

## Matthew 13

Jesus teaches in parables:

- I. The parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:1-8)
  - a. *Information in this parable* (13:1–8): A farmer sows grain, which falls upon four different kinds of soil, producing four different results.
  - b. Roadside soil (13:1–4): This seed is soon devoured by the birds.
  - c. Shallow, rocky soil (13:5–6): This seed springs up quickly but soon withers, being scorched by the sun.
  - d. Thorn-infested soil (13:7): This seed is quickly choked by the thorns.
  - e. Fertile soil (13:8): This seed produces a thirty, sixty, and even hundredfold crop!
- II. The reason for the parables (Matthew 13:9-17): Jesus uses his parables to accomplish a twofold goal.
  - a. *1) To reveal God's truth to the righteous* (13:9–12a, 34–35, 51)
  - b. *2) To conceal God's truth from the unrighteous* (13:12b–13)
  - c. **The prophecy** (13:14–17): Isaiah predicted that Israel would not be able to understand or accept the truths in Christ's parables (Isa. 6:9–10).
- III. The interpretation of the parable of the sower (Matthew 13:18-23)
  - a. The seed (13:18–19a): The seed represents the Good News about the Kingdom.
  - b. The roadside soil (13:19b): The hard soil represents those who hear the message but do not understand it, thus allowing Satan to steal it from them.
  - c. The rocky soil (13:20–21): The shallow, rocky soil represents those who have no depth and thus drop out upon encountering any trouble or persecution.
  - d. The thorn-infested soil (13:22): The thorny ground represents those who allow the lure of wealth to snuff out the Good News.
  - e. Fertile soil (13:23): The good soil represents those who truly accept God's message, producing an abundant harvest.
- IV. The wheat and the thistle (Matthew 13:24-30)
  - a. The diligence of a sower (13:24): A farmer sows good seed throughout his field.
  - b. The discovery by the sower (13:25–28): He learns his enemy later secretly visited the field and sowed thistles among the wheat.
  - c. The dilemma of the sower (13:29): He knows that if he attempts to pull out the thistles, he will also harm the wheat.
  - d. The decision of the sower (13:30): He will wait until harvesttime, when he will sort out the thistles from the wheat and burn them.
- V. The mustard seed (Matthew 13:31-32)
  - a. *It goes into the ground the smallest of seeds* (13:31–32a).
  - b. *It grows out of the ground the largest of plants* (13:32b).
- VI. The yeast (Matthew 13:33)
  - a. *It is placed in the flour* (13:33a): Only a small amount of yeast is used.
  - b. *It permeates every part of the dough* (13:33b).
- VII. Prophecy and parables: To reveal God's truth to the righteous (Matthew 13:34-25)
- VIII. *Interpretation of the parable* (13:36–43)

- a. The sower is Christ (13:36–37).
- b. The enemy is the devil (13:39a).
- c. The field is the world (13:38a).
- d. The good seed is believers (13:38b).
- e. The thistles are unbelievers (13:38c).
- f. The harvest is the end of the age (13:39b).
- g. The reapers are angels (13:39c–41).
- h. The granary is heaven (13:43).
- i. The furnace is hell (13:42).
- IX. **The treasure in the field** (13:44)
  - a. *The discovery* (13:44a): A man finds a precious treasure.
  - b. *The delight* (13:44b): He is overjoyed at what he finds.
  - c. *The decision* (13:44c): He sells all that he has to buy the field.
- X. **The merchant and the pearl** (13:45–46)
  - a. *He seeks this pearl* (13:45).
  - b. *He buys this pearl* (13:46).
- XI. **The sorting of fish** (13:47–50)
  - a. *The information in this parable* (13:47–48): Upon catching a net filled with fish, the fishermen sort out the good from the bad.
  - b. *The interpretation of this parable* (13:49–50): At the end of the world, the angels will likewise separate the righteous from the wicked.
- XII. **The homeowner and his treasure** (13:52): A wise teacher of God’s Word can display both old and new precious truths (Old and New Testament) like a homeowner can show off both old and new treasures.
- XIII. **THE REACTION TO HIS PARABLES** (13:53–58): The people in Jesus’ hometown of Nazareth react to his parables in a twofold way.
  - a. **First they are amazed** (13:53–56).
  - b. **Then they are angered** (13:57–58): Jesus does only a few miracles there because of their unbelief.<sup>1</sup>

Verse by verse:

I. The parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:1-8)

Matthew 13:1–9 (ESV)

### The Parable of the Sower

**13** *That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. <sup>2</sup> And great crowds gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat down. And the whole crowd stood on the beach. <sup>3</sup> And he told them many things in parables, saying: “A sower went out to sow. <sup>4</sup> And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them. <sup>5</sup> Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and immediately they sprang up, since*

