

## Matthew 13

But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

Matthew 13:23

PRAYER: Father, please help me to understand the Word and mysteries of the kingdom of heaven as I study the parables in Matthew 13.

Journal your prayer here:

PREVIEW: From the parables Jesus taught in Matthew 13, we'll discover how important it is to “understand” the Word of the kingdom, so that it may produce a crop in our life.

### Matthew 13 Outline:

Parable of the Soils - Read Matthew 13:1-23

Parable of the Wheat and Tares - Read Matthew 13:24-30

Parable of the Mustard Seed - Read Matthew 13:31-32

Parable of the Leaven - Read Matthew 13:33-35

Parable of the Tares Explained - Read Matthew 13:36-43

Parable of the Hidden Treasure - Read Matthew 13:44

Parable of the Pearl of Great Price - Read Matthew 13:45-46

Parable of the Dragnet - Read Matthew 13:47-50

Parable of the Householder - Read Matthew 13:51-53

Rejection at Nazareth - Read Matthew 13:54-58

**PREPARE:** Get ready to learn about the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven as Jesus teaches in parables and provides us with the key to understanding them.

The word *parable* comes from *parabole* in Greek. The Greek word *para* means “alongside,” while *ballo* means “to cast, or to throw.” Thus, the word “parable” means “casting alongside.” Parabolic teaching places a story alongside a truth or a principle.

## **Parable of the Soils - Read Matthew 13:1-23**

Matthew 13:1-23 (NKJV)

1 On the same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the sea.

2 And great multitudes were gathered together to Him, so that He got into a boat and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.

3 Then He spoke many things to them in parables, saying: **“Behold, a sower went out to sow.**

**4 And as he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them.**

**5 Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth.**

**6 But 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 sprang up and choked them.**

**8 But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.**

**9 He who has ears to hear, let him hear!”**

10 And the disciples came and said to Him, “Why do You speak to them in parables?”

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

12 For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him.

13 Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.

14 And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: ‘Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, And seeing you will see and not perceive;

15 For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed, Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them.’

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

17 for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.

18 “Therefore hear the parable of the sower:

19 When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside.

20 But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy;

21 yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles.

22 Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful.

23 But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.”

1. In Jewish culture, preachers would stand; when teaching or explaining, they would sit. When Jesus got into the boat, He sat. Who was on the shore to hear what Jesus was going to teach (vv. 1-2)?

2. PROPOUND: The sower went out to sow seed. Carefully identify the four different places where Jesus said the sower’s seed could fall (vv. 4-8).

3. PROPOUND: Carefully identify what becomes of the seed in each of the four different places it could fall (vv. 4-8).

4. Only one place allowed the seed to grow and yield a crop. Where was that, and how did Jesus describe the amount of crop that yielded (v. 8)?

5. PRACTICE: In Matthew 13:9, Jesus said, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!" What is meant by this statement? How can you be sure that you're "hearing"?

6. PROFOUND: Based on the description of the place that yielded a crop, what can you infer about the other three places?

7. Jesus' disciples asked Him, "Why do you speak to them in parables?" (v. 10). Who did the "them" in their question refer to?



8. What answer does Jesus give His disciples? What has not been given to “them” (v. 11)?

9. **PROMOTE:** In Matthew 13:11, Jesus said that knowing the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven were given to His disciples. How can you know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven? (See John 14:26; 16:13, 1 Corinthians 2:10-13, and 1 John 2:20.)

10. Describe in your own words the difference between he who has and he who does not have, as stated in Matthew 13:12.

11. **PROPOUND:** How can you ensure that you are one who has (vv. 9, 11)?

12. Jesus quotes Isaiah 6:9-10 as the reason why He speaks in parables to the multitudes (vv. 13-15). He immediately contrasts the multitudes with the disciples (vv. 16-17). How does Jesus describe the disciples' eyes and ears, and why (vv. 16-17)?

13. Jesus said that many prophets and righteous men desired to see and hear what the disciples are seeing and hearing (v. 17). Who is Jesus referring to? (See John 8:56, Hebrews 11:13, and 1 Peter 1:10-11.)

14. Jesus begins to explain the Parable of the Soils (v. 18) by stating that a person must not only hear the word of the kingdom, but must also do something else. What else is required? Why is this so important?

15. Jesus explained what the pictures in the parable represent. It is critical to understand what each picture represents, as they will be keys to understanding the other parables (see Mark 4:13). What did Jesus say each of these pictures represent: sower, seed, soil, wayside, birds, stony places, sun, thorny ground, thorns, good soil, and fruit? (See also Mark 4:1-20 and Luke 8:4-15.)

16. **PRODUCE:** Carefully examine the Parable of the Soils and its use of the word *understand*. Why is it critical to understand the Word of the kingdom?

17. **PROCEED:** In the Parable of the Soils, where was the only place that the seed (the Word of the kingdom) produced a crop? (See Matthew 13:23.)

## Parable of the Wheat and Tares - Read Matthew 13:24-30

Matthew 13:24-30 (NKJV)

24 Another parable He put forth to them, saying: “The kingdom of heaven is like a man who 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 grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared.

