

The Kingdom Parables Of Matthew 13 Pleasant Plains 6-17-2018PM NICK ANGEL

- ***READ Matthew 13:10-16*** From the earliest recordings of the ministry of Jesus we find our Lord focusing so much attention on the kingdom of heaven. In **Matthew 4:17** we read, *"From that time Jesus began to preach and say, 'Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.'"* Jesus's words simply emphasized the importance of what was about to be a reality for those who He was speaking to all throughout His ministry for not only had He come to be the Lamb of sacrifice of the sins of man, but He wanted to prepare men to be a part of this great kingdom that we have come to know as the church that Jesus gave His life to establish.
- Later on in **Matthew 16:18,19**, we read of Jesus speaking in one breath of the church He was going to establish and in the very next He speaks of giving the keys to the kingdom of heaven to His Apostles as they helped to plant and grow the church. Surely we can see easily that what Jesus was doing when He spoke a message of repentance was preparing men to become members of His church. However, He didn't always do this in the most straightforward of terms.
- The text we read just a moment ago here in **Matthew 13:10-16** focuses on the disciples asking why it is that Jesus spoke to the multitudes in parables so often. Jesus responds by speaking to the inability of so many to understand the deeper meanings of the parables. He spoke as He did because He wanted for the truly spiritually focused disciple to gain the most from His teachings. His expectation was that the Apostles would fit into this category, *"But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears because they hear."* (**Matthew 13:16**)
- The Apostles didn't always catch on quickly, but without even knowing it they were being readily prepared to be the leaders of the kingdom that was shortly to be established. One of the ways in which they were be prepared was when Jesus would speak to them about different aspects of the kingdom. This evening we will look at some aspects of the kingdom that we come to know through the kingdom parables that Jesus spoke in **Matthew 13**.

5 Lessons We Learn About The Kingdom

I. Satan wants to infiltrate the Kingdom.

A. We see Satan's agents being hard at work in the first century.

1. The parable itself is speaking of Satan's children that can be found within the world, but I would suggest that a further application could be carried out into the kingdom itself. While Satan is most certainly busy keeping souls out of the kingdom, he also is hard at work trying to cause kingdom citizens to be expelled from the kingdom. It doesn't take long for the church to be established before we see Satan's agents hard at work trying to cause havoc within the kingdom of heaven.
2. Even just within the book of Acts we see the problems that can be caused by the tares that are sown within the church. The big discussion that was taking place in **Acts 15** was brought upon by a group of Jews who were trying to teach the necessity of observing Jewish customs in order to be a part of the church. (**Acts 15:1-5**) This type of discussion is basically the exact same discussion that Paul has with the church in Galatia. (**Galatians 5:1-4**)
3. The work of Satan continues even into the letters that Paul wrote to the preacher Timothy. In both letters we find Paul recording warnings of coming times when men would cause problems within the churches of God's people. (**I Timothy 4:1-3 & II Timothy 3:1-8**) Just as God desires the growth of the church, so Satan will be looking for ways in which he can stunt the growth of the church, and no better way to do then this to cause the problems from within.

B. They continue to wreak havoc in the Lord's churches, today.

1. The problems continue to exist even today, and those warnings that were handed down by inspired writers are relevant even to day. In **Romans 16:17**, the Apostle Paul writes, *"Now I urge you brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissension and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them."* The Christians in Rome faced these issues, and Christians today continue to face the same type of issues. There are those within the Lord's churches who will seek to cause division through any number of means.
2. Here in **Romans 16:17**, we see Paul saying that divisions and hindrances were being caused by those who did not hold to the teachings of the Apostles. Elsewhere we can read of people who were unwilling to be united in mind and judgment as they worked together within the church in Corinth. (**I Corinthians 1:10**) Paul puts it best as he writes to Titus that those who are factious are sinning and will be condemned. (**Titus 3:8-11**)

II. Satan's agents will be judged in the end.

A. We might easily become frustrated when we see evil men seemingly unhindered in their ways.

1. Surely Paul was a man who was continually aggravated by those who consistently caused him problems during his efforts to plant and strengthen churches. His ministry was much the same way in that regard as Jesus's was. It could've been easy for him to allow those frustrations to hinder his work, but he kept in mind that those evil people would eventually be judged.
2. We have probably found ourselves in much the same position at times, I know that I have experienced times where the frustrations of divisive men had caused me much angst. Yet, it is in those times that we must remember that thought they may seem to go unhindered at the moment, those who cause division among God's people will eventually be eternally judged.