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<sup>1</sup> H. L. Willmington, [The Outline Bible](#) (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1999) (Adapted from)

*they had no depth of soil, <sup>6</sup> but when the sun rose they were scorched. And since they had no root, they withered away. <sup>7</sup> Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. <sup>8</sup> Other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. <sup>9</sup> He who has ears, let him hear.”*

- a. *Information in this parable (13:1–8): A farmer sows grain, which falls upon four different kinds of soil, producing four different results.*
- b. *Swindoll points out that Matt 12 was a long day for Jesus. Now He sits by the sea to rest but they won’t let Him. Swindoll shared that at one point he had a very busy time and so they scheduled a vacation to Hawaii to relax. Him and his boys went out to the shore and fish. They catch some fish and are wading in to clean them, etc. They see a crowd coming with Bibles. His son said, “They are coming for you dad, we’re getting out of here.” He replied, “No, no one knows we are here.” However, sure enough they said brother Swindoll we heard you were here. Swindoll told them that they had other plans and headed to the car, where the boys were waiting.*
- c. Notice verse 1 says, “that same day...” this is the same day as His previous teaching.
- d. The verse also says that He went out of the house... So, He was in a house.
- e. In the previous chapter Jesus had a confrontation with the Pharisees over plucking grain on the sabbath; healing a man with a withered hand; and casting out a demon. He was told that He casts out demons by the prince of the demons. Jesus had also been teaching in the previous chapter.
- f. I cannot find where it says that He was in the house.
- g. Sproul makes the case that the last dispute happened in a house.
- h. *ESV SB: 13:1–53 Mysteries of the Messianic Kingdom Revealed in Parables. This is the third of Jesus’ five major discourses called the Parabolic Discourse because of its collection of parables.<sup>2</sup>*
- i. *IVP BBC NT: Rabbis commonly taught in parables, sermon illustrations to communicate their main point or points. This Palestinian Jewish teaching form appears in the New Testament only in the teaching of Jesus, and thus cannot be attributed to composition by the later church outside Jewish Palestine.*
- j. *Most of the Roman Empire’s inhabitants were rural peasant farmers or herders. The literate elite often ignored this large population, but Jesus’ illustrations show that he ministered frequently among this class. Although Galilee was heavily populated with villages and boasted two major cities (Sepphoris and Tiberias), most of its inhabitants were rural, agrarian peasants.<sup>3</sup>*
- k. Jesus gets into a boat...

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<sup>2</sup> Crossway Bibles, [\*The ESV Study Bible\*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 1847.

<sup>3</sup> Craig S. Keener, [\*The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament\*](#) (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), Mt 13:1–9.

- l. *Jesus gets in the boat for the purpose of relieving the overcrowding, but this would also make him easier to hear; a speaker to a crowd on shore would produce an ideal acoustic situation.*<sup>4</sup>
- m. Moody: *In many ways chap. 12 is the watershed chapter of Matthew. There the leaders formally rejected Jesus and committed the unpardonable sin. They rejected the King. In light of this, what happens to the kingdom He offered? Jesus answered that question in Mt 13 with eight parables about the nature of the kingdom in light of the nation's rejection of the King.*<sup>5</sup>
- n. Sproul shares: *It was customary for the people of God in that time to stand for long periods of time in order to avail themselves of His instruction.*<sup>6</sup>
- o. What follows is the first from Jesus that Matthew records and it might be the most important having critical significance.
- p. Several other parables follow.
- q. Sproul: *We have a tendency to think that parables were merely illustrations Jesus employed to help make His points. There is a sense in which that is true, but it is a vast over-simplification of the actual function of parables. The word parable is made up of a prefix, para, and a root, the verb ballō. Para means "alongside." A paralegal is someone who comes alongside a lawyer to provide legal help. A parachurch ministry comes alongside the church to aid it in its mission. Baleo means "to throw or hurl." So, literally, a parable is something that is thrown alongside of something else. In the case of Jesus, a parable was an illustration or a restatement of a truth that He "threw in" with His teaching.*<sup>7</sup>
- r. In church history they would try to allegorize parables. Then, they would try to give one meaning, but sometimes Jesus gives more than one meaning.
- s. They cannot be allegorized.
- t. Origin would allegorize. To Origin: the parable of the good Samaritan: the man was Adam, Jerusalem is paradise and Jericho is the world, the robbers are hostile powers, the priest is the law, the Levites are the prophets, the Samaritan= Christ. The wounds are disobedience, the wounds are the Lord's body, the inn, which accepts all wish to enter is the church, the manager is the head of the church, pastor, to whom its care has been entrusted. Also since the Samaritan says he will return represents the Savior's second coming.
- u. That is allegory. That is an illustration that we have gone too far. There are some things in there that make us think, hmmm.
- v. Roadside soil (13:1–4): This seed is soon devoured by the birds.

