CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Matthew Chapter 13 — Parables of the Kingdom

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Matthew Chapter 12 was full of conflict.

The Pharisees plotted to kill Jesus.

They said His power came from the devil.

Even His own family misunderstood Him.

Now, in Matthew Chapter 13, Jesus begins to teach in a new way.

He speaks in **parables.**

A **parable** is a story from everyday life that teaches a spiritual truth.

Jesus used farmers, seeds, weeds, bread, treasure, pearls, and fishing nets.

Things everyone understood.

But the meaning was hidden from those who did not want to hear.

And it was revealed to those who did.

Matthew 13 is the third of the five great teaching sections in Matthew.

It contains seven parables about the **kingdom of heaven.**

The Sower — how people respond to God's Word.

The Weeds — good and evil growing together until the end.

The Mustard Seed — the kingdom starts small and grows great.

The Yeast — the kingdom quietly spreads through everything.

The Hidden Treasure — the kingdom is worth everything.

The Pearl — the kingdom is worth everything we have.

The Net — a final separation is coming.

In the middle of these parables, Jesus explains why He teaches this way.

Some people see but do not see.

They hear but do not hear.

Their hearts have grown hard.

But His disciples are blessed.

They see and hear what prophets longed to see and hear.

The chapter ends with a sad scene.

Jesus returns to His hometown of Nazareth.

The people who knew Him best refuse to believe in Him.

Matthew 13 therefore teaches us two great truths:

The kingdom of heaven is growing quietly but surely in the world.

And:

The way we respond to God's Word shows what kind of heart we have.

The central truth of Matthew 13 is:

The kingdom of heaven grows through the Word of God in receptive hearts, it is worth more than everything we own, and at the end of the age God will separate the righteous from the wicked.

I. JESUS SAT BY THE LAKE

Matthew 13:1 — That Same Day

“That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake.”

That same day connects this chapter to Matthew 12.

It was the same day the Pharisees accused Jesus of working with Satan.

The same day His family came looking for Him.

Jesus **went out of the house** and **sat by the lake.**

This was the Sea of Galilee.

Sitting was the normal position for a teacher.

Cross References

Mark 4:1

Again Jesus began teaching by the lake. A very large crowd gathered around Him.

Luke 8:4

A large crowd was gathering, and people were coming to Jesus from every town. He told them this story.

Matthew 4:18

As Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus kept teaching even on a day of great opposition.

II. A BOAT FOR A PULPIT

Matthew 13:2 — The People Stood on the Shore

“Large crowds gathered around Him, so He got into a boat and sat down, while the people stood on the shore.”

So many people came that Jesus **got into a boat.**

The boat became His pulpit.

The shore became the seats.

The water carried His voice to the crowd.

There may have been a natural cove where sound carried well.

Cross References

Luke 5:3

Jesus got into one of the boats, the one that belonged to Simon, and asked him to push off a little from shore. Then He sat down and taught the people from the boat.

Mark 3:9

Because of the crowd, Jesus told His followers to get a small boat ready for Him so the people would not crowd Him.

Mark 4:1

So many people came that He got into a boat and sat in it on the lake. All the people stayed on the shore.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus uses ordinary things to carry His Word to people.

III. A FARMER WENT OUT TO SOW

Matthew 13:3 — Many Things in Parables

“He told them many things in parables, saying: ‘A farmer went out to sow seed.’”

This is the first time in Matthew that the word **parable** is used.

The word means **“to put beside.”**

A parable puts an everyday story beside a spiritual truth.

Jesus began with a farmer.

In Israel, a farmer often walked through his field throwing seed by hand.

The seed would land in many different places.

Cross References

Mark 4:2

> Jesus taught them many things by using stories.

Luke 8:5

> A farmer went out to plant his seed.

Ezekiel 17:2

> Human, tell a story and give a lesson to the people of Israel.

Spiritual Principle

God uses simple stories to teach deep truths.

IV. SEED ALONG THE PATH

Matthew 13:4 — The Birds Ate It

“As he scattered it, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up.”

Fields in Israel often had paths running through them.

People walked on these paths, packing the soil down hard.

Seed that fell on the path could not sink in.

It just sat on top.

And **the birds came and ate it up.**

Cross References

Mark 4:4

> While he was planting, some seed fell by the road, and the birds came and ate it all up.

Luke 8:5

> While he was planting, some seed fell by the road. People walked on it, and the birds ate it up.

Isaiah 55:10

> Rain and snow fall from the sky and do not return without watering the ground. They make plants grow, and they give seed to the farmer and bread for people to eat.

Spiritual Principle

A hard heart keeps God's Word from going in.

V. SEED ON ROCKY PLACES

Matthew 13:5 — It Sprang Up Quickly

“Some fell on rocky places, where there wasn't much soil. It sprang up quickly because the soil was shallow.”

In many parts of Galilee, there was a layer of limestone rock just under the surface.

From the top, the soil looked fine.

But it was only a few inches deep.

Seed that fell there **sprang up quickly.**

The shallow soil warmed up fast, so the plant grew fast.

At first, it looked like the best plant in the field.

Cross References

Mark 4:5

Some seed fell on rocky ground where there was not much dirt. That seed grew very fast, because the ground was not deep.

Luke 8:6

Some seed fell on rock, and when it began to grow, it died because it had no water.

Hosea 6:4

Your faithfulness is like a morning mist, like the dew that goes away early in the day.

Spiritual Principle

Quick growth is not always lasting growth.

VI. NO ROOT

Matthew 13:6 — Scorched by the Sun

“But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root.”

When the hot sun came, the plants **withered.**

Why?

Because they had no root.

The rock under the soil kept the roots from going deep.

Without deep roots, the plants could not reach water.

What grew fast died fast.

Cross References

Mark 4:6

But when the sun rose, the plants dried up and died because they did not have deep roots.

James 1:11

The sun rises with burning heat and dries up the plant. The flower falls off, and its beauty is gone.

Jonah 4:8

When the sun rose, God sent a hot east wind. The sun beat down on Jonah's head, and he became weak.

Spiritual Principle

Faith without roots cannot survive the heat.

VII. SEED AMONG THORNS

Matthew 13:7 — Choked

“Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants.”

Some seed fell where thorn seeds or roots were already in the ground.

The soil may have looked clean.

But the thorns were there.

The good seed and the thorns grew up together.

And the thorns **choked** the good plants.

They took the sunlight, water, and room the good plants needed.

Cross References

Mark 4:7

> Some other seed fell among thorny weeds, which grew and choked the good plants. So those plants did not produce grain.

Luke 8:7

> Some seed fell among thorny weeds, but the weeds grew up with it and choked the good plants.

Jeremiah 4:3

> Plow your fields, which have not been plowed. Don't plant seeds among thorns.

Spiritual Principle

Competing priorities can choke out spiritual life.

VIII. SEED ON GOOD SOIL

Matthew 13:8 — A Hundred, Sixty, or Thirty

“Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty, or thirty times what was sown.”

Finally, some seed fell on **good soil.**

It was soft, deep, and clean.

And it **produced a crop.**

In those days, a crop of ten times what was planted was considered good.

A crop of thirty, sixty, or a hundred times was amazing.