27 So the servants of the owner came and said to him, ‘Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?’

28 He said to them, ‘An enemy has done this.’ The servants said to him, ‘Do you want us then to go and gather them up?’

29 But he said, ‘No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them.

30 Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, “First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn.” ’ ’ ”

18. A tare is introduced in this parable. Tares have the same color, shape, and fragrance as wheat, but no heads of grain form. When did the tares get sown? Who sowed the tares? When and where did the tares appear? Who recognized the tares? What was done with the tares?

19. Why weren't the tares removed from the field when they were recognized (v. 29)?

20. Once the tares are separated from the wheat, what becomes of them (v. 32)? (See also Matthew 3:12.)

## Parable of the Mustard Seed - Read Matthew 13:31-32

Matthew 13:31-32 (NKJV)

31 Another parable He put forth to them, saying: **“The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field,**

**32 which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches.”**

21. Who sowed the mustard seed and where was it sown (v. 31)?

22. What became of the mustard seed (v. 32)?

23. What do the birds in the mustard tree represent?

## Parable of the Leaven - Read Matthew 13:33-35

Matthew 13:33-35 (NKJV)

33 Another parable He spoke to them: “The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened.”

34 All these things Jesus spoke to the multitude in parables; and without a parable He did not speak to them,

35 that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: “I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things kept secret from the foundation of the world.”

24. In Hebrew life, leaven played an important part not only in breadmaking, but also in law, ritual, and religious teachings. What became of the three measures of meal that the woman took and hid leaven in (v. 33)?

25. PROPOUND: Leaven is often linked with evil in the Scriptures. Read 1 Corinthians 5:6 and Galatians 5:9. What does a little bit of leaven do?

26. Jesus speaking in parables was a fulfillment of prophesy. What did Matthew say is contained in the parables (v. 35)?

## Parable of the Tares Explained - Read Matthew 13:36-43

Matthew 13:36-43 (NKJV)

36 Then Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, “Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field.”

37 He answered and said to them: “He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man.

38 The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one.

39 The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels.

40 Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age.

41 The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness,

42 and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

43 Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

27. The disciples asked Jesus to explain the Parable of the Tares to them (v. 36). Jesus explained what the pictures represent. What do these pictures represent in the Parable of the Wheat and Tares: the man sowing, the field, the good seeds, the tares, the enemy, the harvest, and the reapers (vv. 37-39)?

28. How did Jesus describe the tares that are sown in with the wheat (v. 41)?

## Parable of the Hidden Treasure - Read Matthew 13:44

Matthew 13:44 (NKJV)

44 “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

29. Where did the man find the treasure (v. 44)?

30. Why did the man buy the field (v. 44)? (See also 1 Corinthians 6:20 and Hebrews 12:2.)

31. PROPOUND: What do you think the treasure represents (See Galatians 3:13, 1 Corinthians 6:20, 1 Peter 1:18)?

## Parable of the Pearl of Great Price - Read Matthew 13:45-46

Matthew 13:45-46 (NKJV)

45 “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls,

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

32. What did the merchant give for the pearl of great price (v. 46)?

33. PROPOUND: What do you think the pearl represents? (See also 2 Corinthians 5:21 and Ephesians 2:10.)

## Parable of the Dragnet - Read Matthew 13:47-50

Matthew 13:47-50 (NKJV)

47 “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet that was cast into the sea and gathered some of every kind,

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

49 So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just,

50 and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.”

34. In this parable, what is caught in the dragnet (v. 47)?

35. What is done with what is caught in the dragnet (v.48)?

36. How does Jesus describe the place where the wicked will be cast (v. 50)?

## Parable of the Householder - Read Matthew 13:51-53

Matthew 13:51-53 (NKJV)

51 Jesus said to them, “Have you understood all these things?” They said to Him, “Yes, Lord.”

52 Then He said to them, “Therefore every scribe instructed concerning the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure things new and old.”

53 Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these parables, that He departed from there.

37. PROPOUND: What do you think the treasure is that the householder brings out? (See Proverbs 15:6 and Matthew 12:35.)

## Rejection at Nazareth - Read Matthew 13:54-58

Matthew 13:54-58 (NKJV)

54 When He had come to His own country, He taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished and said, “Where did this Man get this wisdom and these mighty works?

55 Is this not the carpenter’s son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas?

56 And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this Man get all these things?”

57 So they were offended at Him. But Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and in his own house.”

58 Now He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

38. Jesus went to teach in His own country. Why were the people there so astonished at His teachings (vv. 55-56)?

39. PROCLAIM: The Catholic Church teaches the doctrine of the perpetual virginity of Mary. According to the doctrine, Mary was a virgin for her entire life, making Jesus her only biological son. How does Matthew 13:55-56 refute that teaching?

40. What was the response of the people in Jesus' country to His teachings and mighty works (v. 57)?

41. What was the result of their response to Jesus (v. 58)?

42. PROTECT: Many of the parables Jesus gave in Matthew 13 illustrate a separation between two different groups of people. Identify them.

PROCESS: Review what you've learned in Matthew 13. Highlight what the Lord has shown you so you can share it with the group.

PRAY: Father, thank You for giving me an understanding of the mysteries of the word of the kingdom of heaven, and may it produce a crop in my life.

Journal your prayer here: