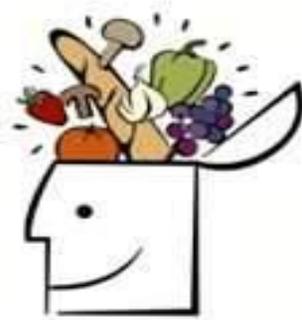


Food For Thought Bible Studies



The Parables Of Jesus
Series 2 Booklet 1

Introduction to Series 2: The Parables Of Jesus

The word “parable” comes from the Greek word “parabole” which means “to place beside”. Vine’s Expository Dictionary defines “parable” as “signifies a placing of one thing beside another with a view to comparison”. Jesus described the purpose of his parables as comparisons as well saying, “If I told you earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?” (John 3:12) When explaining the Godhead, John referred to this same principle that the earth is the witness of heavenly things. (I John 5:7&8) Jesus’ parables were a way of explaining heavenly things by comparison to earthly things- something you and I are very familiar with. Jesus did not use past scripture to help people understand his sayings or spiritual truths. His sermons did not require an education to comprehend. They were not particularly deep, or over people’s heads. He took everyday life scenarios and demonstrated the profound simplicity of the gospel. In the next several lessons we will cover the Parables of Jesus. Some will require more explanation than others, but one thing is common to all- you will leave with a deeper understanding of the nature of God, his purpose for us as believers, and a renewed hope of his calling.

“That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory,
may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation
in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding
being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling,
and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And
what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe,
according to the working of his mighty power.”

Ephesians 1:17-19

The Parables Of Jesus

“Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.”

Matt. 13:9

Synopsis

First understand that Jesus’ parables were for a particular audience, and not just everyone. Because of the hardness of people’s hearts, Jesus spoke in parables to conceal the true meaning of his teachings. (Matt 13:13-15) (Matt. 4:10-12) His parables were for those who had been enlightened. At first, his own disciples had difficulty determining the meaning of his teachings, because they were still carnally minded.

(Mark 4:10-12) After they had received the Spirit their spiritual eyes were opened. (Luke 24:45) (Matt. 13:10&11) It is given to Spirit-filled believers to understanding the “mysteries” of the kingdom! They were for us! Jesus spoke them to crowds of people, but it was not for them to understand- it was for his disciples. The whole Bible itself is a book of the generation of Jesus Christ written to his inheritants- you and I. Pray that the Lord open your understanding that you may rightly divide the Word.

The Parable of the Sower (Matt. 13:3-9, 18-23)

This is a very common parable and for a very good reason. In reference to this particular parable, Jesus said, “Know ye not this parable? And how then will ye know all parables?” (Mark 4:13) Jesus thought that this parable was a very significant one. In order to understand all other parables, you must at least understand this one. Jesus at the time had been dealing with many hearts that had been hardened or had difficulty

receiving his teachings. In light of that, Jesus explained the root of the problem through this parable- good seed can be sown by a good sewer but it must fall on good ground in order to grow. To attain growth- whether personal growth or church growth- we must evaluate three things: the Sower, the Soil, and the Seed.

The Sower

Jesus did not say directly who the Sower is, but it can easily be understood by reference to the following parable of The Wheat and the Tares. Jesus explains that the sower here is “the Son of Man” (Matt 13:37) It is safe to say, that the Sower is Jesus himself; or, today, those who faithfully preach the gospel. Preachers and teachers hold an immense responsibility to hold the truth in righteousness (Rom. 1:18) while instructing those who are under them. As a teacher, the process of growth starts with you, and if the sower is corrupt we will see later that the product is tares (weeds). You are known by the fruit you bear and the seeds you sew! (Matt. 12:33)

The Seed

What is the seed? The seed is the Word of the kingdom. (Matt. 13:19) The true Word of God is purposeful because the Sower is purposeful. He will never give a Word without purpose, and He will never give you a job to do in His kingdom without the skills to perform it. (Gal. 1:11) From the outside, it can appear that the seed must be dead because you do not see any growth above the soil. Do not expect every seed to sprout over night! Some take longer. Patiently wait for the seed to sprout in its own good time.