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<sup>4</sup> Craig S. Keener, [\*The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament\*](#) (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), Mt 13:1–2.

chap. chapter

<sup>5</sup> Michael G. Vanlaningham, "[Matthew](#)," in *The Moody Bible Commentary*, ed. Michael A. Rydelnik and Michael Vanlaningham (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2014), 1475.

<sup>6</sup> Robert Charles Sproul, [Matthew](#), St. Andrew's Expository Commentary (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 408.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 409.

- w. Shallow, rocky soil (13:5–6): This seed springs up quickly but soon withers, being scorched by the sun.
- x. Thorn-infested soil (13:7): This seed is quickly choked by the thorns.
- y. Fertile soil (13:8): This seed produces a thirty, sixty, and even hundredfold crop!
- z. *Typical agricultural yields ranged from about fivefold to fifteenfold, with a tenfold return considered a good crop, though some historical reports tell of extraordinary yields up to a hundredfold (one is in Gen. 26:12).*<sup>8</sup>
- aa. Dr. White, President of Cedarville University shared: *Luke only states 100 fold, he does not go from 30 to 60 to hundred...*
- bb. *Mark goes from 30-60-100*
- cc. *Luke say he hears the word and understands it and Luke says he hears the word and accepts it. Luke says upon hearing it he holds it fast in an honest and good heart and he bears fruit with patience... There is work required...spiritual disciplines, etc*
- dd. *A receptive heart will bear fruit.*
- ee. *good heart*
- ff. *good soil*
- gg. *good hearing*
- hh. *good mind*
- ii. *This is not about us, but God bearing fruit for the Gospel. We must be in the Word. We must be focused on spiritual disciplines to be more like Christ, not just for legalism...The soil cannot change itself... Pray the Holy Spirit would soften our heart, provide us root, dig us deep...*<sup>9</sup>
- jj. Swindoll shares:

*Now here's a rhyme I'll never understand:*

*Pussy-cat, pussy-cat, where have you been?*

*I've been to London to look at the queen.*

*Pussy-cat, pussy-cat, what did you there?*

*I frightened a little mouse under the chair.*

*That little pussy-cat had the chance of her lifetime. All of London stretched out before her.*

*Dozens of famous, time-worn scenes to drink in. Westminster Abbey. Trafalgar Square. The unsurpassable British Museum. She could have scurried up an old lamppost and watched the changing of the guards. Or slipped in the side entrance and enjoyed an evening with the London Philharmonic.*

*Not this cat! She was such a mouseaholic that she couldn't break with the monotonous routine even when she was on vacation.*

*That mouseaholic has a lot to say to all workaholics . . . and churchaholics, for that matter.*

*Overcommitted, pushed, in a hurry, grim-faced, and determined, we plow through our*

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<sup>8</sup> Crossway Bibles, [\*The ESV Study Bible\*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 1847.

<sup>9</sup> Dr White; Cedarville chapel; 09.07.2021

*responsibilities like a freight train under a full head of steam. What we lack in enthusiasm, we make up for in diligence.*

*We've been programmed to think that fatigue is next to godliness. That the more exhausted we are (and look!), the more spiritual we are and the more we earn God's smile of approval. We bury all thoughts of enjoying life . . . for we all know that committed, truly committed, Christians are those who work, work, work. Preferably, with great intensity. As a result, we have become a generation of people who worship our work, who work at our play, and who play at our worship.*

*Hold it! Who wrote that rule? Why have we bought that philosophy? What gave someone the right to declare such a statement?*

*I challenge you to support it from the Scriptures. Or to go back into the life (and lifestyle) of Jesus Christ and find a trace of corroborating evidence that He embraced such a theory. Some will be surprised to learn there is not one reference in the New Testament saying (or even implying) that Jesus intensely worked and labored in an occupation to the point of emotional exhaustion. No, but there are several times when we are told He deliberately took a break. He got away from the demands of the public and enjoyed periods of relaxation with His disciples. I'm not saying He rambled through His ministry in an aimless, halfhearted fashion. Not at all! But neither did He come anywhere near an ulcer. Never once do we find Him in a frenzy. His was a life of beautiful balance. He accomplished everything the Father sent Him to do. Everything. And He did it without ignoring those essential times of leisure. If that is the way He lived, then it makes good sense for you and me to live that way, too.<sup>10</sup>*

#### **The Parables of Jesus**

<b>Parable</b>	<b>Matthew</b>	<b>Mark</b>	<b>Luke</b>
The Purpose of the Parables	13:10–17	4:10–12	8:9–10
The Sower	13:1–9, 18–23	4:1–9, 13–20	8:4–8, 11–15
The Weeds	13:24–30, 36–43	4:26–29	
The Mustard Seed	13:31–32	4:30–32	13:18–19
The Leaven	13:33		13:20–21
The Hidden Treasure	13:44		
The Pearl of Great Value	13:45–46		

