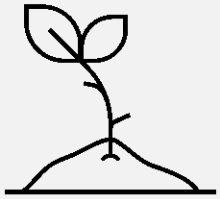
Matthew
Chapter 13



As you prepare for this week's study, begin by praying and asking God to open your heart and mind to understand the truths He has for you this week. Then read your first impressions? What stands out to you?

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Mission 119: Search Matthew and listen to the commentary for Matthew 13.

Day 1 – Speaking in Parables

Matthew 13:1-30

Throughout the book of Matthew, parables were used to communicate biblical truths to the people listening. While there have been parables seen throughout Matthew, this was the first time the word "parable" was used directly in this book. Furthermore, the first parable in Matthew 13 was about a farmer and seeds which would have been familiar concepts to those listening.

1) What did Jesus do when the great crowds gathered around Him? (v.1-3)

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2) What happened to the four kinds of seeds? Where did they fall and what was their result? (v.3-8)

_____

_____

3) Why did Jesus say He spoke to the people in parables? (v.13)

_____

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4) What did Jesus say to His disciples in verse 16?

_____

_____

5) What were the four explanations for the four kinds of soils in verses 18-23? Summarize each of them.

a) The path - _____

_____

b) The rocky soil - _____

_____

c) The thorny soil - _____

_____

d) The good soil - _____

_____

6) How did other gospel writers tell this parable? Note the similarities and the differences.

a) Mark 4:1-20 _____

_____

b) Luke 8:4-15 _____

_____

c) What phrase was repeated before the explanation in each telling? _____

_____

7) In verse 24, to what was the kingdom of heaven compared?

_____

_____

8) Who were all the characters in the parable of the weeds? (v.24-30)

a) The one who sows good seed - _____

_____

b) The field - _____

_____

c) The good seed - _____

_____

d) The weeds - _____

_____

e) The enemy who sowed the weeds - _____

_____

f) The harvest - _____

_____

g) The reapers - _____

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9) What was sown with the wheat in the fields? (v.25)

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10) What did the master say to do with the weeds and the wheat? (v.29-30)

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Day 2 – The Kingdom of Heaven

Matthew 13:31-58

1) In verses 31-32, what was the kingdom of heaven compared to and why? See also Luke 13:18-19.

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2) In verse 33, what was the kingdom of heaven compared to and why?

3) What did the disciples ask Jesus in verse 36?

4) What will happen to the weeds at the end of the age? (v.40-42)

5) What will happen to the righteous? (v.43)

6) What was the kingdom of heaven compared to in these verses?

   a) (v.44)

   b) (v.45)

   c) (v.47)

7) What did Jesus say every scribe was like? (v.52)

8) What did the people of Nazareth call Jesus when He returned? (v.55)

9) What did Jesus say to them in return? (v.57)

10) **Is there anything in this chapter new to you?

Day 3 - Connecting the Dots…

1) Read Isaiah 6:9-10. What was the context of this passage? What point about the crowd was Jesus trying to make by citing this Isaiah passage in verses 14-15?

"The unhearing crowd paralleled the spiritually blind and ignorant of Isaiah's day, while the disciples paralleled the prophets and righteous people of the Old Testament who faithfully responded to God's revelation." [1]

2) Only in verse 23 was the bearing of fruit mentioned. Some see this mentioning of fruit to mean "people converted to Christianity." However, there may be a different meaning. Read the following passages and note what kind of fruit (or seed) was mentioned in each:

   a) 1 John 3:9

   b) Galatians 5:22-23

   c) 1 Corinthians 12:1-11

3) From where did all these fruits come? How did these passages relate to the Parable of the Sower?

At no point in this parable or explanation was the fruit clearly identified. It could be referring to those who have decided to follow Jesus - those won to Christ. And it could also mean the outward evidence of having an inward heart change because of Christ and the kingdom. May we all bear fruit as the evidence of a heart surrendered to Christ.

