

Welcome to Grace Christian Fellowship

Jesus is Lord! (Romans 10:9)

Topic: Matthew 13:1-23

Jesus explains why some listen to his message and why some end up rejecting it

- all verses are from the *NLT* unless otherwise stated

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Matthew

Our text for today ...

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Matthew 13:1-23

¹ Later that same day Jesus left the house and sat beside the lake. ² A large crowd soon gathered around him, so he got into a boat. Then he sat there and taught as the people stood on the shore. ³ He told many stories in the form of parables, such as this one:

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Matthew 13:1-23

“Listen! A farmer went out to plant some seeds. ⁴ As he scattered them across his field, some seeds fell on a footpath, and the birds came and ate them. ⁵ Other seeds fell on shallow soil with underlying rock. The seeds sprouted quickly because the soil was shallow. ⁶ But the plants soon wilted under the hot sun, and since they didn’t have deep roots, they died. ⁷ Other seeds fell among thorns that grew up and choked out the tender plants. ⁸ Still other seeds fell on fertile soil, and they produced a crop that was thirty, sixty, and even a hundred times as much as had been planted! ⁹ Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand.”
¹⁰ His disciples came and asked him, “Why do you use parables when you talk to the people?”

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Matthew 13:1-23

¹¹ He replied, “You are permitted to understand the secrets of the Kingdom of Heaven, but others are not. ¹² To those who listen to my teaching, more understanding will be given, and they will have an abundance of knowledge. But for those who are not listening, even what little understanding they have will be taken away from them.

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Matthew 13:1-23

¹³ That is why I use these parables, For they look, but they don’t really see. They hear, but they don’t really listen or understand. ¹⁴ This fulfills the prophecy of Isaiah that says, ‘When you hear what I say, you will not understand. When you see what I do, you will not comprehend. ¹⁵ For the hearts of these people are hardened, and their ears cannot hear, and they have closed their eyes — so their eyes cannot see, and their ears cannot hear, and their hearts cannot understand, and they cannot turn to me and let me heal them.’

¹⁶ “But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear. ¹⁷ I tell you the truth, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, but they didn’t see it. And they longed to hear what you hear, but they didn’t hear it.

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Matthew 13:1-23

¹⁸ "Now listen to the explanation of the parable about the farmer planting seeds:¹⁹ The seed that fell on the footpath represents those who hear the message about the Kingdom and don't understand it. Then the evil one comes and snatches away the seed that was planted in their hearts. ²⁰ The seed on the rocky soil represents those who hear the message and immediately receive it with joy. ²¹ But since they don't have deep roots, they don't last long. They fall away as soon as they have problems or are persecuted for believing God's word. ²² The seed that fell among the thorns represents those who hear God's word, but all too quickly the message is crowded out by the worries of this life and the lure of wealth, so no fruit is produced. ²³ The seed that fell on good soil represents those who truly hear and understand God's word and produce a harvest of thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times as much as had been planted!"

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Unpacking today's text

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Questions

Why do some people listen to his message and hearken to it, and why some end up rejecting it?

What are some practical advantages of telling the Gospel through stories or parables?

Does God want people to seek Him?

If a person refuses to seek God does that make it easier to understand the Gospel?

What is God's intent (motive) for why people should listen to His message?

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Questions

What is the 'up-side' to **not** hearing, or refusing to hear, Jesus?

What is the 'down-side' to investigating the teachings of Jesus?

... Or to following Jesus?

When the seed is planted, if a person hears the message and does not understand, what can he do?

For one who understands, what does he need to endure?

What is God's desire for those who understand and endure in the Gospel?

Is the Church responsible for what the 'soil' does with the message?

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Context

Jesus has just finished responding to the challenges of the Pharisees

- They claim he uses Satan to work miracles
- They want a sign of authority

The Pharisees and many of the people have rejected Jesus.

Why?

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Matthew 13:1-23

¹ Later that same day Jesus left the house and sat beside the lake. ² A large crowd soon gathered around him, so he got into a boat. Then he sat there and taught as the people stood on the shore.

Why did Jesus go and sit by the lake?

Maybe ... to catch fish? ... To be a fisher of men?
Why get into a boat?

³ He told many stories in the form of parables, such as this one:

Why tell stories?

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Matthew 13:1-23

"Listen! A farmer went out to plant some seeds. ⁴ As he scattered them across his field,

- some seeds fell on a footpath, and the birds came and ate them.
- ⁵ Other seeds fell on shallow soil with underlying rock. The seeds sprouted quickly because the soil was shallow. ⁶ But the plants soon wilted under the hot sun, and since they didn't have deep roots, they died.
- ⁷ Other seeds fell among thorns that grew up and choked out the tender plants.
- ⁸ Still other seeds fell on fertile soil, and they produced a crop that was thirty, sixty, and even a hundred times as much as had been planted!

⁹ Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand."

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Matthew 13:1-23

¹⁰ His disciples came and asked him, "Why do you use parables when you talk to the people?" ¹¹ He replied, "You are permitted to understand the secrets of the Kingdom of Heaven, but others are not.

This is life outside of the garden
We are supposed to ask, seek, knock
- Not stiff-arm God and say, 'God - prove it first'

His purpose was for the nations to seek after God and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him — though he is not far from any one of us.

