

# THE PARABLES of JESUS

Session Two • Wednesday, September 25, 2019

- I. The purpose of the parables revisited. Matthew 13:1-3, 10-17.
  - A. Jesus speaking to the crowds (verse 2) and to his disciples (verse 10), who ask, “Why do you speak to us in parables?”
    1. Matthew’s Gospel starts with the Twelve and enlarges the spectrum to the crowds.
    2. The sense of the text is the disciples, having seen and been taught, should understand; the crowds need parables to disclose the wonder and mystery of the Kingdom.
  - B. The parables disclosing the Kingdom, quietly and subtly. Matthew 13:38-39.
    1. The sense is that parables can cut through an initial defensiveness or lack of comprehension of the things of the Kingdom (eyes to see, ears to hear), the secrets of the Kingdom.
    2. A sower went out to sow...seeds scattered...Jesus acknowledges opposition, religious leaders, the world. Some Good News seeds will not take root.
    3. The sower continues to go out season after season, amidst all the elements and the challenges.
  - C. So why parables again?
    1. To see the inbreaking of the Kingdom in a carpenter’s son, an unknown Galilean: well, it requires the mystery unfolding.
    2. To people of privilege, power, even a certain piety—the Word addressed in a foot-washing Messiah will be rejected.
    3. Parables are designed to tell it slant—cut through initial defensiveness to hear differently. (Remembering Jesus still “explains” the parable.)

II. “He put before them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to...” Matthew 13:24-30.

A. Seed sowing. Universal context. Agrarian setting. People’s lives.

1. The master owns the field, sows good seed. Such seed is always infiltrated by the enemy seeds.
2. Privately disgusted, the disciples wonder why the master permits bad seed at all (verse 27).
3. There will always be enemies of the good seed. Ironically, in the world, good seed can never grow separately from bad.
4. Disciples are prepared to root out evil. God will take care of it in a divine patience uncommon to disciples of his own. “Let us pull the weeds.” (Matthew 13:28b.)
5. Parable is explained in Matthew 13:36-43. The Son of Man, who sows the seed, determines judgment.

III. Matthew 13:31-34.

A. Mustard seed.

1. From the smallest of beginnings, spring forth (Ezekiel 17:22-24) wondrous things.
2. Quite unobtrusively, the seed grows. It is a process with small beginnings.
3. This parable is instructive about trees of power/prestige. “No trees growing to lofty heights.” (Ezekiel 31:14)
4. Insignificant beginnings.

B. Likewise, yeast.

1. Be aware of the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Matthew 16:5-12.
2. The Kingdom grows secretly, leaven transforming the whole loaf.
3. The Kingdom small and potent. The Kingdom’s beginnings are scandalous.
4. And yet, yeast performs chemistry we know not how. It mystifies.