Not every plant produced the same amount.

But every plant on good soil produced fruit.

Cross References

Mark 4:8

> Some other seed fell on good ground. It began to grow and produced grain. Some plants made thirty times more, some sixty times more, and some a hundred times more.

Luke 8:8

> And some seed fell on good ground and grew and made a hundred times more.

John 15:5

> I am the vine, and you are the branches. If you stay joined to Me and I stay joined to you, you will produce much fruit.

Spiritual Principle

A receptive heart always produces fruit.

Key Truth

The seed was the same in every place.

The difference was the soil.

IX. WHOEVER HAS EARS

Matthew 13:9 — Let Them Hear

“Whoever has ears, let them hear.”

Jesus ended the story with a call.

Listen.

Think about this.

The parable is about hearing.

And now Jesus asks His listeners how they are hearing.

Cross References

Mark 4:9

> Then Jesus said, “Whoever has ears to hear should listen.”

Luke 8:8

> As Jesus finished the story, He called out, “Whoever has ears to hear should listen!”

Revelation 2:7

> Whoever has ears should listen to what the Spirit says to the churches.

Spiritual Principle

The way we listen to God's Word matters.

X. WHY PARABLES?

Matthew 13:10 — The Disciples Ask

“The disciples came and asked Him, ‘Why do You speak to the people in parables?’”

The disciples noticed a change.

Jesus had been teaching plainly.

Now He was speaking in stories.

So they asked Him why.

Cross References

Mark 4:10

> Later, when Jesus was alone, the twelve apostles and others around Him asked Him about the stories.

Luke 8:9

> Jesus' followers asked Him what this story meant.

John 16:25

> I have told you these things using stories. But the time is coming when I will not use stories to tell you things. I will speak to you in plain words about the Father.

Spiritual Principle

Honest questions bring us closer to Jesus' answers.

XI. THE SECRETS OF THE KINGDOM

Matthew 13:11 — Given to You

“He replied, ‘Because the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them.’”

A **secret** in the Bible is a truth that was hidden in the past but is now revealed by God.

It is not something that can be discovered by human cleverness.

It must be **given.**

The disciples had been given understanding.

Those who had hardened their hearts had not.

Cross References

Mark 4:11

> Jesus said, “You can know the secret about the kingdom of God. But to other people I tell everything by using stories.”

Luke 8:10

> Jesus said, “You have been chosen to know the secrets about the kingdom of God. But I use stories to speak to other people.”

1 Corinthians 2:10

> But God has shown us these things through the Spirit. The Spirit searches out all things, even the deep secrets of God.

Spiritual Principle

Spiritual understanding is a gift from God.

XII. WHOEVER HAS WILL BE GIVEN MORE

Matthew 13:12 — Abundance or Loss

“Whoever has will be given more, and they will have abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them.”

This is a principle of spiritual growth.

Those who receive God's truth and respond to it will be given **more.**

Those who reject the truth they have will lose even that.

Truth is like a muscle.

If you use it, it grows.

If you refuse it, it weakens.

Cross References

Mark 4:25

> Those who have understanding will be given more. But those who do not have understanding will lose even what they have.

Luke 8:18

> So be careful how you listen. Those who have understanding will be given more. But those who do not have understanding will lose even what they think they have.

Matthew 25:29

> Everyone who has will be given more, and he will have much more than he needs. But the one who does not have anything will have everything taken away from him.

Spiritual Principle

Responding to God's truth leads to more truth.

Key Truth

The more we obey what we know, the more God shows us.

XIII. SEEING BUT NOT SEEING

Matthew 13:13 — Hearing but Not Hearing

“This is why I speak to them in parables: Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand.”

The people saw Jesus' miracles.

But they did not **see** who He was.

They heard His words.

But they did not **hear** what He meant.

Parables work like a test.

To those who are seeking, they open up the truth.

To those who have already rejected the truth, they remain a puzzle.

Cross References

Mark 4:12

> I do this so that “they will look and look, but they will not learn. They will listen and listen, but they will not understand.”

Luke 8:10

> I use stories so that “they will look, but they may not see. They will listen, but they may not understand.”

Ezekiel 12:2

> Human, you live among people who refuse to obey. They have eyes to see, but they do not see. They have ears to hear, but they do not hear.

Spiritual Principle

A closed heart cannot receive what open eyes can see.

XIV. ISAIAH'S PROPHECY

Matthew 13:14 — Ever Hearing, Never Understanding

“In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: ‘You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving.’”

Jesus quoted Isaiah 6.

When Isaiah was called to be a prophet, God told him that many people would not listen.

They would hear his message, but they would not understand.

The same thing was happening with Jesus.

This verse is quoted many times in the New Testament.

It shows that rejection of the truth is not a surprise to God.

Cross References

Isaiah 6:9

> Then the Lord said, “Go and tell this to the people: ‘You will listen and listen, but you will not understand. You will look and look, but you will not learn.’”

John 12:40

> He has blinded their eyes and closed their minds, so that they will not see with their eyes or understand with their minds.

Acts 28:26

> Go to these people and say: “You will listen and listen, but you will not understand. You will look and look, but you will not learn.”

Spiritual Principle

God's Word is never surprised by human unbelief.

XV. A HARDENED HEART

Matthew 13:15 — Otherwise I Would Heal Them

“For this people's heart has grown hard; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and turn, and I would heal them.”

Notice why they could not understand.

Their heart has grown hard.

They have closed their eyes.

They chose not to see.

They did not want to **turn.**

Because if they turned, God **would heal them.**

God's desire is to heal.

But a hard heart refuses healing.

Cross References

Isaiah 6:10

> Make the minds of these people stubborn. Make their ears deaf and their eyes blind. Otherwise, they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their minds, and come back to Me and be healed.

Acts 28:27

> For the minds of these people have become stubborn. They have stopped up their ears, and they have closed their eyes.

Romans 11:8

> As it is written: “God gave the people a dull mind so they could not understand.”

Spiritual Warning

People can close their eyes to God until they can no longer see.

Key Truth

God wants to heal; a hard heart refuses to be healed.

XVI. BLESSED ARE YOUR EYES

Matthew 13:16 — Because They See

“But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear.”

Jesus turned to His disciples.

“Blessed are your eyes.”

They were seeing the truth.

They were hearing and believing.

This was not because they were smarter.

It was because God had opened their hearts.

Cross References

Luke 10:23

> Then Jesus turned to His followers and said privately, “You are blessed to see what you now see.”

1 Peter 1:10

> The prophets searched carefully and tried to learn about this salvation. They spoke about the grace that was coming to you.

Psalm 119:18

> Open my eyes to see the wonderful things in Your teachings.

Spiritual Principle

Seeing the truth about Jesus is a great blessing.

XVII. WHAT THE PROPHETS LONGED TO SEE

Matthew 13:17 — Many Prophets and Righteous People

“Truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.”

Think about the Old Testament prophets.

Isaiah.

Jeremiah.

David.

They spoke about the coming Messiah.

They longed to see Him.

But they died without seeing Him.

The disciples were living in the time those prophets dreamed about.

They were seeing the Messiah face to face.

