* Parable of treasure hidden in a field [Mat 13:49 *not* *explained*]
* Parable of the pearl of great value [Mat 13:45 *not* *explained*]
* **Parable of the net**[Mat 13:47-50 *partly* *explained*]
* Parable of old and new treasures [Mat 13:31-32 *not* *explained*]

**GAINING PERSPECTIVE**

The message of the Kingdom as presented by Jesus in his parables is a story, an unfolding story.

Basically, every story has actors who perform the different actions in that story. Every story has locations where the events and actions of its actors take place. The actors and locations and other objects in a story have direct and indirect relationships and interactions which bring about the actions and events that the story tells. Every story also has locations, places where events take place. Stories also have beginnings and endings, they happen over time.

As we study his parables, let us keep an eye on such questions crucial to understanding any story such as: who? Where? When? Why? How?

**EXERCISE 1**

First, read the three parables Jesus explained and understand their explanations. Discuss them. *(The tables below are to serve as guides.)*

**CHARACTERS IN THE KINGDOM STORY IN THE MATTHEW 13 PARABLES**

| **Representation of Characters** | **Characters** |
| --- | --- |
| *i) The four different grounds on which seed was scattered* | * The hearers of the gospel |
| *ii) He man who sowed good seed in his field* | * Jesus Christ, the Son of Man |
| *iii) The enemy of the man who sowed good seed in his field* | * The devil, the evil one |
| *iv) The servants of the man who sowed good seed in his field* | * The angels |
| *v) The good seed that were sowed in a field* | * The sons of the kingdom, the righteous |
| *vi) The bad weeds that were sowed among the good seeds in a field*  *vii) The bad fish caught in a net* | * The sons of the devil, the unrighteous |

**OBJECTS IN THE KINGDOM STORY IN THE MATTHEW 13 PARABLES**

| **Representation of Object** | **Object** |
| --- | --- |
| i) *The seed the sower scattered on four different types of ground* | * The word, the Gospel of the Kingdom of heaven |

**LOCATIONS IN THE KINGDOM STORY IN THE MATTHEW 13 PARABLES**

| **Representation of Locations** | **Locations** |
| --- | --- |
| i) *The good field in which the man sowed good seed* | * The world |
| *i) Where the weeds are destroyed*  *ii) Where the bad fish are thrown away* | * The fiery furnace |

**ACTIONS & EVENTS IN THE KINGDOM STORY IN THE MATTHEW 13 PARABLES**

| **Representation of Actions & Events** | **Actions & Events** |
| --- | --- |
| *i) The scattering of seeds by the sower* | * The preaching of the gospel |
| *i) The planting of good seeds in the field by a man* | * The establishment of the church |
| *i) The planting of bad seeds in the field by his enemy* | * the planting of evil men among the righteous |
| *i) The separation of wheat and weeds at the time of the harvest [Mat 13:30]*  *ii) The separation of good and bad fish [Mat 13:48]* | * separating between the righteous *(i.e., the sons of the kingdom)* and the unrighteous *(i.e., the sons of the evil one)* |

**TIME PERIODS IN THE KINGDOM STORY IN THE MATTHEW 13 PARABLES**

| **Representation of Time Periods** | **Time Periods** |
| --- | --- |
| *i) Time of sowing (sowing season) when the man sowed good seed in his field [Mat 13:24]* | * The first coming of Jesus Christ when he plant the church |
| *i) Period of growth*  *ii) Early stage of growth when bad seeds were sown* | * The growth of the church, quite early in her history, the devil’s children joined the church |
| *i) Harvest time [Mat 13:30]* | * The end of the age |

**EXERCISE 2**

Now let us read and interpret the parables he did not explain. Answer these questions:

1. In the parable of the mustard [Mat 13:31-32] seed
   1. Who is the man who planted the mustard seed?       *(b)*
   2. What is the seed?       *(c)*
   3. What is the garden in which it is planted?       *(d)*
2. In the parable of yeast [Mat 13:33]
   1. What is the yeast?       *(a)*
   2. What is the flour it is mixed into?       *(d)*
   3. Can you see any time periods in this parable?
3. In the parable of Parable of treasure hidden in a field [Mat 13:49],
   1. What is the treasure hidden in the field?       *(c)*
   2. What is the field?       *(d)*
   3. Who is the man who finds the hidden treasure?       *(b)*
   4. What does it mean that he sold everything he had to buy the field?     *(g)*
   5. What time periods can you identify?       *(f)*
4. In the parable of pearl of great value [Mat 13:45 *not* *explained*]
   1. Who is the merchant who finds the pearl of great value?       *(b)*
   2. What is the pearl of great value?       *(c)*
   3. What does it mean that he sold everything he had to buy the field?       *(g)*
   4. What time periods can you identify?     *(f)*

**ANSWERS**

1. The gospel
2. The Son of man
3. The church, the sons of the kingdom
4. The world
5. The mixing of the yeast and the time of rising
6. Three—Finding, selling all, and buying
7. Atonement—incarnation and death

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| **LAST LESSONS QUIZ**  What are the themes or subjects of the following parables? Who are they about?   * New wine and old bottles [Mat 9:16]   ·         The gospel of the Kingdom  ·         The servants *(disciples)* of Christ   * Pearl of Great Price [Mat 13:45-46]   ·         Acquisition of the kingdom   * Children in the market place [Mat 11:16-19]   ·         Reception of the Gospel   * Parable of the Sower [Mat 13:3-8, 18-23; Luk 8:5-15]   ·         The reception of the Gospel   * Marriage Feast [Mat 22:2-14]   ·         Reception of the Gospel  ·         Judgment—recompense and reward  ·         The servants *(disciples)* of Christ   * Parable of Minas [Luk 19:12-27]   ·         Acquisition of the Kingdom  ·         Reception of the Gospel  ·         Rejection of the Kingdom of heaven  ·         Judgment—rewards and recompense   * Virgins [Mat 25:1-13]   ·         The servants *(disciples)* of Christ  ·         Judgment—rewards and recompense |