

2019-2020 Bible Study

#20

2/18/20

The Parables

Matthew 13

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Review of Jesus' Authority Being Given to the Apostles

- What attribute did Matthew establish in chapter 8-9?
 - Authority
- How did Jesus demonstrate this authority?
 - By performing “mighty deeds”
- What did Jesus do with this authority?
 - He gave it to His apostles
- Why did Jesus decide to give this authority to His apostles?
 - Because the people appeared to be like sheep without a Shepherd
- What authority did Jesus give to the apostles?
 - To heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons

Review of Jesus Being Rejected by the People

- Why did John the Baptist send his disciples to Jesus?
 - To ascertain if he was in fact the Messiah
- How did Jesus respond to John's question?
 - He quoted from **Is 35:5-6** pointing out that he was opening the eyes of the blind and unstopping the ears of the deaf, making the lame walk and the dumb sing
- What was Jesus asking the people to do in the towns he visited while performing His mighty deeds?
 - Repent for their sins
- What does Jesus do to reflect that the people had rejected His message?
 - He upbraids them and compares them to pagan towns that did not repent

Review of Jesus Being Rejected by the Leaders (Cont)

- What did the Pharisees do at first to challenge the authority of Jesus?
 - They questioned his actions as being contrary to the laws of Moses
- What OT passages did Jesus use to refute his opponents?
 - 1 Samuel 15
 - Hosea 6:6
- How did the Pharisees respond?
 - They plotted to kill Jesus
- What did the Pharisees accuse Jesus of using when He cast out demons?
 - They indicated that Jesus was using the power of the devil
- What is the unpardonable sin?
 - Denying the power of God to forgive sins – the sin of despair

The Main Points of this Presentation

- To demonstrate how Jesus used parables to present His calling for the kingdom to His disciples without explaining it to those who had rejected Him

The Parables

- Matthew presents Jesus speaking in parables for the first time in chapter 13, where He lists seven parables
- Why did Jesus speak in parables?
 - Many think that Jesus used parables so that His teaching could be easily understood and remembered
 - The opposite is true since the parables were given as a judgment to the Jewish leaders for rejecting Jesus' teachings and intended to hide and conceal His message
 - The parables mark a radical turning point in Matthew's gospel as Jesus refused to speak directly to the people or their leaders from that point forward

The Parables (Cont)

- Jesus only addressed His teachings to the disciples after this point
- Matthew reports how Jesus goes “out of house” (Peter’s house) and speaks in parables, then returns into “the house” and explains them to the disciples
- There is an awesome depth to each parable and they need to be read in a special way
- Everything is tightly wound and structured, designed to teach the big picture

The Parables (Cont)

- The Old Testament parables were given as a sign of judgment
 - The first OT parable was Nathan's judgment of David (2 Sam 12:1-15*)
 - A sort of Trojan house
 - OT Parables were often presented as judgments

The Parables (Cont)

- The first parable in Mt 13 is the Sower of the Seeds (Mt 13:1-23 *)
 - Jesus presented this parable from a boat due to size of the crowd and for better acoustics as His voice carried over the water
 - Being in a boat also separated Jesus from the masses indicating that he was different
 - Jesus, as the sower, is pointing out how He had traveled all around Galilee preaching and performing the 10 mighty deeds without the production of any fruit (repentance)
 - In this parable there are four sowings and the first three are complete failures

The Parables (Cont)

- He pointed out that only in the last sowing the seed fell on the good soil of the disciples who produced a great harvest
- This sets the stage for the rest of Matthew's gospel
- Jesus said, in Mt 11:20*, "Woe to you Chorazon and Bethsaida" for not repenting
- Matthew is saying that from Mt 3 –12 there has been ineffective sowing of the seed

The Parables (Cont)

- Jesus is proclaiming that the problem is with the bad soil (Israel) and not with the seed (his message)
- Jesus, in Mt 12:45*, speaks of this “evil generation” which is a throwback to the evil generation at the time of Moses (Nu 32:13 *) which was not permitted to enter the Promised Land
- The disciples asked Jesus why He spoke in parables and He replied, in Mt 13:10*, that the people failed to heed the message of Is 6:8-10 *

The Parables (Cont)

- Isaiah 6^f is one of the most troubling passages in the OT
 - This is where Isaiah is literally taken up into the heavenly Temple to receive his vocational calling
 - This has become a part of our Eucharistic liturgy where we recite the *sanctus* “holy, holy, holy” to emphasize the holiness of the event (Hebrew did not use adjectives)