B. Their end will surely come to pass in the judgment day.

1. This is a strong point that Jesus makes within these parables. We see Him speaking to the fact of a coming judgement in **Matthew 13:40-42, 47-50**. Both the parable of the tares and the dragnet have judgment type language and teachings found within them.
2. The tares will be gathered up by the angels and thrown into the furnace of fire where there will be much weeping and gnashing of teeth and those bad fish will be thrown away in the same way. We might all be gathered together now in this world, but there is coming a time when there will be a great separation between the faithful of God and those who have fought against God as workers and agents of Satan.

III. The Kingdom is all about growth.

A. The mustard seed starts off very small, but it grows into something much much greater.

1. This is not the only time we see Jesus using the imagery of a mustard seed. In **Matthew 17:20**, we find Jesus speaking of the Apostles' faith needing to only be the size of the tiny mustard seed in order for them to be successful in their work of ministry.
2. Similarly here in **Matthew 13:31,32**, we see Jesus speaking of the church in the same type of terms. In this parable Jesus compares the kingdom to the mustard seed in its infancy, but by the time it is full grown it is larger than all of the garden seeds and becomes a tree where all of the birds of the air can come and make nests for themselves. The mustard seed truly was and continues to be one of the smallest seeds that can be found in the lands of the middle east. It is extremely tiny, but grows into a large tree that is actually snapped more like a bush because it grows out more than it does tall. The transformation is quite astounding, in fact.

B. The church had its start with twelve men standing before thousands on Pentecost.

1. The kingdom of heaven could certainly be compared to the mustard seed and its growth for it did begin quite small. It was first spoken of by a single man named John the Baptist who was not a man that seemed of any repute at all. Yet, he spoke of a coming kingdom and Messiah who would rule this kingdom. That great Messiah eventually came onto the scene in the form of Jesus, and He too began to proclaim a message of the coming kingdom.
2. Once departed from this world, the great kingdom of heaven still was not anything worthy of much note in regard to its size. It was led by twelve seemingly uneducated and unimpressive men, but they were able to change the look of the kingdom very quickly as they nearly immediately expanded its borders by 3,000 souls on the day of Pentecost. (**Acts 2**) The growth of the kingdom continued as we move into the later chapters of Acts as more were added to the kingdom in **Acts 4** and then persecution forced the gospel to be taken outside the walls of Jerusalem which caused the church's borders to expand all the more.
3. A heavenly kingdom that once numbered in double digits quickly grew into the thousands and has continued to expand and grow ever since, and it has become true that all of the birds of the sky have found rest in its tree. Certainly Paul was so proud of the Gospel because it was able to bring men and women of every race, ethnicity, and creed into it. (**Romans 1:16**)

IV. The Kingdom grows through its influence.

A. A small portion of leaven can have a major impact.

1. If you have even done any baking then you are well aware of the major impact of leaven upon the bread that you might have been making. Notice that Jesus says that the kingdom is like the leaven that a woman took and mixed into three pecks of flour until it was all leavened. It has been a little while since I've measured in pecks, but this would amount to about 50-60 lbs of flour. The thing about leaven is that it doesn't take a lot of leaven in order to accomplish the goal of leavening the whole lump. To accomplish the raising of this much flour only a little more than half a pound of leaven would be needed. The point of Jesus's parable is that the kingdom has great influence within it just as leaven does.
2. This can be clearly seen in what Paul writes to the Corinthians concerning the man who was engaged in wickedness within their congregation. In **I Corinthians 5:6-8**, Paul speaks of the harmful effects that were being seen from the wicked leaven being in and among the disciples in Corinth. *"Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough?"* It was only one man engaged in sin, but it had a disastrous affect on the entire church. The kingdom in a similar respect, can and should have a great impact on those who are around it.