Cross References

Luke 10:24

> I tell you, many prophets and kings wanted to see what you now see, but they did not. And they wanted to hear what you now hear, but they did not.

Hebrews 11:13

> All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not get the things God promised, but they saw them coming far in the future and were glad.

John 8:56

> Your father Abraham was very happy that he would see the day when I came. He saw it and was glad.

Spiritual Principle

We live in the age of fulfillment that the prophets longed for.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

What the prophets waited for, we have been given — do not take it for granted.

XVIII. THE MEANING OF THE SOWER

Matthew 13:18 — Listen Then

“Listen then to the meaning of the parable of the sower:”

Now Jesus explains the first parable.

This is one of only a few parables Jesus explained in detail.

His explanation helps us understand how to read the others.

Cross References

Mark 4:13

> Then Jesus said to them, “Don't you understand this story? If you don't, how will you understand any of My stories?”

Luke 8:11

This is what the story means: The seed is God's message.

Proverbs 1:5

> Wise people can also listen and learn. Even smart people can find good advice in these words.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus explains His Word to those who want to understand.

XIX. THE HARD PATH

Matthew 13:19 — The Evil One Snatches It Away

“When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed along the path.”

The **seed** is **the message about the kingdom.**

The **path** is a hard heart.

The person hears the message but does not let it in.

And **the evil one** — Satan — **snatches it away.**

The birds in the story are a picture of the devil.

He is always ready to steal God's Word before it can take root.

Cross References

Mark 4:15

> Sometimes people hear the teaching, but Satan quickly comes and takes away the teaching that was planted in them.

Luke 8:12

> The devil comes and takes away the teaching from their hearts so they cannot believe it and be saved.

1 Peter 5:8

> Control yourselves and be careful! The devil is your enemy, and he goes around like a roaring lion looking for someone to eat.

Spiritual Warning

The enemy works hard to steal God's Word from our hearts.

Application

The enemy steals the Word through:

- Distraction during worship.
- Forgetting what we heard right away.
- Doubt and arguments.
- Busyness after church.
- Never thinking about it again.

XX. THE ROCKY GROUND

Matthew 13:20 — Receives It with Joy

“The seed on rocky ground is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy.”

This person seems like a wonderful response.

They hear the word **immediately.**

They receive it **with joy.**

They are excited.

They seem to be growing fast.

But something is missing underneath.

Cross References

Mark 4:16

> Others are like the seed planted on rocky ground. They hear the teaching and quickly accept it with joy.

Luke 8:13

> The seed that fell on rock is like those who hear God's teaching and accept it gladly.

Hebrews 6:4

> Some people have once understood God's truth. They tasted the gift from heaven and shared in the Holy Spirit.

Spiritual Principle

Emotional excitement is not the same as deep faith.

XXI. NO ROOT

Matthew 13:21 — When Trouble Comes

“But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away.”

They have no root.

Their faith was on the surface.

Then **trouble or persecution** came.

Like the hot sun, it tested them.

And **they quickly fall away.**

Following Jesus costs something.

When the cost came, they quit.

Cross References

Mark 4:17

> But they don't let the teaching go deep into their lives, so they keep it only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the teaching, they quickly give up.

2 Timothy 1:15

> You know that everyone in the country of Asia has left me.

Hebrews 6:6

> And then they fell away from Christ. It is not possible to bring them back to a changed life again.

Spiritual Principle

Hard times reveal whether our faith has roots.

Key Truth

Roots grow in secret before the storm, so the plant can stand during the storm.

XXII. THE THORNY GROUND

Matthew 13:22 — Worries and Riches

“The seed among the thorns is the one who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, making it unfruitful.”

This person hears the word.

They do not reject it.

They do not quit under persecution.

But other things crowd it out.

Jesus named two kinds of thorns.

The worries of this life.

The deceitfulness of riches.

Money promises happiness and security.

But it lies.

Little by little, these thorns **choke the word.**

The person becomes **unfruitful.**

Cross References

Mark 4:18

> Others are like the seed planted among the thorny weeds. They hear the teaching, but the worries of this life, the false hope of riches, and the desire for other things choke the teaching.

Luke 8:14

> The seed that fell among the thorny weeds is like those who hear God's teaching, but they let the worries, riches, and pleasures of this life keep them from growing and producing good fruit.

1 Timothy 6:9

> People who want to get rich bring temptation to themselves and are caught in a trap. They want many foolish and harmful things that ruin and destroy people.

Spiritual Warning

The thorns that choke faith are often ordinary worries and desires.

Application

Thorns in our lives may include:

- Constant worry.
- The love of money.
- Being too busy.
- Chasing pleasure.
- Wanting more and more things.
- Letting entertainment crowd out God.

XXIII. THE GOOD SOIL

Matthew 13:23 — Hears, Understands, Produces

“But the seed on good soil is the one who hears the word, understands it, and produces a harvest —yielding a hundred, sixty, or thirty times what was sown.”

The good soil does three things.

Hears the word.

Understands it.

Produces a harvest.

This is a true disciple.

God's Word goes deep.

It takes root.

It grows.

And it produces fruit.

The amount of fruit is different for each person.

But every true believer bears fruit.

Cross References

Mark 4:20

> Others are like the seed planted in the good ground. They hear the teaching and accept it. Then they grow and produce fruit — sometimes thirty times more, sometimes sixty times more, and sometimes a hundred times more.

Luke 8:15

> The seed that fell on good ground is like those who hear God's teaching with good, honest hearts and obey it. They patiently produce good fruit.

Galatians 5:22

> But the fruit the Holy Spirit produces is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Spiritual Principle

The proof of a good heart is fruit.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The question is not whether the seed is good, but whether the soil is ready.

XXIV. THE PARABLE OF THE WEEDS

Matthew 13:24 — Good Seed in His Field

“Jesus told them another parable: ‘The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field.’”

The second parable also begins with a man sowing seed.

But this time, the focus is different.

The first parable was about the soil.

This parable is about what happens in the field after the seed is planted.

The man sowed **good seed.**

Cross References

Matthew 3:12

> He will come ready to clean the grain. He will gather the wheat into His barn, but He will burn the chaff with a fire that cannot be put out.

1 Corinthians 3:9

> We are workers together for God, and you are like God's field.

Job 31:40

> Then let thorns grow instead of wheat, and weeds instead of barley.

Spiritual Principle

What God plants is always good.

XXV. AN ENEMY SOWED WEEDS

Matthew 13:25 — While Everyone Was Sleeping

“But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away.”

At night, **his enemy came.**

He **sowed weeds among the wheat.**

Then he **went away.**

This was a real practice in the ancient world.

Roman law even had penalties for sowing weeds in someone else's field.

The weed was probably **darnel.**

When it is young, darnel looks almost exactly like wheat.

Cross References

Galatians 6:7

> Don't be fooled: You cannot cheat God. People harvest only what they plant.

Job 4:8

> I have seen that people who plow evil and plant trouble will harvest it.

1 Thessalonians 5:6

> So we should not be like other people who are sleeping, but we should be awake and have self-control.

Spiritual Warning

The enemy works secretly while people are not watching.

XXVI. THE WEEDS APPEARED

Matthew 13:26 — When the Wheat Formed Heads

“When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared.”

At first, no one could tell the difference.

The weeds and the wheat looked the same.

But when the wheat **formed heads**, the difference became clear.

Wheat produces good grain.

Darnel produces small black seeds that are poisonous.

Fruit reveals what kind of plant it is.

Cross References

1 Corinthians 3:6

> I planted the seed, and Apollos watered it. But God is the One who made it grow.

Hosea 8:7

> They plant the wind, and they will harvest the whirlwind.

Mark 4:26

> Then Jesus said, “The kingdom of God is like someone who plants seed in the ground.”

Spiritual Principle

Time and fruit reveal what is real.

XXVII. WHERE DID THE WEEDS COME FROM?

Matthew 13:27 — The Servants' Question

“The owner's servants came and said, ‘Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?’”

The servants were confused.

Their master had planted **good seed.**

So where did the weeds come from?

This is a question many people ask today.

If God is good, why is there evil in the world?

Why are there false believers in the church?

Cross References

Psalm 92:7

> Wicked people may grow like grass, and evil people may do well, but they will be destroyed forever.

2 Timothy 2:20

> In a large house there are things made of gold and silver, but there are also things made of wood and clay.

Proverbs 24:31

> It was covered with thorns and weeds, and the stone wall had fallen down.

Spiritual Principle

God is not the source of evil.

XXVIII. AN ENEMY DID THIS

Matthew 13:28 — Should We Pull Them Up?

“He replied, ‘An enemy did this.’ The servants asked, ‘Do you want us to go and pull them up?’”

The master gave a clear answer.

“An enemy did this.”

Evil did not come from the master.

It came from an enemy.

The servants wanted to fix the problem immediately.

“Do you want us to go and pull them up?”

Cross References

Genesis 3:1

> Now the snake was more clever than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made.

Ephesians 6:12

> Our fight is not against people on earth. We are fighting against the rulers and authorities and the powers of this world's darkness, against the spiritual powers of evil.

John 8:44

> You belong to your father the devil... He was a murderer from the beginning. He is a liar and the father of lies.

Spiritual Principle

Evil in the world comes from God's enemy, not from God.

XXIX. NOT YET

Matthew 13:29 — You May Uproot the Wheat

“He answered, ‘No, because while you are pulling the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them.’”

The master said **no.**

Why?

Because the roots of the weeds and the wheat were tangled together.

Pulling up the weeds would damage the wheat.

Also, the servants might make mistakes and pull up wheat thinking it was a weed.

Only the master could judge perfectly.

Cross References

Matthew 7:1

> Don't judge other people, or you will be judged.

1 Corinthians 4:5

> So don't judge anything before the right time. Wait until the Lord comes. He will bring to light the things that are hidden in darkness.

Romans 14:4

> You cannot judge another person's servant. The master decides if the servant is doing well or not.

Spiritual Principle

Final judgment belongs to God, not to us.

Key Truth

This parable does not mean the church should never correct sin.

It means that final separation is God's work at the end of the age.

XXX. UNTIL THE HARVEST

Matthew 13:30 — Burn the Weeds, Gather the Wheat

“Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat into my barn.”

Let both grow together.

For now, good and evil exist side by side.

But not forever.

Until the harvest.

At the harvest, the separation will be complete.

The weeds will be **burned.**

The wheat will be gathered **into my barn.**

God is patient.

But His patience has an end.

Cross References

Malachi 4:1

> “The day is coming that will burn like a furnace,” says the LORD who commands armies. “All the proud and all who do evil will be like straw.”

Revelation 14:15

> Then another angel came out of the temple and called to the One sitting on the cloud, “Take Your sickle and gather the harvest, because the time to harvest has come.”

Joel 3:13

> Swing the sickle, because the harvest is ready.

Spiritual Principle

God's patience with evil is not approval of evil.

XXXI. THE MUSTARD SEED

Matthew 13:31 — Planted in a Field

“He told them another parable: ‘The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field.’”

The third parable is about a **mustard seed.**

A mustard seed is very small.

It was the smallest seed farmers in Israel commonly planted.

It was often used as a picture of something tiny.

Cross References

Mark 4:30

> Then Jesus said, “How can I show you what the kingdom of God is like? What story can I use to explain it?”

Luke 13:19

> It is like a mustard seed that a man plants in his garden. The seed grows and becomes a tree.

Daniel 4:10

> I saw a tree standing in the middle of the earth. It was very tall.

Spiritual Principle

God often begins His greatest works in small ways.

XXXII. A GREAT TREE

Matthew 13:32 — Birds Perch in Its Branches

“Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches.”

The tiny seed becomes **the largest of garden plants.**

In Israel, mustard plants could grow ten to twelve feet tall.

Big enough for **birds** to rest in its branches.

The kingdom of heaven began small.

A carpenter from Nazareth.

Twelve ordinary followers.

But it would grow to fill the world.

In the Old Testament, a great tree with birds in its branches was a picture of a great kingdom where nations find shelter.

Cross References

Mark 4:32

> But when planted, this seed grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants. It produces large branches, and the wild birds can make nests in its shade.

Daniel 4:12

> The tree had beautiful leaves and plenty of fruit, enough food for everyone. Wild animals rested under it, and birds lived in its branches.

Ezekiel 17:23

> I will plant it on the high mountain of Israel. Then it will grow branches and produce fruit and become a beautiful cedar tree. Birds of every kind will live in it.

Spiritual Principle

Do not despise small beginnings.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The kingdom that began with twelve men has now reached every nation on earth.

XXXIII. THE YEAST

Matthew 13:33 — Worked All Through the Dough

“He told them still another parable: ‘The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into about sixty pounds of flour until it worked all through the dough.’”

The fourth parable is about **yeast.**

A woman mixed a small amount of yeast into **about sixty pounds of flour.**

That is enough bread to feed more than a hundred people.

The yeast worked quietly.

No one could see it working.

But it spread **all through the dough.**

The mustard seed shows the kingdom's **outward growth.**

The yeast shows the kingdom's **inward power.**

The kingdom changes people from the inside out.

Cross References

Luke 13:21

> It is like yeast that a woman mixed into a large amount of flour until it made all the dough rise.

1 Corinthians 5:6

> You know the saying, “Just a little yeast makes the whole batch of dough rise.”

Galatians 5:9

> Be careful! “Just a little yeast makes the whole batch of dough rise.”

Spiritual Principle

God's kingdom works quietly but powerfully.

Key Truth

In other passages, yeast is a picture of sin spreading.

Here, Jesus uses the same picture to show how His kingdom spreads.

XXXIV. ALWAYS IN PARABLES

Matthew 13:34 — Nothing Without a Parable

“Jesus spoke all these things to the crowd in parables; He did not say anything to them without using a parable.”

At this point in His ministry, Jesus taught the crowds **only in parables.**

This was a change.

The crowds had heard Him clearly but had not repented.

Now He spoke in a way that only those who were seeking would understand.

Cross References

Mark 4:33

Jesus used many stories like these to teach the people as much as they could understand.

Mark 4:34

He always used stories to teach them. But when He and His followers were alone, Jesus explained everything to them.

John 16:25

I have told you these things using stories. But the time is coming when I will not use stories to tell you things.