The Parables (Cont)

- Isaiah says his lips were cleansed by being touched by coals from the altar (King Uzziah had just died of leprosy)
 - St. Jerome said that the hot coals was a reference to the Eucharist
 - In the Byzantine liturgy, after communicants receive the Eucharist, acclaim that this which has just touched their lips (the Eucharist) shall heal them of their sins

The Parables (Cont)

- Isaiah is saying that after he was taken up into heaven, his lips cleansed, he would speak about the burning fire that will destroy Israel leaving only a purified remnant
- This message will be sent to Israel, but due to their hardened hearts, the message will be rejected and only a small remnant will survive
 - Israel rejects God's message resulting in their children being taken off during the Babylonian captivity
- Isaiah knew from the beginning that his mission would fail
- It was only through their failure to repent and the ensuing devastation that caused the people to break so that they could "see" and "hear" the truth

The Parables (Cont)

- Jesus was speaking as the “new Isaiah” and the people of his day were about to go through the same cycle their ancestors had gone through
- The key to the parables was the coming of the Kingdom
- The reason Jesus speaks in parables is because He no longer wants the people to grasp His meaning because it is part of their judgment

The Parables (Cont)

- The people do not understand their meaning and later on they will realize that a judgment had been imposed on them via the parables
- It was a very effective way of teaching about sin
- It was the same Trojan horse approach used in the OT

The Parables (Cont)

- The parables prevented the people from understanding that Jesus was presenting a judgment condemnation
- Just like David who did not know his response was a judgment, the people did not fully understand the meaning of the parable until they were caught in the trap

The Parables (Cont)

- The other six parables in Mt 13 include:
 - Good seed mixed with weeds
 - Mustard seed
 - Leaven
 - Treasure hidden in the field
 - Fine pearls
 - Fish caught in the net

The Parables (Cont)

- After presenting all seven parables Jesus asks the disciples if they understood His message
- Jesus then moves to the Synagogue of Nazareth where he was rejected by His friends and neighbors (Mt 13:53-58)
- A more complete rendition of this event is in Lk 4:16-30

Matthew 14

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Matthew 14

- **Matthew 14:1-2** *“At that time Herod the tetrarch heard about the fame of Jesus...why those powers are at work in him”*
 - Father suggested that Jesus may have looked a bit like John the Baptist as they were related
 - According to Matthew, they were both appearing in the same place on the Jordan River
 - They both shared some of the same disciples
 - They seemed to be saying similar things to the people to include a presentation that the Kingdom of God was at hand

Matthew 14 (Cont)

- **Matthew 14:3-12** *“For Herod had seized John...’It is not lawful for you to have her”*
 - Here we can see a great example of the differences between the gospel according to Matthew and that of Mark
 - Matthew simply says that it was unlawful for Herod to have Herodias (his brother Philip’s wife) because he assumes that his audience knows the issue
 - The Torah said that if a man took a wife she became a part of his body and therefore he could not divorce her
 - She therefore, could not marry a brother or relative because she was considered to be a sister of that brother

Matthew 14 (Cont)

- **Leviticus 15** prohibited a man from marrying a sister
- This made Herod's act unlawful
- Mark explains all this in his gospel (Mark 6:17-18) where he explains that Herod could not marry his brother's wife

Matthew 14 (Cont)

- **Matthew 14:13-21** *“Now when Jesus heard this...besides women and children”*
 - It appears that this took place at a lonely place on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee
 - Father pointed out that there was miles of coastland with no populated areas between Capernaum and Gennesaret
 - Once again, we see Jesus expressing compassion and healing the sick
 - Then, the disciples pointed out to Jesus that it was late in the day and He needed to dismiss the crowd so they could get some food

Mathew 14 (Cont)

- Jesus directed the disciples to provide food for the crowd
- They reported that all they could find was five loaves and two fish
- After asking for the bread and fish, Jesus blessed the food and had the disciples distribute it to the 5000 + men and their families
- After satisfying the needs of the crowd, they collected 12 baskets of leftovers
- Father reminded us that Matthew and Mark reported on two multiplication of food stories (5000 and 4000 men)
- Luke and John only report on the one story related to 5000 men

Matthew 14 (Cont)

- In this story, Matthew presents some very Jewish numbers to his Jewish audience
 - 5000 relates to the 5 books of the Torah
 - 12 baskets of leftovers to the tribes of Israel
 - The Greek word for basket *kophinos* was the type of basket the Jews would have used
- We will contrast this with the differences in the next multiplication story in **Matthew 15**