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Matthew 13:1-23

¹⁰ His disciples came and asked him, "Why do you use parables when you talk to the people?" ¹¹ He replied, "You are permitted to understand the secrets of the Kingdom of Heaven, but others are not.

This is life outside of the garden
We are supposed to ask, seek, knock
- Not stiff-arm God and say, 'God - prove it first'

Acts 17:27

His purpose was for the nations to seek after God and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him — though he is not far from any one of us.

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Matthew 13:1-23

¹² To those who listen to my teaching, more understanding will be given, and they will have an abundance of knowledge. But for those who are not listening, even what little understanding they have will be taken away from them.

God wants 'listeners'
For those who listen, more is given

Have you known persons who stand back and insist that God prove himself first?
- They want an academic explanation first

If a person refuses to seek God does that make it easier to understand the Gospel?

Have you known some who learn some about God but do not dig into the word and then abandon the faith?

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Matthew 13:1-23

¹³ That is why I use these parables, For they look, but they don't really see. They hear, but they don't really listen or understand. ¹⁴ This fulfills the prophecy of Isaiah that says,

'When you hear what I say, you will not understand. When you see what I do, you will not comprehend. ¹⁵ For the hearts of these people are *hardened*, and their ears cannot hear, and they have closed their eyes — so their eyes cannot see, and their ears cannot hear, and their hearts cannot understand, and they cannot turn to me and **let me heal them.**' [Isaiah 6:9-10]

Can non-believers find excuses for not believing?
'This is nonsense, who can listen to it?'
What do we learn about God's true intent?

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Matthew 13:1-23

¹⁶ "But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear. ¹⁷ I tell you the truth, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, but they didn't see it. And they longed to hear what you hear, but they didn't hear it.

What is the 'up-side' to **not** hearing, or refusing to hear, Jesus?

What is the 'down-side' to investigating the teachings of Jesus? ... Or to following Jesus?

What is the 'up-side' to following Jesus?
- In this life? ...
- In the next life? ...

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Matthew 13:1-23

¹⁸ "Now listen to the explanation of the parable about the farmer planting seeds:

Jesus explains the parable here, one of the few times we see the explanation

It is rooted in the context of the time

Requires an understanding of

- the time,
- the culture,
- the customs,
- the religious background

Applications that ignore the context are suspect

Applications that personalize or spiritualize the message beyond what the audience would understand ... are also suspect

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Matthew 13:1-23

- ¹⁹ The seed that fell on the **footpath** represents those who hear the message about the Kingdom and **don't understand it**. Then the evil one comes and snatches away the seed that was planted in their hearts.

Have you known people like this?

They hear the message, it was planted in their heart. But they don't understand the importance, the impact, the meaning.

The seed is snatched away.

Why do we have discipling in our church?

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Matthew 13:1-23

- ²⁰ The seed on the rocky soil represents those who hear the message and immediately receive it with joy. ²¹ But since they don't have deep roots, they don't last long. They fall away as soon as they have **problems or are persecuted** for believing God's word.

They hear, the seed is in the heart/mind, they understand it, they receive it with joy

But **they have no roots**, they do not last

When problems in life comes, they leave

Have you known people like this?

Why do we go deep in the Bible in our sermons?

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Matthew 13:1-23

- ²² The seed that fell among the thorns represents those who hear God's word, but all too quickly the message is **crowded out by the worries of this life and the lure of wealth**, so no fruit is produced.

They hear, the seed is in the heart/mind, they understand it, they receive it with joy, they have roots, but are **distracted by worries and things** they can have ... or other things they can do ... and **have NO fruit**

What distracts you?

Is wealth a necessary part of salvation?

Have you known people like this?

Does the message motivate you to want to help others to know God's love, His joy, His peace, His mercy, His grace, His Kingdom?

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Matthew 13:1-23

- ²³ The seed that fell on good soil represents those who truly hear and understand God's word and produce a harvest of thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times as much as had been planted!"

Is the church responsible for the kind of soil?

Is the church responsible for discerning the kind of soil?

Is the church responsible for what the 'soil' does with the seed?

What is the church responsible for?

- Scattering seed

What is the fruit?

- Changed lives

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Summary

Why do some people listen to his message and hearken to it, and why do some end up rejecting it?

It's in the dirt (heart, mind)

What are some practical advantages of telling the Gospel through stories or parables?

- People will listen to stories without interruption and then think about it

Does God want people to seek Him? - Yes

If a person refuses to seek God does that make it easier to understand the Gospel? - No

What is God's intent (motive) for why people should listen to His message?

- To heal them from sin & imperfection

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Summary

What is the 'up-side' to **not** hearing, or refusing to hear, Jesus?
- None that I can think of

What is the 'down-side' to investigating the teachings of Jesus?
... Or to following Jesus?
- None that I can think of

When the seed is planted, if a person hears the message and does not understand, what can he do?
- Ask, seek, knock (Matthew 7:7)

For one who understands the message, what does he need so that he may endure?
- Roots

What is God's desire for those who understand and endure in the Gospel?
- The roots bear fruit

Is the Church responsible for what the 'soil' does with the message?
- No

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Next time ...

Matthew 13:24-30; 36-43; 47-50

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