

PARABLES

I'd like to share a few thoughts and some scriptures with you about Jesus's parables of the kingdom of God.

In Matthew 13.11 Jesus told His disciples,
To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven.

The kingdom of God was prophesied by the angels, declared by John the Baptist, preached by Jesus everywhere, he instructed his disciples to preach the gospel of the kingdom everywhere, and he even spoke of the kingdom of God after His resurrection.

Why is the kingdom of God such a mystery?

Jesus said in John 18.36 that my kingdom is not of this world. It's not visible to the natural senses.

God is a Spirit. His Kingdom is also spiritual. Natural man can't comprehend things of Spirit. It requires a revelation of the Holy Spirit to perceive it.

The Kingdom of God or the Kingdom of Heaven is mentioned over 100 times in the gospels.

Being born again is only mentioned one time in the Bible. Jesus had a private conversation with a Pharisee named Nicodemus, who came to him secretly. He told Nicodemus in John 3, that unless he was born again he could not see the Kingdom of God and unless he was born of the Spirit he could not enter it.

So in the only place that being born again is even mentioned in the scriptures, it reveals that the goal of being born again is to be recreated in God's spirit and enter His kingdom.

Jesus told His disciples that they had been given the ability to know the mysteries of the Kingdom, but the people had not.

Matthew 13.15 amp explains why.

This nation's heart has grown dull and their ears have become hard-of-hearing, and their eyes they have tightly closed, lest they see and perceive with their eyes and hear and comprehend with their ears, and grasp and understand with their heart, and turn and I should heal them.

The problem was a heart issue. Only those with a repentant heart and a willingness to discard their unfixable nature inherited from Adam will be able to perceive and receive by faith God's offer to be born again of His Spirit and enter His kingdom. The natural thinking and perception of man is incapable of laying hold of the spiritual reality that God is offering.

Religion won't help at all either. Jesus told the Pharisees in John 5.39, you search the scriptures thinking that you will find eternal life, but you are unwilling to come to me that you might have it.

As 1 Corinthians 2.14 states,

The natural man does not accept things of the Spirit of God because they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them because they are spiritually appraised.

God intends for all men to receive by faith His eternal life and enter His kingdom. It was not offered to the intelligent, the powerful, or to religious people. It was an equal opportunity to receive God's eternal life and enter His kingdom that is offered to all men by faith.

Mark 4:22 in the Amplified version reads,

Things are hidden temporarily only as a means to revelation. For there is nothing hidden except to be revealed, nor anything temporarily kept secret, except in order that it may be made known.

Jesus didn't come to Earth to share a few little bible stories with us. He preached everywhere repent, for the Kingdom of God is here. In other words, what you were actually created for is available now.

Let's look at a few of Jesus's parables and I'll share a few of the Kingdom realities that I've been able to glean from them.

In Mark chapter 4 Jesus shared the familiar parable of the sower and the soils. He explained that the sower went out to sow his seed. It landed on four different types of soil.

Some fell beside the road and the birds ate it.

Some fell on the rocky soil and it sprang up quickly but was later burned by the sun.

Some landed among the thorns which eventually choked it out.

Some landed on good fertile ground and brought forth a crop of 30, 60 and 100 fold.

When his disciples asked him to explain this parable He responded with a question. If you cannot discern and understand this parable, how will you understand all the parables?

Jesus was revealing to them that there is a key in this parable that unlocks all the parables. In other words if you don't get this one, you won't get the other ones either.

This parable reveals the key.

The Word of God is a Seed. The Kingdom of God grows in our lives by the word of the Kingdom being sown in them.

Let's look at a few more scriptures.

John 1.1-4 amp

In the beginning, before all time was the word, Christ, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God Himself. He was present originally with God. All things were made and came into existence through Him, and without Him was not even one thing made that is coming to being. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

Hebrews 11.3

By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.

Deuteronomy 8.3

He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna that you did not know, nor did your father's know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord.

1 Peter 1.23-25

For you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and abiding word of God.

Jesus came to earth to announce that the Kingdom of God was here, to be the way into the kingdom of God and He invited all mankind to enter and be citizens of it. Jesus said I AM the way, the truth, and the life, no one comes to the Father except by me.

Like Jesus said, unless you're born again you cannot see the kingdom. Unless you're born of the spirit you cannot enter it.

Jesus in His parables was not trying to describe some sort of a far off mythical place.

He was describing to us the place that God created for us to live in His presence.

Let's look at a couple more parables.

Matthew 13.44

The Kingdom of Heaven is like a 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.

The next parable is very much like it. The Kingdom of Heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls, and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

Here are a few observations from these parables.

God's kingdom is eternal and has been around as long as God, even though we may have just become aware of it.

The inestimable value of God's kingdom makes every other thing in our lives pale by comparison.

His kingdom is so appealing to man's originally created nature, our spirits, that it makes us willing to jettison every other thing in our lives that we would possess it.

The Apostle Paul was a great example of this. In Philippians 3.3-11 he stated
Whatever was gain to me, I consider it a complete loss that I might be found in Christ and know Him and the power of His resurrection.

Let's look at Matthew 13.31.

Kingdom of Heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, and though it's smaller than all the other seeds, when it is full-grown, it is larger than all the garden plants, and becomes a tree so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches.

A few more observations.

The kingdom of God is like the mustard seed, although to our senses it may seem small and insignificant, it has a much greater potential than we can even imagine.

The kingdom of God starts with the word of the Kingdom being sown in our hearts, and with the empowering of the Holy Spirit in our spirits it continually increases until it grows to full stature.

The kingdom of God not only has benefit to the sower, but it also has tremendous benefit to the many others in our lives who can come and dwell in it.

Here's another parable.

Matthew 13:33

The Kingdom of Heaven is like leaven which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, until it was all leavened.

A few more observations.

The word of the kingdom is like leaven, when it's placed in our spirits it will eventually overtake our entire lives.

It seems significant that the woman put the leaven in three measures of meal. We are triune beings, spirit soul and body. The Kingdom of God will affect every area of our lives to be the expression of His eternal life.

The only real catalyst to recreate our fallen nature back to our originally created oneness with God, is the Kingdom of God.

Let's look at another one of Jesus's parables in Matthew 25.14.

It's the story of a slave owner who had three slaves. He gave one of them five talents, another two talents, and the third one talent.

The first slave traded in the marketplace and gained five more talents. The second one did the same and gained two talents.

The third was afraid and hid the one talent in the ground.

When the slave owner returned and asked for an accounting of their efforts, the first two slaves were praised saying well done good and faithful slaves.

The third one was called wicked, lazy and worthless and was cast into outer darkness.

I've been taught my entire Christian life the God wants to use my natural talents to benefit His Kingdom. This parable was used to justify this idea.

A few observations as we look at this parable a little closer.

In our modern times when we talk about talents we are talking about an acquired skill or ability.

In this parable a talent was a measure of weight. It was used to weigh gold and silver and was roughly about 100 pounds.

Notice that the slave owner gave the slaves his possessions to invest for his benefit. He didn't ask them to pawn their most prized possessions or empty their bank accounts to invest for him.

The slave with one talent was deceived. He said that the slave owner reaped where he did not sow. The slave owner's investment was considerable.

800 pounds of gold or silver in our modern day would be worth millions and millions of dollars.

He rightfully expected a good return on his investment.

1 Peter 4.10 amp says,

As each of you has received a gift, (a particular spiritual talent, a gracious divine endowment), employ it for one another as befits good trustees of God's many-sided grace, (as faithful stewards of the extremely diverse powers and gifts granted to Christians by unmerited favor).

God has not recruited us to work for Him or to expend our natural efforts to try and establish His Kingdom.

He has given His Holy Spirit to dwell within us, make us new creatures, and empower us to BE His witnesses and Ambassadors of His kingdom.

In Acts 1.8 Jesus didn't say wait in Jerusalem and I'll teach you to do witnessing for Me.

The Amplified version reads

You shall receive power (ability, efficiency, and might) when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall BE my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, to the ends of the of the Earth

God imparted His Holy Spirit to them. It was God's presence in them, by His Holy Spirit, that caused them to BE His witnesses and not just do witnessing by their own effort and ability.

God has committed everything He is and everything He has to His children, so that they would fulfill His Great Commission of reaching this entire world with the gospel of the Kingdom.

Jesus said that the Kingdom of God does not come with outward observation but it is within you.

I pray that the Holy Spirit would give us a revelation of this reality so that we can BE His witnesses and His ambassadors of His kingdom to this entire world.

God bless you.
Jim Fuller