Spiritual Principle

God's truth is open to those who seek it.

XXXV. HIDDEN SINCE CREATION

Matthew 13:35 — I Will Open My Mouth in Parables

“So was fulfilled what was spoken through the prophet: ‘I will open My mouth in parables, I will utter things hidden since the creation of the world.’”

Matthew quotes Psalm 78.

The writer, Asaph, was called a seer, or prophet.

In that psalm, he tells Israel's history in a way that reveals hidden lessons.

Jesus does something even greater.

He reveals truths about God's kingdom that had been **hidden since the creation of the world.**

Cross References

Psalm 78:2

I will speak using stories. I will tell things that have been secret since long ago.

Psalm 49:4

I will pay attention to wise sayings. I will explain my riddle with the harp.

Proverbs 1:6

Then they will understand wise words and stories, the words of wise people, and their riddles.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus reveals God's hidden plan.

XXXVI. EXPLAIN THE WEEDS

Matthew 13:36 — In the House

“Then Jesus left the crowd and went into the house. His disciples came to Him and said, ‘Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field.’”

Jesus left the crowd.

The disciples came to Him privately.

They wanted to understand.

This shows the difference between the crowd and the disciples.

The crowd went home.

The disciples stayed and asked.

Cross References

Mark 4:34

> But when He and His followers were alone, Jesus explained everything to them.

John 16:29

> Then His followers said, “You are speaking clearly to us now and are not using stories that are hard to understand.”

Mark 7:17

> When Jesus left the people and went into the house, His followers asked Him about this story.

Spiritual Principle

Those who draw near to Jesus with questions will receive understanding.

XXXVII. THE SOWER IS THE SON OF MAN

Matthew 13:37 — The Good Seed

“He answered, ‘The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man.’”

Jesus explained each part of the story.

The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man.

Jesus Himself is the One planting good seed in the world.

Cross References

John 12:24

> I tell you the truth, a grain of wheat must fall to the ground and die to make more seeds. If it never dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.

1 Corinthians 3:10

> Using the gift God gave me, I laid the foundation of that house like an expert builder.

Hebrews 1:2

> But now in these last days God has spoken to us through His Son. God has chosen His Son to own all things, and through Him He made the world.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus is the source of everything good in His kingdom.

XXXVIII. THE FIELD IS THE WORLD

Matthew 13:38 — Good Seed and Weeds

“The field is the world, the good seed stands for the people of the kingdom. The weeds are the people of the evil one,”

The field is the world.

Notice this carefully.

The field is not only the church.

It is the whole world.

The good seed stands for **the people of the kingdom.**

These are true believers.

The weeds are **the people of the evil one.**

These are those who belong to Satan.

Both live together in the world.

Cross References

1 John 3:10

> This is how you can tell who are God's children and who are the devil's children: Anyone who does not do what is right is not from God.

John 17:15

> I am not asking You to take them out of the world but to keep them safe from the evil one.

Ephesians 2:2

> In the past you lived the way the world lives. You followed the ruler of the evil powers that are above the earth.

Spiritual Principle

God's people live in the world, but they do not belong to it.

XXXIX. THE ENEMY AND THE HARVEST

Matthew 13:39 — The Devil and the Angels

“and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels.”

The enemy is **the devil.**

The harvest is **the end of the age.**

The harvesters are **angels.**

History is moving toward a harvest.

God's angels will carry out His final judgment.

Cross References

Revelation 14:14

> Then I looked, and there was a white cloud. Sitting on the cloud was One who looked like a Son of Man. He had a gold crown on His head and a sharp sickle in His hand.

Matthew 24:31

> He will use a loud trumpet to send His angels all around the earth, and they will gather His chosen people.

Zephaniah 1:3

> I will destroy people and animals. I will destroy the birds in the air and the fish of the sea.

Spiritual Principle

History has an end, and it is in God's hands.

XL. BURNED IN THE FIRE

Matthew 13:40 — At the End of the Age

“As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age.”

The weeds will be **pulled up and burned.**

This is a picture of the final judgment of the wicked.

Jesus spoke about judgment more often than almost anyone in the Bible.

He did it not to frighten people needlessly, but to warn them out of love.

Cross References

2 Peter 3:10

> But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The skies will disappear with a loud noise, and everything in them will be destroyed by fire.

Revelation 20:9

> They marched across the earth and surrounded the camp of God's people... But fire came down from heaven and burned them up.

Nahum 1:6

> No one can stand up against His anger. No one can survive His great anger. His anger is poured out like fire.

Spiritual Warning

The final judgment is real.

XLI. WEEDED OUT OF HIS KINGDOM

Matthew 13:41 — Everything That Causes Sin

“The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will weed out of His kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil.”

Notice that the angels are **His angels.**

Jesus is the King who commands the angels.

They will **weed out of His kingdom** two things:

Everything that causes sin.

All who do evil.

One day, God's kingdom will be completely pure.

No more temptation.

No more evil.

Cross References

Revelation 14:19

> The angel swung his sickle over the earth. He gathered the earth's grapes and threw them into the great winepress of God's anger.

Ezekiel 34:17

> I will judge between one sheep and another, between the male sheep and the male goats.

Matthew 25:32

> All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them from each other, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus will one day remove all evil from His kingdom.

XLII. THE BLAZING FURNACE

Matthew 13:42 — Weeping and Gnashing of Teeth

“They will throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Jesus describes the final punishment with strong words.

The blazing furnace.

Weeping — deep sorrow.

Gnashing of teeth — anger and regret.

These words are meant to warn us.

No one should take hell lightly.

And no one needs to go there, because Jesus has made a way of salvation.

Cross References

Matthew 8:12

> But those people who should have the kingdom will be thrown outside into the darkness, where people will cry and grind their teeth with pain.

Daniel 3:6

> Anyone who doesn't bow down and worship will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace.

Revelation 20:15

> Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.

Spiritual Warning

Hell is real, and Jesus warned about it out of love.

XLIII. THE RIGHTEOUS WILL SHINE

Matthew 13:43 — Like the Sun

“Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears, let them hear.”

After the dark warning, there is a bright promise.

The righteous will shine like the sun.

God's people will be glorious.

Pure.

Radiant.

In **the kingdom of their Father.**

Then Jesus says again:

“Whoever has ears, let them hear.”

Cross References

Daniel 12:3

> The wise people will shine like the brightness of the sky. Those who teach others to live right will shine like stars forever and ever.

Malachi 4:2

> But for you who honor Me, goodness will shine on you like the sun, with healing in its rays.

1 Corinthians 15:41

> The sun has one kind of beauty, the moon has another beauty, and the stars have another.

Spiritual Principle

The future of God's people is glorious.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The wheat may look ordinary now, but one day it will shine like the sun.

XLIV. THE HIDDEN TREASURE

Matthew 13:44 — In His Joy

“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.”

In Bible times, there were no banks.

People often buried their valuables in the ground to keep them safe.

Sometimes the owner died, and the treasure was forgotten.

In this parable, a man finds a treasure buried in a field.

He hides it again.

Then **in his joy**, he sells everything he owns to buy that field.

Notice the word **joy.**

He was not sad to give up everything.