B. The way of God is simply the better way, and people will take notice.

1. The rich and powerful influence of the church should help to aid in the growth that we discussed just a moment ago. The reality is that those within the kingdom of God are different from those in the world. Where those in the world bite and devour one another in many different ways, the citizens of God's kingdom are to be caring and loving towards one another.
2. Whereas so many people are living lives with no purpose and motivation, citizens of God's kingdom know the reason for which we live, and we seek to move forward in that focus of pleasing God in all things. These types of lives will be noticed by others, and they will want to know what is different about us. This simple approach to life can make all the difference in influencing others to seeking the better way of life that is found in Christ Jesus, and it is the result of **Matthew 5:13-16** being practiced in our lives.

V. We should value being a part of the Kingdom.

A. No one just forgets about those valuable things that they lose.

1. Finally, the last lesson we learn from Jesus's kingdom parables focuses around the value that being a citizen of the kingdom of heaven holds. Jesus speaks of two different men. One finds treasure in a field, and the other is in search of a fine pearl in which he can purchase.
2. Both of these men upon finding what it was they were looking for went and sold everything they had in order to obtain and keep the precious things that they had found. They held these things in such high esteem that they would do anything in order to keep them. This is the way that Jesus says we should approach the way we value being in the kingdom.

B. Once we have found God's grace in being a part of the kingdom...we better hold on to it!

1. Each of us should be just like these men in the parables as they were willing to give up and leave everything else in the order to have the treasure and the pearls. In the same way, once we have found the kingdom...we must not let anything separate us from it. The true cost of discipleship is everything, and we must be willing to pay that great but worthwhile cost.
2. Unfortunately, there are men in the Bible who didn't value the kingdom as they ought to have. In **II Timothy 4:10** we read of the man Demas who deserted the Apostle Paul because his love for the world was so great. He valued the world over the kingdom. In a similar way, we read of the rich young ruler in **Matthew 19:16-23** who loved his riches more than anything and held them in such high esteem that he was not willing to part with them in order to gain entrance into the kingdom of heaven.
3. What about us? Is there anything in this life that we value more than our citizenship in the kingdom of heaven? Is there anything that we would not be willing to part with if it stood between us and being in the kingdom? If there is such a thing then may we be willing to put it away from us so that we might value the kingdom more than anything and therefore never allow ourselves to depart away from it.

As Jesus went about sharing His message of preparing the people to be citizens of the kingdom of heaven, He spoke often of the way in which the kingdom would exist and operate. Yet, He wasn't in the business of just spoon feeding information concerning the kingdom for He desired that the truly committed put in effort to learn of the kingdom that was to come. For this reason we read the parables, and we ourselves put in effort in order to learn of God's great kingdom in which we reside even today. It is a kingdom that is constantly under attack for Satan knows of its strength and influence. He knows the great potential that it possesses, and he desires to only hinder its growth. May we equally value this great kingdom and give all of ourselves in order to gain entrance and remain firmly within it. May God be praised within His kingdom as its citizens give full effort to move it forward in power and influence.

PRAYER *Our mighty God in heaven...we are so very grateful for Your kingdom that exists here on this earth and in heaven above. We are so thankful that you have allowed for sinful men to be cleansed by the blood of Your Son so that we might gain valuable entrance into it. Help us to love our citizenship in heaven so that we might daily give of ourselves in order to serve You more fully. Help us as we go throughout this week to only live in such a way that the kingdom is strengthened. May our focus be continually on You and things above. Help us to glorify You in all that we do in the upcoming days. We praise You and thank You for all of Your blessings, and it is in Jesus's name that we pray things things...amen.*