<sup>10</sup> <https://insight.org/resources/daily-devotional/individual/is-fatigue-next-to-godliness>

The Net	13:47–50		
The Lost Sheep	18:10–14		15:3–7
The Unforgiving Servant	18:23–35		
The Two Sons	21:28–32		
The Tenants	21:33–44	12:1–11	20:9–18
The Wedding Feast	22:1–14		14:16–24
The Ten Virgins	25:1–13		
The Talents	25:14–30		19:11–27
The Good Samaritan			10:29–37
The Rich Fool			12:16–21
The Barren Fig Tree			13:6–9
The Wedding Feast			14:7–11
The Lost Coin			15:8–10
The Prodigal Son			15:11–32
The Dishonest Manager			16:1–9
The Rich Man and Lazarus			16:19–31
The Persistent Widow			18:1–8
The Pharisee and the Tax Collector			18:9–14 <sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Crossway Bibles, [\*The ESV Study Bible\*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 1847.

- II. The reason for the parables (Matthew 13:9-17): Jesus uses his parables to accomplish a twofold goal.

Matthew 13:10–17 (ESV)

### The Purpose of the Parables

<sup>10</sup> Then the disciples came and said to him, “Why do you speak to them in parables?” <sup>11</sup> And he answered them, “To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. <sup>12</sup> For to the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. <sup>13</sup> This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. <sup>14</sup> Indeed, in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled that says:

“ ‘You will indeed hear but never understand,  
and you will indeed see but never perceive.”

- <sup>15</sup> For this people’s heart has grown dull,  
and with their ears they can barely hear,  
and their eyes they have closed,  
lest they should see with their eyes  
and hear with their ears  
and understand with their heart  
and turn, and I would heal them.’

<sup>16</sup> But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. <sup>17</sup> For truly, I say to you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.

- a. 1) To reveal God’s truth to the righteous (13:9–12a, 34–35, 51)
- b. 2) To conceal God’s truth from the unrighteous (13:12b–13)
- c. About verse 9 the NET Bible shares:
- d. The translation “had better listen!” captures the force of the third person imperative more effectively than the traditional “let him hear,” which sounds more like a permissive than an imperative to the modern English reader. This was Jesus’ common expression to listen and heed carefully (cf. Matt 11:15, 13:43; Mark 4:9, 23; Luke 8:8, 14:35).<sup>12</sup>
- e. ESV SB:
- f. **secrets** (plural of Gk. *mystērion*, “mystery, secret”). The mysteries of how the kingdom of heaven would operate are revealed to the disciples but withheld from the spiritually unresponsive crowd. In particular, these secrets **of the kingdom of heaven**

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<sup>12</sup> Biblical Studies Press, [The NET Bible First Edition Notes](#) (Biblical Studies Press, 2006), Mt 13:8–9.



- explained its partial and preliminary manifestations in Jesus' day as it was breaking into the world in advance of its full and final appearing at the end of the age.<sup>13</sup>
- g. There was both a concealing and a revealing going on.
  - h. Those opened to the Kingdom would have the mysteries revealed.
  - i. Those hard hearted would not have the mysteries revealed.
  - j. One source shares:
  - k. Up to this point in Jesus' ministry He had not once taught the crowds in parables. This is why the disciples questioned Him about it (v. 10). He teaches the crowds predominantly in parables throughout the remainder of Matthew's gospel. Verses 10–17 explain why. **The disciples have the privilege of knowing the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but not all do.** "Mystery" means "a secret" or "that which is hidden," the contents usually revealed to a select group. Here it refers to truth Jesus was revealing about the **kingdom of heaven** for the first time (for "kingdom of heaven," see 3:1–4). **In the OT prophecies, the kingdom would come to earth in a cataclysmic, civilization-shattering way, accompanied with judgment of the nations and the restoration of Israel (see Is 2; Dn 2, 7; Zch 14). But with the rejection of the King, Jesus reveals new aspects of the kingdom not forecast by the OT.** George Eldon Ladd (*The Presence of the Future: The Eschatology of Biblical Realism* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1974], 225), wrote, "The new truth, now given to men by revelation in the person and mission of Jesus, is that the Kingdom which is to come finally in apocalyptic power, as foreseen by Daniel, has in fact entered into the world in advance in a hidden form to work secretly within and among men" (*italics Ladd's*). **In the end, the kingdom will come in all its outward power at Jesus' second coming, but in the wake of the nation rejecting the King, the "mystery form" of the kingdom is at work in the world initially.**
  - l. **The parables were designed to reveal truth to the privileged few, including the disciples, but to conceal it from the spiritually dull (vv. 12–13)—especially the religious leaders and opponents of Jesus seen in Mt 12. The parables thus have a dual function, the key being God's elective purposes. However, as in much of Scripture, divine election and human responsibility are not mutually exclusive; the spiritual receptivity of the hearer plays a role in this, and if one did not persist in rejecting Jesus, he or she could later embrace Him. The citation from Is 6:9–10 (vv. 14–15), spoken by God through the prophet, was for Isaiah's contemporaries, and addressed their spiritual unresponsiveness. That citation served as an analogy for the Jewish rejection of Jesus.**<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Crossway Bibles, [The ESV Study Bible](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 1847.