He was thrilled.

He knew he was getting something far more valuable.

Cross References

Proverbs 2:4

> Search for it like silver, and hunt for it like hidden treasure.

Job 28:12

> But where can wisdom be found? Where does understanding live?

Philippians 3:8

> I think that all things are worth nothing compared with the greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.

Spiritual Principle

The kingdom of heaven is worth more than everything we have.

Key Truth

Giving up everything for Jesus is not a loss; it is the best trade anyone could ever make.

XLV. THE MERCHANT

Matthew 13:45 — Looking for Fine Pearls

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls.”

In the ancient world, pearls were among the most valuable things a person could own.

Some were worth a fortune.

This merchant was **looking** for fine pearls.

The man in the field stumbled onto the treasure.

The merchant was searching for it.

Some people find the kingdom by surprise.

Others find it after a long search.

Cross References

Proverbs 3:15

> Wisdom is worth more than rubies. Nothing you could want is equal to it.

Job 28:18

> The value of wisdom is greater than pearls.

Proverbs 8:11

> Wisdom is more precious than rubies. Nothing you could want is equal to it.

Spiritual Principle

God is found by those who search for Him.

XLVI. THE PEARL OF GREAT VALUE

Matthew 13:46 — He Sold Everything

“When he found one pearl of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.”

The merchant found **one pearl of great value.**

And he **sold everything he had** to buy it.

He had seen many pearls.

But this one was different.

It was worth more than everything else combined.

Jesus and His kingdom are like that pearl.

Cross References

Philippians 3:7

> At one time all these things were important to me. But now I think they are worth nothing because of Christ.

Luke 14:33

In the same way, you must give up everything you have to be My follower.

Mark 10:21

> Jesus looked at the man and loved him. He said, “There is one more thing you need to do. Go and sell everything you have, and give the money to the poor... Then come and follow Me.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus is worth everything.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

When you find the Pearl, nothing else seems valuable anymore.

XLVII. THE NET

Matthew 13:47 — All Kinds of Fish

“Once again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish.”

The last parable is about fishing.

Many of Jesus' disciples were fishermen.

They knew this picture well.

A large net was let down into the lake.

It **caught all kinds of fish.**

Good fish and bad fish.

The net did not choose.

It gathered everything.

Cross References

Mark 1:17

> Jesus said to them, “Come follow Me, and I will make you fishermen for people.”

Luke 5:6

> When the fishermen did as Jesus said, they caught so many fish that their nets began to break.

Habakkuk 1:14

> You have made people like fish in the sea, like sea creatures without a leader.

Spiritual Principle

The gospel goes out to all kinds of people.

XLVIII. SORTING THE FISH

Matthew 13:48 — Good and Bad

“When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. They sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away.”

When the net was full, the fishermen **pulled it up.**

Then they **sat down** and sorted the catch.

The **good fish** went into baskets.

The **bad fish** were thrown away.

Bad fish may have been fish the law said were unclean, or fish that were not fit to eat.

Cross References

Ezekiel 47:10

> Fishermen will stand along the shore... There will be many kinds of fish, as many as in the Great Sea.

Matthew 22:10

> So the servants went into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, both good and bad. And the wedding hall was filled with guests.

Amos 9:9

> I will shake the people of Israel among all the nations, like someone shakes grain in a sifter. But not one grain will fall to the ground.

Spiritual Principle

There will be a final sorting.

XLIX. AT THE END OF THE AGE

Matthew 13:49 — The Angels Will Separate

“This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous”

Jesus explains the parable.

At **the end of the age**, the angels will come.

They will **separate the wicked from the righteous.**

This is the same lesson as the parable of the weeds.

Jesus repeated it because it is so important.

Cross References

Daniel 12:2

> Many people who have died and been buried will wake up. Some will wake up to have life forever, and some will wake up to shame and disgrace forever.

Malachi 3:18

> Then you will again see the difference between good and evil people, between those who serve God and those who don't.

Psalm 1:5

> So the wicked will not escape God's punishment. Sinners will not worship with God's people.

Spiritual Principle

God will make a clear difference between the righteous and the wicked.

L. THE BLAZING FURNACE

Matthew 13:50 — A Second Warning

“and throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Jesus repeated the warning from verse 42.

The same words.

The same fire.

The same weeping.

Repetition is a sign of importance.

Jesus wanted His listeners to take this seriously.

Cross References

Matthew 22:13

> So the king told some servants, “Tie this man's hands and feet and throw him out into the darkness, where people will cry and grind their teeth with pain.”

Revelation 21:8

> But cowards, those who refuse to believe, who do evil things, who kill... their place will be in the lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.

Isaiah 66:24

> Their worm will never die, and their fire will never go out.

Spiritual Warning

Jesus repeated His warnings so no one could say they were not warned.

LI. HAVE YOU UNDERSTOOD?

Matthew 13:51 — “Yes”

“‘Have you understood all these things?’ Jesus asked. ‘Yes,’ they replied.”

Jesus asked His disciples a direct question.

“Have you understood all these things?”

“Yes.”

Their understanding was not yet complete.

They would still have much to learn.

But they had grasped the main truths.

And Jesus wanted them to understand, because they would soon teach others.

Cross References

Luke 24:45

> Then Jesus opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures.

Colossians 1:9

> We have not stopped praying for you. We ask God that you will know fully what He wants, and that you will have great wisdom and understanding in spiritual things.

1 Corinthians 13:12

> Now we see a dim reflection, as if we were looking into a mirror, but then we will see clearly. Now I know only a part, but then I will know fully.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus wants His followers to understand His Word.

LII. TREASURES OLD AND NEW

Matthew 13:52 — The Owner of a House

“He said to them, ‘Therefore every teacher of the law who has become a disciple of the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old.’”

A **teacher of the law** was an expert in the Old Testament.

When such a person becomes **a disciple of the kingdom**, he has two kinds of treasure.

Old treasures — the truths of the Old Testament.

New treasures — the truths Jesus revealed about the kingdom.

A good teacher brings out both.

The Old Testament is not thrown away.

It is understood in a new light through Jesus.

Some believe Matthew may have been describing himself.

His Gospel is full of both old and new treasures.

Cross References

Song of Solomon 7:13

> At our doors are all kinds of delicious fruit, both new and old, that I have saved for you, my love.

1 Peter 4:10

Each of you has received a gift to use to serve others. Be good servants of God's various gifts of grace.

Proverbs 24:4

Through knowledge its rooms will be filled with all kinds of valuable and beautiful things.

Spiritual Principle

The Old and New Testaments together reveal the full treasure of God's truth.

LIII. HE MOVED ON

Matthew 13:53 — When Jesus Finished

“When Jesus had finished these parables, He moved on from there.”

This is the phrase Matthew uses to end each of Jesus' five great teaching sections.

“When Jesus had finished...”

The parables were over.

Jesus moved on to His hometown.

Cross References

Mark 6:1

Jesus left there and went to His hometown, and His followers went with Him.

Matthew 7:28

When Jesus finished saying these things, the people were amazed at His teaching.

Matthew 19:1

When Jesus finished saying all these things, He left Galilee and went into the area of Judea on the other side of the Jordan River.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus' ministry moved forward according to the Father's plan.

