

March 20–26. Matthew 13; Luke 8; 13: “Who Hath Ears to Hear, Let Him Hear”

Parables

Jesus explains to His disciples why He teaches in parables

Matt 13:10-14

10 And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables?

11 He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.

12 For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.

13 Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.

14 And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive:

What reason does Jesus give for teaching with parables?

(it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given
because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand)

Bible dictionary

From the Lord's own words we learn the reason for this method. It was to veil the meaning. The parable conveys to the hearer religious truth exactly in proportion to his faith and intelligence; and to the dull and uninspired it is a mere story “seeing they see not,” while to the instructed and spiritual it reveals the mysteries or secrets of the kingdom of heaven.” (Bible Dictionary, Parables)

Matt 13:15-17

15 For this people’s heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

16 But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.

17 For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.

Spencer W. Kimball

“It is inconceivable that otherwise intelligent, astute, and highly educated people should ignore or wilfully disregard this great privilege. The doors can be unlocked. The gap can be bridged. And men can walk safely,

securely to never-ending happiness....

“The Lord knew that those who were sincere in heart and who really wished to know the mysteries of the kingdom would seek and search prayerfully until they informed themselves.” (CR, Oct. 1964)

Parable of the Sower

Before we read the Parable of the Sower, Lets review how Alma compared the Word of God to a seed

Alma 32:28,38

[28] Now, we will compare the word unto a seed. Now, if ye give place, that a seed may be planted in your heart, behold, if it be a true seed, or a good seed, if ye do not cast it out by your unbelief, that ye will resist the Spirit of the Lord, behold, it will begin to swell within your breasts; and when you feel these swelling motions, ye will begin to say within yourselves -- It must needs be that this is a good seed, or that the word is good, for it beginneth to enlarge my soul; yea, it beginneth to enlighten my understanding, yea, it beginneth to be delicious to me.

[38] But if ye neglect the tree, and take no thought for its nourishment, behold it will not get any root; and when the heat of the sun cometh and scorcheth it, because it hath no root it withers away, and ye pluck it up and cast it out.

What does Alma compare the Word of God to?

(we will compare the word unto a seed)

What is required to gain and strengthen a testimony of the Word of God?

(give place, that a seed may be planted in your heart
you feel these swelling motions... It must needs be that this is a good
seed

But if ye neglect the tree, and take no thought for its nourishment...)

Let's read what happens when the Word of God is spread by the sower

Matt 13:3-9

3 And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow;

4 And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up:

5 Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth:

6 And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away.

7 And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them:

8 But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.

9 Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Generally speaking, what do the different conditions of the soil represent?

Dallin H. Oaks

"Jesus explained to His disciples. The seed that was sown was 'the word of the kingdom' (Matt 13:19), 'the word' (Mark 4:14), or 'the word of God' (Luke 8:11) - the teachings of the Master and His servants.

"The different soils on which the seeds fell represent different ways in which mortals receive and follow these teachings...

"The parable of the sower warns us of circumstances and attitudes that can keep anyone who has received the seed of the gospel message from bringing forth a goodly harvest." (CR, April 2015)

Jesus gives the interpretation of this parable to His disciples

Matt 13:18-19

18 ¶ Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower.

19 When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.

Dallin H. Oaks

"There are many whose desires are fixed so firmly on the acquisition or use of property, or on other worldly things, that they have no desire for righteousness or the things of God. In the parable of the sower, Jesus indicated that some of the sower's seed 'fell by the way side'. He explained to his disciples that this circumstance represented those who 'heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not'. The Prophet Joseph Smith attributed this lack of understanding of the gospel to a lack of desire:

"Men who have no principle of righteousness in themselves, and whose hearts are full of iniquity, and have no desire for the principles of truth, do not understand the word of truth when they hear it. The devil taketh away the word of truth out of their hearts, because there is no desire for righteousness in them' (HC 2:266)." (Pure in Heart, pg. 54-55)

Matt 13: 20-21

20 But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it;

21 Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.

