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Why Jesus used Parables.

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Learn the Bible with Friends

Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Why Jesus used Parables.

- Things hidden from the foundation of the world.
- Why parables?
- Those that seek knock and ask will be given more.
- The blessedness of New Testament Christians.
- The words of Jesus and Isaiah the prophet are fulfilled.

Jesus spoke many things in parables

- **Matthew 13:1-3:** The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the seaside. ²And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore. ³And he spoke many things unto them in parables.

Jesus at this time is sitting in a boat and speaks the Kingdom parables to the multitudes. A parable is:

- A placing of one thing by the side of another to make a comparison.
- Comparing one thing with another in likeness or similitude.
- An example by which a doctrine or precept is illustrated.

A parable is a story that is fictitious, but agreeable to the laws and usages of human life, by which either the duties of men or the things of God, particularly the nature and history of God's Kingdom are figuratively (not literally) portrayed. It is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning.

1

Mark wrote:

- **Mark 4:33-34:** With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it. ³⁴He did not speak to them without a parable, but privately to his own disciples he explained everything.

Jesus spoke the parables to the multitudes and then explained them to his disciples. It was prophesied in the Old Testament that Jesus would speak in parables.

- All these things Jesus said to the crowds in parables, indeed, he said nothing to them without a parable. ³⁵This was to fulfil 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" (Matt. 13:34-35).

A Psalm of Asaph

Thousands of years before Jesus appeared Asaph wrote:

- Give ear, O my people, to my teaching; incline your ears to the words of my mouth! ²I will open my mouth in a parable, I will utter dark sayings from of old, ³things that we have heard and known, that our fathers have told us (Psalm 78:1-3).

Dark sayings: in this context means something that is difficult, hard or perplexing to understand, (but they are not difficult for those who read them with a right heart attitude).

NOTE: often the New Testament will refer back to a verse in the Old Testament and though what the prophet is saying may refer to himself or the generation of his era the message can also be echoing Christ (his inner thoughts or the things concerning him) or apply to Christ's generation or a very similar future event yet to be fulfilled on a much grander scale. In Psalm seventy-eight Asaph is speaking of the rebellious and unbelieving Jews of his generations and the generations before them, but the content of what he is saying also applies to Christ and the Jews of Jesus generations especially the religious leaders of Israel the chief priest, Pharisees and scribes. Many times, the New Testament Scriptures will cite a verse of the Old Testament to take our minds back to the chapter that verse is in. This is because even though the message maybe referring to a particular person or event of that era contained within the prophetic language is an echo of things concerning Christ or things concerning a similar future event yet to be fulfilled that will affect not just a nation but the entire world.

Things hidden from the foundation of the world

The things Christ uttered that had been hidden since the foundation of the world refer to the things concerning Christ's death and resurrection, the New Testament Covenant of grace and the Jews and Gentiles being made one new nation in Christ. These are the things Jesus taught that were hard to understand, not even the apostles fully understood what Jesus meant when he told them he must die and rise again on the third day until he appeared to them after his brutal, bloody and cruel crucifixion and his majestic and glorious resurrection to eternal life and everlasting glory. Parables are used many times in the Old Testament books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Micah, Habakkuk, Zechariah and Malachi, the following is one example from the book of Ezekiel:

- The word of the LORD came to me (Ezekiel): ⁴⁶"Son of man, set your face toward the southland; preach against the south, and prophesy against the forest land in the Negeb. ⁴⁷Say to the forest of the Negeb, Hear the word of the LORD: Thus, says the Lord GOD, Behold, I will kindle a fire in you, and it shall devour every green tree in you and every dry tree. The blazing flame shall not be quenched, and all faces from south to north shall be scorched by it. ⁴⁸All flesh shall see that I the LORD have kindled it; it shall not be quenched." ⁴⁹Then I said, "Ah, Lord GOD! They are saying of me, '*is he not a maker of parables?*'" (Ezekiel 20:45-49).

2

In this chapter Israel has been rebellious and dealt treacherously with the LORD not willing to listen to His prophets so the LORD through Ezekiel tells them He will purge the rebel from amongst his people. Though this applies to Israel during Ezekiel's generations its message also refers to the rebellious Jews of Jesus generation who also refused to listen to Christ.

Why parables?

- **Matthew 13:10-12:** Then the disciples came and said to him, "Why do you speak to them in parables?" ¹¹And 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. ¹²For 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.

The disciples ask Jesus, "Why speak in parables?" and Jesus tells them that it was because it had been given to the disciple to know the secrets of God's Kingdom, but one might wonder, why was it given to them to know? Simply this, they left everything to follow Jesus. Whoever seeks after God with a humble heart will find him, but those who are full of pride as were the chief priests, Pharisees and scribes will never perceive the secrets of God's Kingdom or the glory of God's love and grace in Christ.

They may have an abundance of intellectual Scriptural knowledge, but they never perceive its saving power because self, ego and pride are seated as kings on the throne of their minds and their hearts.

Those that seek, knock and ask, will be given more

- **Matthew 13:12-15:** 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. ¹³This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. ¹⁴Indeed, 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. ¹⁵For this people's heart has grown dull, and with their ears they can barely hear, and their eyes they have closed, lest (perhaps) they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their hearts and turn and I would heal them.'