LIV. HOMETOWN AMAZEMENT

Matthew 13:54 — Where Did He Get This Wisdom?

“Coming to His hometown, He began teaching the people in their synagogue, and they were amazed. They asked, ‘Where did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers?’”

Jesus came to **His hometown**, Nazareth.

He taught in **their synagogue.**

The people were **amazed.**

But their amazement was not faith.

They asked, **“Where did this man get this wisdom?”**

They could not deny His wisdom or His power.

But they could not accept that it came from God.

Notice they called Him **“this man.”**

Cross References

Mark 6:2

> On the Sabbath day He taught in the synagogue. Many people heard Him and were amazed. They said, “Where did this man get these teachings? What is this wisdom that has been given to Him?”

Luke 4:16

> Jesus went to Nazareth, where He had grown up. On the Sabbath day He went to the synagogue, as He always did.

John 7:15

> The Jews were amazed and said, “This man has never studied in school. How did He learn so much?”

Spiritual Principle

Amazement is not the same as faith.

LV. ISN'T THIS THE CARPENTER'S SON?

Matthew 13:55 — His Mother and Brothers

“Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't His mother's name Mary, and aren't His brothers James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas?”

The people of Nazareth thought they knew Jesus.

“Isn't this the carpenter's son?”

They had watched Him grow up.

They knew His family.

His mother **Mary.**

His brothers **James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas.**

James later became a leader in the church in Jerusalem and wrote the book of James.

Judas, also called Jude, wrote the book of Jude.

But at this time, the people saw Jesus only as an ordinary man from an ordinary family.

Cross References

Mark 6:3

> He is just the carpenter, the son of Mary. He is the brother of James, Joseph, Judas, and Simon. And His sisters are here with us.

John 6:42

> They said, “This is Jesus, the son of Joseph. We know His father and mother. How can He say, ‘I came down from heaven’?”

Galatians 1:19

> I saw no other apostles except James, the brother of the Lord.

Spiritual Principle

Familiarity can blind people to the truth.

LVI. HIS SISTERS

Matthew 13:56 — Where Then Did He Get All This?

“Aren't all His sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?”

Jesus also had **sisters.**

They still lived in Nazareth.

The people kept asking the same question.

“Where then did this man get all these things?”

The answer was right in front of them.

His wisdom and power came from God.

Because He is God's Son.

But they would not accept it.

Cross References

Mark 6:3

> He is just the carpenter, the son of Mary... And His sisters are here with us. The people were offended by Him.

Luke 4:22

> All the people spoke well of Jesus and were amazed at the words of grace He spoke. They asked, “Isn't this Joseph's son?”

Mark 3:31

> Then Jesus' mother and brothers arrived. They stood outside and sent someone in to tell Him to come out.

Spiritual Principle

The truth about Jesus is clear to those who are willing to see it.

LVII. A PROPHET WITHOUT HONOR

Matthew 13:57 — In His Own Town

“And they took offense at Him. But Jesus said to them, ‘A prophet is not without honor except in his own town and in his own home.’”

They took offense at Him.

The word means they **stumbled** over Him.

They could not get past the fact that they knew Him as a child.

Jesus answered with a well-known saying.

“A prophet is not without honor except in his own town and in his own home.”

People often have the hardest time accepting greatness in someone they grew up with.

Cross References

Mark 6:4

> Jesus said to them, “A prophet is honored everywhere except in his hometown, with his own people, and in his own home.”

Luke 4:24

> Then Jesus said, “I tell you the truth, a prophet is not accepted in his hometown.”

John 4:44

> Jesus had said before that a prophet is not respected in his own country.

Spiritual Principle

Being close to Jesus is not the same as believing in Jesus.

LVIII. NOT MANY MIRACLES

Matthew 13:58 — Because of Their Lack of Faith

“And He did not do many miracles there because of their lack of faith.”

Jesus **did not do many miracles** in Nazareth.

Why?

Because of their lack of faith.

Jesus was not powerless.

Mark tells us He healed a few sick people there.

But He would not force His blessings on people who refused to believe.

Miracles were meant to lead people to faith.

Where there was only unbelief, Jesus held back.

The chapter ends where it began.

The parable of the sower showed four kinds of soil.

Nazareth was hard ground.

Cross References

Mark 6:5

> Jesus was not able to work any miracles there except to heal a few sick people by putting His hands on them.

Hebrews 3:19

> So we see they were not allowed to enter and have God's rest, because they did not believe.

Hebrews 11:6

> Without faith it is impossible to please God. Anyone who comes to God must believe that He is real and that He rewards those who truly look for Him.

Spiritual Warning

Unbelief closes the door to God's blessings.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Nazareth had the Savior in its streets and the hardest soil in Galilee.

LIX. SIX GREAT LESSONS FROM MATTHEW 13

1. The Word Produces Fruit in Receptive Hearts

Only those who hear and understand God's Word bear lasting fruit.

Principle:

The seed is always good; the question is the soil.

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2. Good and Evil Grow Together Until Judgment

God will separate the righteous from the wicked at the end of the age.

Principle:

God's patience now does not mean God's judgment will never come.

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3. The Kingdom Starts Small but Grows Great

Like a mustard seed or yeast, God's kingdom spreads until it transforms everything.

Principle:

Never despise small beginnings in God's work.

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4. The Kingdom Is Worth Everything

The treasure and pearl parables show that following Christ is worth total surrender.

Principle:

Whatever you give up for Jesus, you gain far more.

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5. Final Judgment Is Real

The wicked will face fire, while the righteous will shine in God's kingdom.

Principle:

How we live now matters forever.

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6. Familiarity Breeds Unbelief

Even Jesus' hometown rejected Him, reminding us that faith, not background, determines blessing.

Principle:

Never let familiarity with Jesus keep you from faith in Jesus.

LX. THE SEVEN PARABLES OF MATTHEW 13

1. The Sower (Verses 3–9, 18–23)

God's Word is received in different ways by different hearts.

2. The Weeds (Verses 24–30, 36–43)

Good and evil grow together until the final harvest.

3. The Mustard Seed (Verses 31–32)

The kingdom begins small but grows very large.

4. The Yeast (Verse 33)

The kingdom works quietly from the inside out.

5. The Hidden Treasure (Verse 44)

The kingdom is worth everything, and it brings joy.

6. The Pearl (Verses 45–46)

The kingdom is worth more than everything else combined.

7. The Net (Verses 47–50)

There will be a final separation of good and bad.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The parables show how the kingdom begins, how it grows, what it is worth, and how it will end.

LXI. THE FOUR SOILS

The Path — The Hard Heart

Hears but does not understand.

Satan snatches the Word away.

The Rocky Ground — The Shallow Heart

Receives the Word with joy but has no root.

Falls away when trouble comes.

The Thorny Ground — The Crowded Heart

Hears the Word, but worries and riches choke it.

Becomes unfruitful.

The Good Soil — The Receptive Heart

Hears, understands, and produces fruit.

Key Truth

Every person who hears God's Word is one of these four kinds of soil.