Bruce R. McConkie

“If the seed falls upon stony places where there is only a small layer of good soil, though the seed readily sprouts, it soon dies, for the roots attain no strengthening depth. Likewise, those who gain testimonies of the truth, but who do not give their whole souls to Christ; those who gain only a superficial knowledge of the doctrines of salvation; those without sufficient strength of character to keep their enthusiasm alive in the face of obstacles; those who are only lukewarm in the cause of righteousness; those whose testimonies are weakened because they discover other men have weaknesses – all such are offended and fall away when persecution arise and when they are called upon to make major sacrifices for the cause of Zion.” (Doctrinal New Testament Commentary, 1:289)

Dallin H. Oaks

“Spiritual food is necessary for spiritual survival, especially in a world that is moving away from belief in God and the absolutes of right and wrong. In an age dominated by the Internet, which magnifies messages that menace faith, we must increase our exposure to spiritual truth in order to strengthen our faith and stay rooted in the gospel.” (CR, April 2015)

Matt 13:22

22 He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.

Bruce R. McConkie

“If the seed falls among thorns, it is in good soil, as is evidenced by the growth of the undesirable plants. But the good plant is soon choked and dies because it cannot overcome the influence of the weeds and thistles. So it is with the members of the Church who know the gospel is true, but who are not valiant in the testimony of Jesus, who are not affirmatively and courageously striving to further the interests of the Church. So it is of the saints who think more of the honors of men, the educational standards of the world, political preferment, or money and property, than they do of the gospel. They know the Lord's work has been established on earth, but they let the cares of the world choke the word. And instead of gaining eternal life, they shall be burned with the tares which overcame them.” (Doctrinal New Testament Commentary, 1:289)

Dallin H. Oaks

“The Savior’s warning against having the cares of this world choke out the word of God in our lives surely challenges us to keep our priorities fixed—our hearts set—on the commandments of God and the leadership of His Church.” (CR, April 2015)

Matt 13:23

23 But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

Dallin H. Oaks

“We have the seed of the gospel word. It is up to each of us to set the priorities and to do the things that make our soil good and our harvest plentiful. We must seek to be firmly rooted and converted to the gospel of Jesus Christ. We achieve this conversion by praying, by scripture reading, by serving, and by regularly partaking of the sacrament to always have His Spirit to be with us. We must also seek that mighty change of heart that replaces evil desires and selfish concerns with the love of God and the desire to serve Him and His children.” (CR, April 2015)

Parable of the Wheat and the Tares

Jesus also likens wheat and tares to the kingdom of heaven

Matt 13:24-30

24 ¶ Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field:

25 But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.

26 But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.

27 So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?

28 He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?

29 But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.

30 Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.

JST Matt 13:29 ...Gather ye together first the wheat into my barn; and the tares are bound in bundles to be burned.

Jesus gives the interpretation of this parable to His disciples

Matt 13:36-43

36 Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field.

37 He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man;

38 The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one;

39 The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels.
40 As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world.
41 The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity;
42 And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.
43 Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

This is what is represented in the parable

1. The man sowing seed is the Son of Man (Jesus).
We will read in D&C 86 that after Jesus' death the sowers were the 12
2. The field is the world.
3. The good seed are the children of the kingdom (followers of Jesus).
4. The tares are children of the wicked one
5. The enemy is the devil.
6. The harvest is the end of the world.
7. The reapers are the angels sent to reap the field.
8. The tares bound and burned are the evil ones separated out and cast into fire (punishment) at the Judgment.
9. The wheat gathered into the barn represents the righteous who are separated out and made to "shine forth" in the kingdom of the Father.

Now let's compare this to the contemporary interpretation the Lord gives Joseph Smith.

D&C 86:1-7

- 1 Verily, thus saith the Lord unto you my servants, concerning the parable of the wheat and of the tares:
- 2 Behold, verily I say, the field was the world, and the apostles were the sowers of the seed;
- 3 And after they have fallen asleep the great persecutor of the church, the apostate, the whore, even Babylon, that maketh all nations to drink of her cup, in whose hearts the enemy, even Satan, sitteth to reign—behold he soweth the tares; wherefore, the tares choke the wheat and drive the church into the wilderness.
- 4 But behold, in the last days, even now while the Lord is beginning to bring forth the word, and the blade is springing up and is yet tender—
- 5 Behold, verily I say unto you, the angels are crying unto the Lord day and night, who are ready and waiting to be sent forth to reap down the fields;
- 6 But the Lord saith unto them, pluck not up the tares while the blade is yet tender (for verily your faith is weak), lest you destroy the wheat also.
- 7 Therefore, let the wheat and the tares grow together until the harvest is fully ripe; then ye shall first gather out the wheat from among the tares, and

after the gathering of the wheat, behold and lo, the tares are bound in bundles, and the field remaineth to be burned.