v. verse

OT Old Testament

OT Old Testament

vv. verses

vv. verses

<sup>14</sup> Michael G. Vanlaningham, "[Matthew](#)," in *The Moody Bible Commentary*, ed. Michael A. Rydelnik and Michael Vanlaningham (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2014), 1475–1476.

- m. **The prophecy (13:14–17):** Isaiah predicted that Israel would not be able to understand or accept the truths in Christ's parables (Isa. 6:9–10).
- n. This is one of those difficult passages and it was commented on above. Further, Dr. Rydelnic shares: The religious people rejected Jesus, but those of the Kingdom will have a better grasp because they are spiritually receptive...
- o. Isa 6 is about the same thing.
- p. There was a parable in Isa 5. Keep preaching and it will prove that the religious leaders were not receptive. That was the same for Isaiah and Jesus.
- q. This is a prediction NOT A prescription. This is the reality.<sup>15</sup>

Joni on 02.15.2022

Would You Like to Be Handicapped?

By Joni Eareckson Tada

*Someone once asked me, "If you had the power, would you go back and choose your life in a wheelchair?" In one sense, I knew what he meant. After all, God has taught me much through my wheelchair. But would I want to do it over again? I don't think so.*

*I can't think of anyone who desires to be paralyzed. Who would be foolish enough to choose not to have use of his legs and hands? Can you imagine someone wanting to be blind, choosing darkness over the brilliance of a clear blue sky? Who would want to deliberately shut his eyes against the sight of a glorious rainbow?*

*And who would want to be deaf? Who in the world would desire silence instead of the beauty of a waltz, or the soothing voice of a loved one?*

***Yet there are people who choose to disable themselves. If you were to challenge them, they wouldn't have it any other way. They deliberately determine to be disabled. Theirs are very serious disabilities, not physical but spiritual. Jesus even talked about such people.***

- r. Wow!
- s. That is powerful from Joni.
- t. Don't miss verses 16-17.
- u. You are blessed!
- v. Many prophets and righteous people longed to see what they were seeing and hear what you hear...
- w. Can you imagine what they experienced?
- x. Still, we have the Word of God, the church of God, and the Holy Spirit.
- y. We have so much truth revealed to us, and the Old Testament prophets longed to have what we have as well.

III. The interpretation of the parable of the sower (Matthew 13:18-23)

Matthew 13:18–23 (ESV)

### The Parable of the Sower Explained

<sup>18</sup> ***"Hear then the parable of the sower: <sup>19</sup> When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart.***

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<sup>15</sup> Dr Rydelnic

Open Line; 08.07.2021

*This is what was sown along the path. <sup>20</sup> As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, <sup>21</sup> yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away. <sup>22</sup> As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. <sup>23</sup> As for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it. He indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty."*

- a. The seed (13:18–19a): The seed represents the Good News about the Kingdom.
- b. The roadside soil (13:19b): The hard soil represents those who hear the message but do not understand it, thus allowing Satan to steal it from them.
- c. The rocky soil (13:20–21): The shallow, rocky soil represents those who have no depth and thus drop out upon encountering any trouble or persecution.
- d. The thorn-infested soil (13:22): The thorny ground represents those who allow the lure of wealth to snuff out the Good News.
- e. Fertile soil (13:23): The good soil represents those who truly accept God's message, producing an abundant harvest.
- f. It seems to me that the parable makes sense. It is easy to understand, but there are major applications.
  - i. We want to have good soil in our hearts to grow spiritually. We talked about this earlier.
  - ii. We must be active in the Spiritual Disciplines.
  - iii. We partner with the Holy Spirit.
  - iv. As we share the Gospel, we must pray that the Lord casts the seeds that we plant into good soil.

#### IV. The wheat and the thistle (Matthew 13:24-30)

Matthew 13:24–30 (ESV)

#### **The Parable of the Weeds**

*<sup>24</sup> He put another parable before them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, <sup>25</sup> but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. <sup>26</sup> So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also. <sup>27</sup> And the servants of the master of the house came and said to him, 'Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have weeds?' <sup>28</sup> He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' So the servants said to him, 'Then do you want us to go and gather them?' <sup>29</sup> But he said, 'No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. <sup>30</sup> Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, "Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn." ' ' "*

- a. Now, we have another parable.
- b. Ultimately, Jesus will define this in verses 36-43.

