

Sunday School Lesson, Tuesday, July 11th, & Sunday, July 16th, 2023

by Pastor Dwight Benoit

Summer Quarter Lesson ~ June, July, and August 2023

Lesson 7 – Unit II Theme: “JESUS Envisions The KINGdom!”
Envision, verb, meaning, to visualize; to see in one’s mind’s eye.

Subject: “Growing Strong!”

Text: Matthew 13: 1-9, 18-23

Key Terms:

- Parables (v. 3) – *parabole* (par-ab-olay’) meaning ‘comparison.’
- Hear (v. 9) – *akouo’* (ak-oo’-o) means to listen, comprehend, give heed.

Introduction:

In Matthew account of **The Gospel of JESUS CHRIST**, he writes primarily to Jews, and presents **CHRIST** as **The KING** (Chaps. 1-4); **HIS Principles [TRUTHS, Morals, Ideals]** (Chaps. 5-7) and **HIS Power** (Chps. 8-10). In Chapters 11-12, points out a in **CHRIST Ministry**, from **Revelation of The KING to Rebellion against The KING**.

The Question in **HIS disciple’s** minds is “What will happen to **The KINGdom** about which **HE** had been Preaching, Now that **The KING** is being *refused*?” **JESUS** answers through “*Parables*.” [Heaven’s Messages expressed through earthly means; to cast alongside; to make comparisons; a narrative illustration used to Teach a Central **TRUTH**. YET, a “*mystery*,” a **Spiritual TRUTH** understood only by **Divine Revelation**... a ‘*Sacred Secret*’ known only to those “on the *inside*,” who LEARN from **JESUS** and **Obey HIM**.]

Why did **JESUS CHRIST** teach in *Parables*?

Read Isaiah 6: 8-10; Matthew 13: 15 and Acts 28: 25-27. The Prophet Isaiah, **JESUS** and Paul explains Why **JESUS** used *Parables*: the hearts, ears, and eyes of the people had become dull, hard, and blind. By using *Parables*, **JESUS** was ‘*exciting the curiosity*’ of the concerned, those who really wanted to know **The TRUTH**. YET, hiding **The TRUTH** from the rebellious: **HE** would not cast these ‘pearls’ of **TRUTH** before swine (Matthew 7: 6). Again, *Parables* did not keep people from LEARNING The TRUTH; rather, to ‘excite their interest and encourage’ them to LEARN.

Matthew 11: 25, “**...THOU hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.**”

I (Pastor Dwight Benoit) *believe*, the Central focus in All of the *Parables* is **JESUS CHRIST!**

The *Central Theme* in this *Parable* of **JESUS CHRIST** is Growth and Change in

The KINGdom of Heaven!

The 3 *Elements*: **The SOWER—The LORD JESUS CHRIST; The SEED—The WORD of GOD** and the Soils, representing 4 categories of Hears, each with a different response to **GOD’S WORD**.

Note... The *Parable* of **The SOWER** does not begin with **JESUS** saying, “**The KINGdom of Heaven** is likened...” because it describes HOW **The KINGdom** begins... it begins with 1. The Preaching/Teaching of **The WORD**—that is, the planting of “**The SEED**” in the hearts of Hearers.

2. The SEED (Read Hebrew 4: 12), it must take root, cultivate, and bear Fruit. 3. Various 'soils' represent different kinds of hearts—Minds. 4. Various responses to **The WORD of GOD**.

Note also, **JESUS** is not impressed with "the great multitudes" that followed **HIM**.

He knew that most would not "believe/receive" **HIS WORD** within and bear Fruit.

*Fruit is the test of *Salvation* (Matthew 7: 16). [Fruit includes "*Holiness* (Romans 6: 22);

CHRISTian Character (Galatians 5: 22, 23); *Good works* (Colossians 1: 10); *Winning Souls to*

CHRIST (Romans 1: 13); *Sharing* (Romans 15: 25-28), *Praising GOD* (Hebrews 13: 15).]

For any Plant to bear Fruit, it must be rooted in Soil; exposed to Sunshine...

The *Sun* represents "*persecution*" that comes because of **The SEED—The Word of GOD**.

And persecution helps us (believers) to GROW! But The Sun will kill a plant that has no roots!

Topics:

1. Parable Told (Matthew 13: 1-9)

--V. 4, **The Wayside soil** represents the *Calloused Heart*. The surface is as hard as concrete, and **The SEED** can *not* penetrate the soil. (Mama use to say, "Boy, your Head is a hard as a rock, but your be-hind...)

--Vss. 5, 6, **The Stony soil** depicts the *Casual Heart*. This is not a field filled with rocks, but an area of limestone covered by a thin layer of dirt. **The SEED** falls and immediately take root, but because the roots could not go deep enough to draw moisture from the ground, the plants would *wither* in the heat. Similarly, some people appear converted and seem to '*encounter*' explosive Growth, but soon fall back into their old ways of living. These do no "lost their *Salvation*—**JESUS** says, they *never* had *Salvation* to begin with. Only an '*emotional experience*.'

--V. 7, **The Thorny soil** represents the *Crowded Heart*. It has *Weeds* that eventually choke out **The SEED**. Note 4 kinds of Weeds: a. The *deceitfulness of riches*. b. The *cares of this world*. c. The *lust for other things*. d. The *pleasures of this life*. The Enemy here is not "*internal*" but "*external*." This heart is divided and crowded.

--V. 8, **The Good soil** represents the *Converted Heart*. The person who Hears The WORD, allows its **TRUTH** to sink in and is genuinely *Saved*. Just as there are 3 levels of NOT *believing/receiving The WORD of GOD* (vss. 4-7), there are also 3 levels of *productivity* in the hearts of those who *believe/receive*. Some produce *Fruit* some Hundredfold, some Sixtyfold, some Thirtyfold.

JESUS presents no category where a True *Believer/Receiver* produces Fruit "zero fold."

2. Parable Unfold. (Matthew 13: 18-23)

--The *Enemy* of **The WORD** in the *First* soil is **The Devil**... represented by *Birds* who "snatch away" **The SEED**.

--The *Enemy* in the *Second* soil is The Flesh, that cannot handle the heat of the Sun.

--The *Enemy* in the *Third* soil is The World, and its *System*—*pleasures, riches, cares* of this life.

--The *proof of genuine Salvation* is not shown by Listening to or emotionally responding to **The WORD**, but by **The FRUIT**.

Point: Whoever hears **JESUS' WORD**, labors to understand it, and then goes on to bear Fruit represent the *Good Soil*. Note, **JESUS** does not commend "any less" those who harvested less than "hundredfold." The *numbers* only indicate the harvest will far exceed anything any hearer had ever expected.