Matthew cites the following words of Isaiah:

- The LORD said to Isaiah, "Go, and say to this people: "'Keep on hearing, but do not understand; keep on seeing, but do not perceive.' ¹⁰Make the heart of this people dull, and their ears heavy, and blind their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts and turn and be healed" (Isaiah 6:9-10).

To the one who has will be given more: in this context means to the one who lays hold of and adheres to Christ will be given much more.

Seeing they do not see: means they did not observe, examine, discern and discover the glory of what is contained in what Jesus was teaching them. It means they did not perceive with their mind the message of grace and that Jesus is the Messiah the Christ and Saviour of the world that the prophet of old said was to come and who the Scriptures speak of because self, pride and ego was seated as king on their hearts. This is why they had grown dull of hearing meaning they gave no time to listen to the prophets or to consider what they were saying. This is not about sin that dwells in the flesh (human nature) which causes every brother and sister in Christ to fall short of Gods Holy standard and limits us from attaining to the perfect demands of the law. Rather the people Isaiah has in focus are those who confess to follow God and yet consciously and deliberately live in a manner that is in absolute violation of God's ways, these people are not only worshipping Baal and idols, but oppressing the poor and using others for their own gain etc. Jesus in this conversation with his disciples is shining a spotlight on the truth that the reason people don't perceive his words is because their heart has become grossly hardened with sin (self, ego, pride and greed etc.). Christ tells his disciples if these people would open their heart at any time to God's words they would be converted, and he would forgive their sins and save them.

NOTE: the heart was regarded as the seat of physical life and figuratively denotes the center and energy of all physical and spiritual life. When used in the Bible it is seen as the fountain and seat of the soul (the mind) with the thoughts, passions, desires, appetites, affections, purposes, and endeavors of the understanding. It represents the faculty and seat of the intelligence of the will and character of the mind so far as it is affected and stirred in a bad way or good. It represents the seat of the sensibilities, affections, emotions, desires, appetites, passions, of the middle or central or inmost part of anything, even though inanimate.

The heart was regarded as:

- The fountain and seat of the soul (the mind) with the thoughts, passions, desires, appetites, affections, purposes, and endeavors.
- The seat and center of all energy and of all physical and spiritual life.
- The faculty and seat of the intelligence of the will and character of the mind so far as it is affected and stirred in a bad or good way.

- The middle or central or inmost part of anything especially the sensibilities, emotions and passions.

Converted: when used in the Bible means to cause to turn one's self about and turn back to the worship of the true God it carries the idea of turning from one lifestyle and way of thinking to another totally different lifestyle and another way of thinking.

Healed: means to make whole spiritually, mentally and eternally it carries the idea of being cured and freed from the errors of sin and being made complete and righteous for salvation to eternal life. This healing of course comes to us by faith in Christ and God's grace. This is because whoever belongs to the family of the Lord Jesus Christ God imputes to them as a pure and free gift, righteousness. No-one is made whole because of their righteousness, but because of Christ's righteousness.

The blessedness of New Testament Christians

- **Matthew 13:16-17:** But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear.
¹⁷Truly, 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.

The things the prophets and the faithful of the Old Testament would have loved to have seen is of course Jesus, he is the promised Messiah the Christ they all by faith longed to see. These words of Jesus show us the following two things:

1. The faithful of the Old Testament were saved in the same manner as we are, by faith in the promised seed of the woman spoken of in (Genesis 3:15), the promised seed of Abraham and the promised seed David and the Prophet and deliver Moses said was to come like him and of course the one all the Old Testament Scriptures in prophecy majestically speak of.
2. How blessed we are to be on this side of Christ's appearing and his death and resurrection since we have far more light than those who lived prior to the death and resurrection of the Lord.

The words of Jesus and of Isaiah the prophet are fulfilled

- **Matthew 13:53-58:** when Jesus had finished these parables, he went away from there, ⁵⁴and 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? ⁵⁵Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? ⁵⁶And are not all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?" ⁵⁷And 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." ⁵⁸And he did not do many mighty works there, because of their unbelief.

These last verses show how true the following words of Isaiah's and Jesus were, "Seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand" (Matthew 53-58). The Jews (especially the religious leaders the chief priests, Pharisees and scribes) not only saw their promised Messiah and spoke with him, but also saw many stunning and amazing miracles that only a man with God's Spirit flowing through could possibly do and still they never believed Jesus even though they heard with their ears and saw with their eyes they still did not perceive the glory of the man who stood before them.

A personal story

Many years ago, as a new convert to Christ I became discouraged after some time witnessing since I was so over joyed I simply believed in my naivety that everyone else would respond in the same manner to my surprise not many did. I started to question what I was saying and this sent me on a never-ending search for the perfect way to witness. One Sunday afternoon I was sharing this with a very mature Christian man he made a very wise statement which I have never forgotten, what did he say you might wonder, simply this:

- James you cannot say the wrong thing to a person who has a right heart attitude and your cannot say the right thing to a person with a wrong heart attitude.”

This is, why the majority of Jews could not understand the parables or accept their Messiah even though he was standing right before them and why the Gentiles embraced Christ by the thousands, one group had a wrong heart attitude while the other group had the right heart attitude.

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