- c. Swindoll shares that we have 30 parables in the Gospels.
- d. 14 in Matthew's Gospel.
- e. 15 in Luke.
- f. 1 in Mark.
- g. None in John.
- h. They must not be overly analyzed or allegorized.
- i. Jesus is talking about the Kingdom of Heaven. People define the Kingdom of Heaven differently. One has said- Kingdom of Heaven means "God's rule."
- j. The diligence of a sower (13:24): A farmer sows good seed throughout his field.
- k. The discovery by the sower (13:25–28): He learns his enemy later secretly visited the field and sowed thistles among the wheat.
- l. The dilemma of the sower (13:29): He knows that if he attempts to pull out the thistles, he will also harm the wheat.
- m. The decision of the sower (13:30): He will wait until harvest time when he sorts out the thistles from the wheat and burn them.
- n. ESV SB: *God allows both believers and unbelievers to live in the world until the day of judgment; see note on v. 38.*<sup>16</sup>
- o. Notice the the good stuff is growing, but so are the weeds.
- p. I think this means that God's church is growing, but there are weeds within the church.
- q. 1 John 2:19 (ESV)
- r. <sup>19</sup> *They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us.*
- s. I once heard a Methodist pastor use this parable as justification to not deal with certain sins, but I think that is an incorrect application. I believe when we preach and follow God's Word, that is God, the Lord of the harvest harvesting, pruning, etc. We cannot have scriptures contradicting. We interpret the unclear in light of the clear. The Scriptures talk about confronting sin- 1 Cor. 5; Matthew 18:15-17; Gal. 6:1, etc.
- t. Ultimately, Jesus will define this in verses 36-43, and Jesus says that the harvest is the end of the age.

#### V. The mustard seed (Matthew 13:31-32)

Matthew 13:31–32 (ESV)

#### The Mustard Seed and the Leaven

<sup>31</sup> *He put another parable before them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his field. <sup>32</sup> It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is larger than all the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches."*

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<sup>16</sup> Crossway Bibles, [The ESV Study Bible](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 1848.

- a. IVP BBC NT: *The point of both parables is that the mighty kingdom everyone expected could issue from apparently obscure beginnings—like Jesus and the disciples.*<sup>17</sup>
  - b. *Scholars still dispute what plant is meant by the “mustard seed.” Nevertheless, by no conjecture is it the smallest of all seeds that Jesus’ listeners could have known (the orchid seed is smaller); the point is that it was recognized as very small and yet yielded a large shrub. Around the Sea of Galilee, it can reach a height of ten feet and has sometimes reached fifteen feet. Its usual height, however, is about four feet; because it would grow anew each year, birds could not nest in it when they built nests in early spring. The hyperbole Jesus applies to the best image of growth from tiny to large he had available does not change the point, however; the kingdom might begin in obscurity, but it would culminate in glory.*
  - c. *Even if birds could not nest in the mustard plant, they could perch in it (Matthew’s term here was sometimes used that way); Matthew’s language here alludes to Daniel 4:12, the splendor of another ruler’s kingdom. Sources suggest that Palestinian custom relegated mustard seeds to fields rather than gardens; one may thus contrast Matthew 13:31 with Luke 13:19, each adjusting the image for their respective readerships.*<sup>18</sup>
  - d. *It goes into the ground the smallest of seeds (13:31–32a).*
  - e. *It grows out of the ground the largest of plants (13:32b).*
- VI. The yeast (Matthew 13:33)

Matthew 13:33 (ESV)

<sup>33</sup> He told them another parable. *“The kingdom of heaven is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, till it was all leavened.”*

- a. *It is placed in the flour (13:33a): Only a small amount of yeast is used.*
- b. *It permeates every part of the dough (13:33b).*
  - i. NIV SB: *In the Bible, yeast usually symbolizes that which is evil or unclean (see note on Mk 8:15). Here, however, it is a symbol of growth. As yeast permeates a batch of dough, so the kingdom of heaven, often having a hidden quality in the present, will expand throughout the whole world. See note on Lk 13:21.*<sup>19</sup>
  - ii. IVP BBC NT: *Roman cities had bakeries, but the image here is that of a rural Galilean woman. Leaven, or yeast, would be mixed through the meal. Three*

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<sup>17</sup> Craig S. Keener, [\*The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament\*](#) (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), Mt 13:31–33.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Kenneth L. Barker, ed., [\*NIV Study Bible\*](#), Fully Revised Edition. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2020), 1666.

pecks of flour, roughly a bushel, was all that a woman could knead, and the resulting bread would feed about a hundred people.<sup>20</sup>

