# Lesson 16 Matthew 13 Parables

Life in Christ: When did you feel closest to Our Lord this week?

1. A. There are two purposes at work with Jesus’ use of parables. One is the fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy. (Isaiah 6:9-10) It was a prophecy given while the people and their leader were turning more and more to idolatry? Why would the attitude of the religious leaders in Our Lord’s time be an appropriate setting for the fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy, especially with regard to idolatry?

Matthew 13:13-14

13 This is why I speak to them in parables, because ‘they look but do not see and hear but do not listen or understand.’

14 Isaiah’s prophecy is fulfilled in them, which says: ‘You shall indeed hear but not understand, you shall indeed look but never see.

Isaiah 6:9-10

9 And he replied: Go and say to this people:

Listen carefully, but do not understand!

Look intently, but do not perceive!

10 Make the heart of this people sluggish,

dull their ears and close their eyes;

Lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears,

and their heart understand,

and they turn and be healed.

Psalm 115:4-6

4 Their idols are silver and gold, the work of human hands.

5 They have mouths but do not speak, eyes but do not see.

6 They have ears but do not hear, noses but do not smell.

B The second reason for the use of parables is explained by the Catechism. In your own words, why did Jesus use parables to teach?

Catechism 546

546 Jesus and the presence of the kingdom in this world are secretly at the heart of the parables. One must enter the kingdom, that is, become a disciple of Christ, in order to "know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven". For those who stay "outside", everything remains enigmatic.

C One of the heresies of the early Church was Gnosticism. One of its tenants was that salvation came from having special, esoteric knowledge not available to the uninitiated. How does the knowledge of the person of Jesus Christ differ from the Gnostic heresy? See Catechism reference for previous question

1. In the explanation of the Parable of the Sower several responses to Our Lord’s offer of salvation are described. Have you ever found yourself responding in any of these ways?

Matthew 13:9, 20-23

9 The seed sown on the path is the one who hears the word of the kingdom without understanding it, and the evil one comes and steals away what was sown in his heart.

20 The seed sown on rocky ground is the one who hears the word and receives it at once with joy.

21 But he has no root and lasts only for a time. When some tribulation or persecution comes because of the word, he immediately falls away.

22 The seed sown among thorns is the one who hears the word, but then worldly anxiety and the lure of riches choke the word and it bears no fruit.

23 But the seed sown on rich soil is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields a hundred or sixty or thirtyfold.”

1. Explain how you might think of this parable as a description of the very times in which we live??

Matthew 13:24-30

24 He proposed another parable to them. “The kingdom of heaven may be likened to a man who sowed good seed in his field.

25 While everyone was asleep his enemy came and sowed weeds all through the wheat, and then went off.

26 When the crop grew and bore fruit, the weeds appeared as well.

27 The slaves of the householder came to him and said, ‘Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where have the weeds come from?’

28 He answered, ‘An enemy has done this.’ His slaves said to him, ‘Do you want us to go and pull them up?’

29 He replied, ‘No, if you pull up the weeds you might uproot the wheat along with them.

30 Let them grow together until harvest; then at harvest time I will say to the harvesters, “First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles for burning; but gather the wheat into my barn.”’”

B Verse 30 used several metaphors. What do you think each one means?

30 Let them grow together until harvest; then at harvest time I will say to the harvesters, “First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles for burning; but gather the wheat into my barn.”’”

* Harvest time?
* Harvesters?
* Weeds?
* Wheat?
* My barn?

1. A. The Parable of the Mustard Seed is curious because it is not the smallest of seeds, nor the largest of plants. But, we must remember we are talking about the Kingdom of Heaven. What is the physical manifestation of the Kingdom of Heaven today? Who is the mustard seed?

Matthew 13:31-32

31 He proposed another parable to them. “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that a person took and sowed in a field.

32 It is the smallest of all the seeds, yet when full-grown it is the largest of plants. It becomes a large bush, and the ‘birds of the sky come and dwell in its branches.’”

B One of the manifestations of God that encounter frequently in the Bible is that of a dove. What does it represent and how does it dwell in the “branches,” vs 32?

1. A. Verses 44-50 contain a series of short parables describing the Kingdom of Heaven in the way we live our lives. From these parables, how do the things of this world compare to the Kingdom of Heaven? Does our way of life make a difference?

Matthew 13:44-50

44 “The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure buried in a field, which a person finds and hides again, and out of joy goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

45 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant searching for fine pearls.

46 When he finds a pearl of great price, he goes and sells all that he has and buys it.

47 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net thrown into the sea, which collects fish of every kind.

48 When it is full they haul it ashore and sit down to put what is good into buckets. What is bad they throw away.

49 Thus it will be at the end of the age. The angels will go out and separate the wicked from the righteous

50 and throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth.

B Fr. John Lipscomb gave a homily on vs 44-46 in which He reversed the usual viewpoint of the finder and the searcher. Recall the words of God when Adam and Eve had committed that first sin, “The LORD God then called to the man and asked him, "Where are you?" (Genesis 3:9) What does God deem to be of great value and what price was He willing to pay?