4) In verses 24-33, Jesus compared the activity of the kingdom of heaven with everyday experiences. Answer the following:

   a) In the parable of the weeds, there was a man sowing good seed in his field and an enemy who came to sow weeds. What did this say about the enemy's character? How and why did he attack this field? _____

   _____

   b) In the parable of the mustard seed, the kingdom of heaven was compared to a mustard seed which was the smallest seed known in Palestine at the time. What did this parable say about the start of spreading the gospel and what did this parable say about what the end of the age will be like? (Read Ezekial 17:22-24) _____

   _____

   c) In the parable of the yeast, the kingdom of heaven was compared to yeast or leaven hidden in flour. How was the kingdom of heaven like yeast and why was this example given? _____

   _____

5) Read Psalm 78:2. Here, Asaph is reflecting on the history of Israel and was clarifying through parables the meaning of God's salvation, in order that the people would learn from their history and not have rebellious or hardened hearts. Up until this point in Matthew, how was Jesus doing the exact same thing?

   _____

   _____

6) How was the kingdom referred to in verse 43? How was this different than how it had been referred to previously in this chapter?

   _____

   _____

"The expression, 'The kingdom of their Father' is not to suggest there is distinction between the kingdom of the Son and another kingdom of the Father, but that the Father's will has been fully accomplished on earth through the activity of the Son. There was full congruence between the will and activity of Father and Son."[2]

7) Based on how the man and the merchant responded, what was being said about the value and worth of the kingdom of heaven in verses 44-46?

8) As depicted in the separating of the wheat and the weed, and the good fish and the bad fish, what is the ultimate separation that will take place at the end of the age? (v.40-43 and v.49-50)

9) The people of Nazareth referred to Jesus as the "carpenter's son" and asked, "Is not his mother called Mary?" What did this say about their understanding of Jesus? What did their response to Jesus reveal about their own hearts? What kind of soil do you think Nazareth was at this point?

Day 4 – Walking the Way of Jesus

1) **At the end of the parable of the Sower, Jesus said, "He who has ears, let him hear." Some think this means not everyone has ears to hear or even the ability to hear. But, rather, it is only those who have spiritual ears who can hear and discern what's being said. What do you think it means to have "spiritual ears"?

2) **Parables can test the heart of the listener and give instruction to the responsive. Thus far in Matthew, what parable or teaching has tested your heart and given you instruction, prompting a response? Why?

3) **What kind of "fruits" do you see and identify in someone who is living a life following Jesus? In the same way, what kind of fruit do you see and identify in someone who is NOT living a life following Jesus?

4) **Which comparison of the kingdom of heaven made the most sense to you? Which one was the most confusing? The most surprising?

5) **If you were to honestly evaluate your heart, would you say you value the kingdom of heaven like the man who sold everything and bought the field? Why or why not?

In verses 51-52, Jesus drew a comparison between the teachers of the law within Judaism and His disciples. The teachers of the law learned from their teachers and passed those things on. Likewise, the disciples of Jesus learned from Jesus alone and will pass these things on as well - much like a master of a house, who brings out his treasures new and old to give to others for their benefit.

6) **How have you been the recipient and the giver of the teachings of Jesus? In what ways would you like to grow in this area?

7) What qualities of God did you see you in this chapter?

8) What qualities of Jesus did you see in this chapter?

9) What did you find convicting in this chapter and what will you do about it?

10) **What key point did you learn this week about walking the way of Jesus?

Day 5 - What Do You Think?

"But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." (Matthew 6:33, NIV)

Today, read chapter 13 with a seeking posture, and be attentive to where God is forming your heart, reordering your priorities, and inviting you into His kingdom life. As you do, take time to reflect on how God's living Word is at work in your life.

Use the questions below to notice where you sense His invitation, conviction, or encouragement. You do not need to answer every question each week. Instead, choose two or three that stand out and spend time with them. Pay attention to where God is leading you toward deeper trust, understanding, and transformation.

1) **What part of God's redemptive story became larger, stranger, or more beautiful after studying this chapter?

2) What assumptions from this passage quietly challenge in your life? (ideas about identity, comfort, control, security, significance, etc.)

3) Where do you see yourself in this story? Are you the hero, someone in the crowd, or someone in need of the grace being revealed?

4) What part of God's kingdom seemed upside-down in this passage compared to the kingdom of this world?

5) **Did any mystery remain unresolved after reading this chapter? Rather than solving it, how might living with that mystery deepen your trust in God?

6) **What invitation did Jesus extend here to experience transformation in your life?

7) **If we lived out the truths we've read about in this chapter in our families, workplaces, churches, and neighborhood - what might become more beautiful about our community? What might become uncomfortable?

[1] NIV Application, Wilkins, pg. 478
[2] NIV Application, Wilkins, 486-487