
Matthew 13 Parables

Session 2 - The Reason for
the Parables

Matthew 13:4-17



Steve Lewis

www.SpiritAndTruth.org

Introduction

- A parable does not display its meaning on the surface. Far from *giving* explanations, parables themselves need to *be explained*.
- Sequence or order of the statements:
 1. Jesus tells the *Parable of the Sower*
 2. His disciples ask privately why He teaches the crowd that way
 3. Jesus answers their question
 4. Jesus interprets the parable
- His answer to their question contained the key for understanding His interpretation of the parable.

Matthew 13:3-9 ~ the Parable of the Sower

Planting a large field of grain

- Walk through the plowed area with a bag of seed and fling handfuls of the seed in a broadcast pattern. A somewhat imprecise but highly effective method for planting a large field by hand.
- Depending on the skill of the sower, the majority of the seed would fall in the plowed soil where it was intended to land.
- Some seed would also fall on the walking path, or in the shallow soil at the edge of the field, or outside the field boundary where weeds and other natural plants were already growing.
- The sower only expected the seed that fell within the plowed ground to grow normally, and even those plants would yield varying results.

Matthew 13:10-11 ~ the Disciples' Question

- Jesus' teaching method was unusual enough that it prompted the disciples to ask about it.
- **"the disciples came"** (*proserchomai*) ~ to draw near or come close.
- If some of Jesus' disciples were with Him in the boat, they may have leaned close or whispered their question to Him.

Jesus' answer (privately to the disciples)

- "To you it has been **granted**" (*didōmi*) ~ to give or furnish something to someone. "But to them it has *not* been **granted**."
- Perfect tense ~ an action that occurred at a time in the past but which has results that continue into the present.

Matthew 13:11 ~ Jesus' Answer

Who is doing the granting?

- “No one can come to Me unless it has been **granted** him *from the Father*” (John 6:65)
- God’s eternal counsels, decrees, and plans granted certain individuals the privilege both of believing and of knowing the things of God.

What is being granted?

- **“to know”** (*ginōskō*) ~ to learn or to gain knowledge.
- **“mysteries** of the kingdom of heaven” (*mustērion*) ~ new revelation of knowledge that was hidden or unrevealed in the Old Testament.
- God has granted this new revelation to specific people, but others are not granted this knowledge.

Matthew 13:12

Whoever has:

- “**has**” (*echō*) ~ to have and to hold as something which has value.
- “will have an **abundance**” (*perisseuō*) ~ to overflow with excess.
- “Unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven” (Matt 5:20).
- God’s righteousness can only be obtained through faith. Because they believe in God’s chosen Messiah, righteousness is credited to them.

Whoever does not have:

- They should have repented and accepted their King, but rejected Him.
- Lack of faith ~ ineligible to receive God’s imputed righteousness and unable to participate in the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 13:12

God requires righteousness of the subjects of His kingdom, but such righteousness is obtained only by permitting the King to reign in their lives.

Whoever has (<i>Haves</i>)	Whoever does not have (<i>Have Nots</i>)
Recognized Jesus as God's chosen King	Rejected Jesus as God's chosen King
Repented when the kingdom was proclaimed	Did not repent when the kingdom was proclaimed
Believed and trusted in Jesus as Messiah	Did not believe in Jesus as their Messiah
God granted new revelation of His plan	God did not grant knowledge of His plan

Matthew 13:13

- **“Therefore”** ~ connects to what was just said, particularly about the “have nots,” so that Jesus will teach them using parables.
- Israel exhibited the same traits as their forefathers ~ “You live in the midst of the rebellious house, who have eyes to see but do not see, ears to hear but do not hear; for they are a rebellious house” (Ezek 12:2).
- “nor do they **understand**” (*suniēmi*) ~ to put together mentally or to comprehend.
- The nation of Israel’s lack of understanding is the result of their own hardness of heart and the rejection of their King.
- Jesus next cites Old Testament support for what He just said.

Matthew 13:14-15

Jesus quoted Isaiah 6:9-10

- Like their forefathers, they closed themselves off from the truth, rejecting God's message and Messiah.
- Jesus spoke in a way that the hardened multitudes could hear but not understand, and see but not perceive.
- "their heart has become **dull**" (*pachunō*) ~ to thicken or be calloused to the point of insensitivity; "their ears **scarcely** hear" (*bareōs*) ~ with difficulty; "they have **closed** their eyes" ~ to smear over with wax so that the eyes cannot be opened.
- "**Otherwise**" ~ understanding with the heart leads to a return to God who would heal them. But they deliberately rejected the truth.

Matthew 13:16-17

The blessed status of the disciples

- In contrast to those who hardened their hearts, plugged their ears, and closed their eyes, those who opened their eyes to see and their ears to hear will receive immense blessings.
- “many prophets and righteous men **desired** to see what you see” (*epithumeō*) ~ a passionate longing. Compare Heb 11:13 & 1 Pet 1:10-12.
- The prophets saw both Christ’s sufferings and the glory that would follow, but the time between those two events was the mystery about which they searched diligently.
- We also should realize how blessed we are because we have even more biblical revelation than Jesus’ disciples did at that time.