How does the interpretation given in Section 86 clarify the parable and make it more pertinent to our day?

1. Original 12 were sowers of the seed after Christ's crucifixion
2. After they were gone the Whore of Babylon sowed tares among the wheat
3. The tares caused the Great Apostasy
4. In these, the last days the gospel is restored and the wheat begins to grow
5. "While the Lord is beginning to bring forth the word" the wheat (faith of the Saints) is tender
6. The wheat and tares grow together until the harvest is fully ripe
7. The wheat is to be gathered first, then the tares are gathered and burned

Marion G. Romney

"Now, the basis for the hope and courage that will keep us from being troubled does not lie in the expectation that enough people will accept and obey the restored gospel to turn aside the oncoming calamities.... It lies in the assurance that everyone who will accept and obey the restored gospel of Jesus Christ shall reap the promised rewards, and this regardless of what others do. And certain it is that those who receive the blessings will have to prevail against great opposition, for the world in general is not improving. It is ripening in iniquity....

"The tempo of wickedness and destruction has been greatly accelerated... and so has the gathering in of the wheat. Even now the tares are binding themselves in bundles, making ready for the field to be burned." (CR, Oct. 1966)

The parable of the fishing net

Matt 13:47-50

47 ¶ Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind:

48 Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.

49 So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just,

50 And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

How is the message of the parable of the fishing net is similar the message of the wheat and the tares?

Other Parables About the Kingdom of Heaven

Jesus likens the kingdom of heaven to a mustered seed

Matt 13:31-32

31 ¶ Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field:

32 Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.

Why is the kingdom of heaven like a mustered seed?

(when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs)

Wilford Woodruff

“The Lord will not fail in anything he has promised concerning the work of the latter days. Whatever opposition this Church and kingdom may have, it is the work of God. The Lord has planted and sustained it. Jesus compares the kingdom of heaven to a mustard seed, the least of all seeds, but by and by when it grows it becomes a large tree, so the fowls of the air can lodge in its branches. So it has been with the kingdom of God; but we are told that the little one will become a thousand, and the small one a strong nation, and the Lord will hasten it in his own time.” (JD, 14:1)

Jesus likens the kingdom of heaven to Leaven

Matt 13:33

33 ¶ Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

How do you think that the kingdom of heaven is like leaven and rises the whole?

Russell Ballard

“In spite of all of the wickedness in the world, and in spite of all the opposition to good that we find on every hand, we should not try to take ourselves or our children out of the world. Jesus said, ‘The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven,’ or yeast. We are to lift the world and help all to rise above the wickedness that surrounds us....

“Members of the Church need to influence more than we are influenced. We should work to stem the tide of sin and evil instead of passively being swept along by it. We each need to help solve the problem rather than avoid or ignore it.” (CR, April 1989)

Jesus likens the kingdom of heaven to a hidden treasure and a pearl of great price

Matt 13:44-46

44 ¶ Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.

45 ¶ Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls:

46 Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

What must we do to obtain the greatest gift in our lives?

(for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field went and sold all that he had, and bought it)

Bruce R. McConkie

“Thus our invitation is for men to investigate the message of the restoration, to come to a knowledge of him whom it is life eternal to know to find the path leading to the celestial city. It is for men to accept The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as the kingdom of God on earth, as ‘the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth’ (D&C 1:30). It is for truth seekers everywhere to sell all that they have and come and buy the gospel pearl, the pearl of great price.” (CR, April 1967)

Mark E. Petersen

“Let me ask you, what would you have thought of that merchant had the parable been reversed and he had given up the pearl of great price in exchange for something of little or no value?

“We have some among us who are doing that very thing. In their own lives they reverse the parable of the Lord and they give up the pearl of great price for a fleeting fancy. They actually sell their birthright in the kingdom of God for less than a mess of pottage.” (CR, Oct. 1945)