- iii. ESV SB: Jesus uses the metaphor of **leaven**, which usually has a negative connotation in Scripture (cf. 16:6; 1 Cor. 5:6–7), to symbolize the positive, hidden permeation of the kingdom of heaven in this world. **The kingdom is indeed active though not fully visible to the world, because it begins with an inner transformation of the heart.** Three measures was probably about 50 pounds (39 liters) and would have produced enough bread to feed a hundred people.<sup>21</sup>
- iv. NET: The parable of the yeast and the dough teaches that the kingdom of God will start small but eventually grow to permeate everything. Jesus' point was not to be deceived by its seemingly small start, the same point made in the parable of the mustard seed, which preceded this one.<sup>22</sup>

VII. Prophecy and parables: To reveal God's truth to the righteous (Matthew 13:34-45)

Matthew 13:34–46 (ESV)

### Prophecy and Parables

<sup>34</sup> All these things Jesus said to the crowds in parables; indeed, he said nothing to them without a parable. <sup>35</sup> This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet:

*"I will open my mouth in parables;  
I will utter what has been hidden since the foundation of the world."*

### The Parable of the Weeds Explained

<sup>36</sup> Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples came to him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field." <sup>37</sup> He answered, "*The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. <sup>38</sup> The field is the world, and the good seed is the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, <sup>39</sup> and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. <sup>40</sup> Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. <sup>41</sup> The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, <sup>42</sup> and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. <sup>43</sup> Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.*"

### The Parable of the Hidden Treasure

<sup>44</sup> *"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field."*

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<sup>20</sup> Craig S. Keener, [\*The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament\*](#) (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), Mt 13:33.

<sup>21</sup> Crossway Bibles, [\*The ESV Study Bible\*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 1849.

<sup>22</sup> Biblical Studies Press, [\*The NET Bible First Edition Notes\*](#) (Biblical Studies Press, 2006), Mt 13:33.

### **The Parable of the Pearl of Great Value**

<sup>45</sup> “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, <sup>46</sup> who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

- VIII. More about the purpose of parables (Matthew 13:34-35):
- Jesus is teaching all of these things in parables.
  - He said nothing to them without a parable. This probably means during this time. Or, it could mean that He normally taught that way...
  - CSB: *Like Asaph in Ps 78, Jesus taught in **parables** and revealed to his disciples truths that had not previously been understood.*<sup>23</sup>
  - I like what the Moody Bible Commentary shares here:
  - Psalm 78:1–2 is cited in v. 35. It was written by Asaph, poet and prophet under David and Solomon. Psalm 78 is an extended review of the history of the Jewish people from the patriarchs through David’s time. The main theme in the psalm is God’s faithfulness despite the people’s disobedience. Asaph calls his psalm a “parable” and “dark sayings” (78:2), probably indicating that he was drawing insights from historic events not usually seen in them. Asaph wrote the psalm to instruct his own and following generations. **When Matthew says Jesus taught in parables it was to fulfill typologically what Asaph had done, i.e., presenting new insights about the kingdom of God that would come in spite of the people’s unfaithfulness.***<sup>24</sup>
- IX. *Interpretation of the parable (13:36–43):* notice that He now goes inside and the disciples are asking for an explanation. Notice that Jesus does not rebuke their question.
- The sower is Christ (13:36–37).
  - The enemy is the devil (13:39a).
  - The field is the world (13:38a).
  - The good seed is believers (13:38b).
  - The thistles are unbelievers (13:38c).
  - The harvest is the end of the age (13:39b).
  - The reapers are angels (13:39c–41).
  - The granary is heaven (13:43).
  - The furnace is hell (13:42).
- X. **The treasure in the field (13:44)**
- The discovery* (13:44a): A man finds a precious treasure.
  - The delight* (13:44b): He is overjoyed at what he finds.
  - The decision* (13:44c): He sells all that he has to buy the field.
  - ESV SB: **Buys that field** does not suggest earning one’s salvation; instead, the parable emphasizes the supreme value of the hidden treasure (**the kingdom of**

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<sup>23</sup> Charles L. Quarles, “[Matthew](#),” in *CSB Study Bible: Notes*, ed. Edwin A. Blum and Trevin Wax (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), 1523.

v. verse

i.e. that is

<sup>24</sup> Michael G. Vanlaningham, “[Matthew](#),” in *The Moody Bible Commentary*, ed. Michael A. Rydelnik and Michael Vanlaningham (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2014), 1477.



*heaven*), which is worth far more than any sacrifice one could make to acquire it (*sells all that he has*).<sup>25</sup>

XI. **The merchant and the pearl** (13:45–46)

Sproul:

The parable of the hidden treasure and the parable of the pearl of great value are both concerned with the question of value:

Often today “value” or “values” is used as a synonym of ethics. But that is not true.

Value is something of great importance.

How money is spent is the 3rd leading cause of divorce.

Ethics is not about the subjective but the objective. Ethics is about what we ought to value, not subjectively of what we do value.