The Four Soils

You cannot tell by the seed how tall the tree will be or how large the branches will grow, but you can be sure that if it falls on the right ground it will produce a live, fruitful tree! If you go to your local plant nursery, one of the important facts on the tag of a plant is what kind of soil it needs. God has seeds, and he is looking for a particular soil for each seed, or purpose, he has. The soil is the vessel that holds the seed. You and I are vessels for God's purpose. **(II Tim. 2:20)**

The First Soil- The Wayside (Matt. 13:19)

Notice that it is "when any one heareth". This can be anybody, no matter your background. This soil represents those who have heard the word and did not understand it. **(Matt. 13:19)** Understanding something is more than just making sense of it. Having understanding is a state of enlightenment and revelation that comes through the Holy Ghost. These are people who have previously hardened their heart before they ever even heard the Word. Then, when the Word goes forth, they reject it. Satan comes and snatches away the Word **(Luke 8:12)**, and their condition is that of being blinded. **(II Cor. 4:3-4)** Could you be like the wayside? Perhaps you have heard the Word of God, but are procrastinating coming to God. The longer you wait, the harder you will get! You will become very susceptible to the Devil's demises.

The Second Soil- The Stony Places (Matt. 13:20&21)

This is still hardened ground! The difference is that stony places have little cracks with dirt in them. It's just enough to receive some Word, but it's too shallow to retain it. The stony ground will immediately receive the word with joy **(Matt 13:20)**, but lacks rooting ground and, therefore, stability. **(Matt. 13:21)** The Word of God can be a rooting ground for some people and a stumbling block for others. **(Matt. 21:44) (I Pet. 2:7&8)** They are not grounded deep in the Word and when trials come

they lack endurance and fall out with God. (Matt. 13:21) Living for God cannot be based on emotion, but rather dedication. Receiving the Word with joy is good, but your attraction to God must run deeper than that! Could you be like the stony places? Maybe you came to God at one point in your life, but you have failed to grow in God and have lacked stability. It's time to push some roots down in the Word!

The Third Soil: The Thorny Ground (Matt. 13:22)

The thorny ground may appear at first like good soil and, indeed, it is. Thorns can grow out of good soil! So, the soil is really not the problem here. It's *what else* is planted in the soil---cares of this world, the love of money, etc. ---that is the problem. What we can learn from the thorny ground is that it matters what else is planted in you other than the Word. Could you be like the thorny ground? Perhaps there are other things in your life taking priority over godly things. It is best to refrain from any opportunity to fulfill fleshly lusts. (Rom. 13:14) (Eph. 4:27)(I Thess. 5:22) Spiritual death is always the result of lustful thoughts and actions. (James 1:15)

The Fourth Soil – The Good Ground (Matt. 13:23)

These are the people who have been plowed and softened. They have an honest, good heart that patiently strives to bring forth fruit in the kingdom. (Luke 8:15) It's one thing to be a tree, and another thing to be a fruitful tree. The Bereans were this kind of soil. They received the Word and studied the scriptures daily. (Acts 17:11) Some will produce more than others, but what really matters is if you are producing according to your ability. (Matt. 13:23) (Matt 25:14-15) Holiness (Rom. 6:22), Christ-like character (Gal.5:22-23) , winning souls to Christ (Rom. 1:13), and thanksgiving (Heb. 13:15) are a few of the fruits that are produced out of good soil. Are you the good soil?

Food For Thought Bible Study Mission

"For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ."

-Ephesians 4:12

- To encourage saints to engage in personal and group home Bible studies
- To equip saints with an accessible material that is easy to teach
- To provide a thought-provoking lesson that is both encouraging as well as challenging

Church Information

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Service Times

Sunday School 9:30 AM
Sunday Worship 10:30 AM
Tuesday Night Life Application Bible Study 7:30 PM
Gravity Student Ministries Tuesday 7:15 PM