We ought to value what God says.

In the ancient world it was common for goods to be buried in the fields.

So, this person finds the treasure and he does not steal it, but finds a way to buy the field.

Then Matt 13:45 the pearl.

In both of these there is something so valuable and of such worth that you will sell everything you have for it.

Whenever we make a purchase, we are exercising value.

Jesus had asked what will a man give in exchange for his soul. That is about value.

When people bartered, they showed value.

In the first century, Christians did not exchange their lives for their souls.

The pearl of great price is a Person.

Do our values line up with Christ's?<sup>26</sup>

a. *He seeks this pearl* (13:45).

b. *He buys this pearl* (13:46).

XII. **The sorting of fish** (13:47–50)

Matthew 13:47–50 (ESV)

**The Parable of the Net**

<sup>47</sup> *“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind. <sup>48</sup> When it was full, men drew it ashore and sat down and sorted the good into containers but threw away the bad. <sup>49</sup> So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous <sup>50</sup> and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

a. *The information in this parable* (13:47–48): Upon catching a net filled with fish, the fishermen sort out the good from the bad.

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<sup>25</sup> Crossway Bibles, [\*The ESV Study Bible\*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 1849.

<sup>26</sup> Sproul; *Renewing Your Mind*; 01.13.2022



- b. *The interpretation of this parable (13:49–50):* At the end of the world, the angels will likewise separate the righteous from the wicked.
  - c. *ESV SB: The **net**, shaped like a long wall, was dragged toward shore by both ends, trapping fish of every kind. **sorted**. Fish without scales and fins, e.g., were considered **bad** and unclean (cf. Lev. 11:9–12). Evil will not be totally removed from the world until **the close of the age**.*<sup>27</sup>
- XIII. **The homeowner and his treasure (13:52):** A wise teacher of God’s Word can display both old and new precious truths (Old and New Testament) like a homeowner can show off both old and new treasures.
- a. Matthew 13:51–52 (ESV)
  - b. **New and Old Treasures**
  - c. <sup>51</sup> *“Have you understood all these things?” They said to him, “Yes.”*<sup>52</sup> *And he said to them, “Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house, who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.”*
  - d. **ESV SB: Have you understood ... Yes.** True disciples grow in understanding through Jesus’ teaching (cf. 28:20). They are like the man who **brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old**, in that they understand both the “new” revelation from Jesus and how it fulfills the “old” promises in the OT.<sup>28</sup>

XIV. **THE REACTION TO HIS PARABLES (13:53–58):** The people in Jesus’ hometown of Nazareth react to his parables in a twofold way.  
Matthew 13:53–58 (ESV)

### **Jesus Rejected at Nazareth**

<sup>53</sup> *And when Jesus had finished these parables, he went away from there,*<sup>54</sup> *and coming to his hometown he taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished, and said, “Where did this man get this wisdom and these mighty works? <sup>55</sup> Is not this the carpenter’s son? Is not his mother called Mary? And are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? <sup>56</sup> And are not all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?”*<sup>57</sup> *And they took offense at him. But Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and in his own household.”*<sup>58</sup> *And he did not do many mighty works there, because of their unbelief.*

ESV SB:

**13:54–16:20** *The Identity of the Messiah Revealed.* This section marks a major new emphasis in Matthew’s narrative as Jesus’ messianic identity is increasingly clarified.<sup>29</sup>

- a. **First they are amazed (13:53–56).**

<sup>27</sup> Crossway Bibles, [The ESV Study Bible](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 1849.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, 1850.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

- b. He comes to His hometown:
- c. *Although Capernaum had become Jesus' "own city" during his Galilean ministry (4:13; 9:1), **his hometown** is Nazareth, the village of his family and where he spent his childhood (see note on 2:23). Perhaps he is responding to a request from his mother and brothers to return home (see note on 12:46).<sup>30</sup>*
- d. *Since they know Jesus' human roots, the people of Nazareth assume he cannot be anything special. He is a hometown son making fantastic claims for himself. **His brothers** and **his sisters** refers to other children born to Joseph and Mary after the birth of Jesus. Some interpreters, seeking to defend a doctrine of the "perpetual virginity of Mary," have suggested that these were cousins, or children of Joseph from another marriage, but no evidence in the Greek words adelphoi ("brothers") and adelphai ("sisters"), or in any other historical information, gives support to that view. For Mary to have sexual relations with her husband, Joseph, and to bear children, would contribute to her holiness, not detract from it (cf. Gen. 1:28; 1 Cor. 7:3–5; 1 Tim. 5:14). On Jesus' family, see note on Mark 6:3.<sup>31</sup>*
- e. **Then they are angered** (13:57–58): Jesus does only a few miracles there because of their unbelief.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> H. L. Willmington, [\*The Outline Bible\*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1999) (Adapted from)