Application

To keep your heart good soil:

- Soften your heart through humility and prayer.
- Remove the rocks of shallow commitment.
- Pull out the thorns of worry and greed.
- Let God's Word go deep through study and meditation.
- Obey what you learn.

LXII. WHY JESUS TAUGHT IN PARABLES

To Reveal Truth to Seekers

Those who wanted to understand came to Jesus and learned.

To Hide Truth from the Hard-Hearted

Those who had already rejected Him did not understand.

To Fulfill Prophecy

Isaiah and the psalm said this would happen.

To Make Truth Memorable

Stories are easy to remember and repeat.

To Invite a Response

Parables make listeners ask, **“What does this mean for me?”**

Spiritual Principle

Parables are both a door and a wall — a door for seekers and a wall for the stubborn.

LXIII. WHAT MATTHEW 13 TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

Matthew 13 presents Jesus as:

The Sower

He plants the good seed of God's Word.

The Revealer of Secrets

He makes known what was hidden since creation.

The Fulfillment of Prophecy

Prophets longed to see Him.

The Lord of the Harvest

He sends His angels at the end of the age.

The Judge

He will separate the righteous from the wicked.

The Treasure and the Pearl

He is worth more than everything.

The Rejected Prophet

His own hometown would not honor Him.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The Jesus who tells the parables is Himself the treasure the parables point to.

LXIV. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

What is a parable?

A parable is a story from everyday life that teaches a spiritual truth.

The word means **“to put beside.”**

Question 2

Why did Jesus teach in parables?

To reveal truth to those who were seeking and to hide it from those who had hardened their hearts.

It also fulfilled prophecy and made His teaching easy to remember.

Question 3

What do the four soils represent?

They represent four kinds of hearts.

A hard heart, a shallow heart, a crowded heart, and a receptive heart.

Question 4

Who snatches away the seed on the path?

The evil one, Satan.

He tries to steal God's Word before it can take root.

Question 5

Why did the rocky ground fail?

It had no root.

When trouble or persecution came, the person fell away.

Question 6

What are the thorns that choke the Word?

The worries of this life and the deceitfulness of riches.

Question 7

What makes the good soil different?

It hears the Word, understands it, and produces fruit.

Question 8

What does the parable of the weeds teach?

Good and evil will grow together in the world until the end of the age.

Then God will separate them.

Question 9

Why did the master not let the servants pull up the weeds?

Because they might pull up the wheat too.

Final judgment belongs to God.

Question 10

What do the mustard seed and the yeast teach?

The mustard seed shows that the kingdom starts small and grows large.

The yeast shows that it works quietly and changes everything from the inside.

Question 11

What do the hidden treasure and the pearl teach?

The kingdom of heaven is worth more than everything we own.

It is worth giving up everything with joy.

Question 12

What does the parable of the net teach?

At the end of the age, the angels will separate the wicked from the righteous.

Question 13

What are the “old” and “new” treasures?

The old treasures are the truths of the Old Testament.

The new treasures are the truths Jesus revealed about the kingdom.

Question 14

Why did the people of Nazareth reject Jesus?

They knew Him as the carpenter's son.

Their familiarity with Him kept them from believing in Him.

Question 15

What should Matthew 13 change about the way Christians live today?

Matthew 13 should cause believers to live:

- Listening carefully to God's Word.
- Guarding their hearts from hardness, shallowness, and distraction.
- Putting down deep roots in Christ.
- Bearing fruit.
- Leaving final judgment to God.
- Trusting God's work even when it seems small.
- Treasuring Jesus above everything.
- Taking the final judgment seriously.
- Not letting familiarity with Jesus replace faith in Him.

LXV. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Matthew 13 asks several important questions.

What Kind of Soil Is My Heart Right Now?

Is the Enemy Stealing God's Word from Me?

Do I Have Deep Roots, or Only Surface Excitement?

What Thorns Are Choking My Spiritual Life?

Is My Life Producing Fruit?

Am I Trying to Judge What Only God Can Judge?

Do I Trust God's Work When It Seems Small?

Is Jesus My Treasure and My Pearl?

What Would I Be Willing to Give Up for Him?

Am I Ready for the Harvest?

Has Familiarity with Jesus Made Me Cold Toward Him?

LXVI. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“Same Seed, Different Soil”

In the parable of the sower, the farmer threw the same seed everywhere.

The seed did not change.

The farmer did not change.

The only thing that changed was the soil.

On the path, the seed was stolen.

On the rock, the seed died.

Among the thorns, the seed was choked.

In the good soil, the seed produced a harvest.

The same is true for us.

God's Word is perfect.

Jesus is the perfect Sower.

The difference is in our hearts.

This creates a powerful principle.

When God's Word does not seem to be working in our lives, the problem is not the Word.

The problem is the soil.

And the good news is that God can change soil.

He can soften hard hearts.

He can break up rock.

He can pull out thorns.

Principle:

God's Word never fails; the question is always whether our hearts are ready to receive it.

LXVII. FINAL APPLICATION

Matthew Chapter 13 begins by a lake and ends in a synagogue.

In between, Jesus tells seven stories.

A farmer sowing seed.

An enemy sowing weeds.

A tiny mustard seed.

A little yeast.

A buried treasure.

A precious pearl.

A fishing net.

Each one shows something about God's kingdom.

It begins small.

It grows quietly.

It is worth everything.

It lives side by side with evil for now.

And one day, it will be complete.

The weeds will be burned.

The bad fish will be thrown away.

And the righteous will shine like the sun.

But the chapter also shows the danger of hearing without receiving.

The crowds heard but did not understand.

Nazareth saw but did not believe.

Matthew 13 therefore reminds us:

The kingdom of heaven is here.

It is growing.

It is worth everything.

And it is coming to completion.

The question is not:

Is the seed good?

Is the Sower faithful?

Is the kingdom real?

The question is:

What kind of soil am I?

The same call still stands:

Listen carefully.

Let the Word go deep.

Pull out the thorns.

Bear fruit.

Trust God's timing.

Treasure Jesus above all.

And until He returns:

Keep listening.

Keep growing.

Keep treasuring Him.

Keep bearing fruit.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for the parables of Jesus.

Thank You that You reveal the secrets of Your kingdom to those who seek You.

Make my heart good soil.

Where my heart is hard, soften it.

Where my faith is shallow, give it deep roots.

Where worries and riches are choking Your Word, pull out the thorns.

Do not let the enemy steal Your Word from my heart.

Help me hear, understand, and obey.

Produce fruit in my life for Your glory.

Thank You that we are living in the days the prophets longed to see.

Help me never take Your Word for granted.

Give me patience to trust You while good and evil grow together.

Keep me from judging what only You can judge.

Thank You that Your kingdom began small and has grown across the whole world.

Help me trust Your work even when it seems small and quiet.

Lord Jesus, You are the treasure hidden in the field.

You are the pearl of great value.

Help me treasure You above everything.

Give me joy in giving up anything that keeps me from You.

Prepare me for the day of harvest.

Make me ready to stand before You.

Thank You for the promise that the righteous will shine like the sun in Your kingdom.

Keep me from becoming so familiar with You that I stop believing.

Keep my heart soft and my faith alive.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Verse

“But the seed on good soil is the one who hears the word, understands it, and produces a harvest —yielding a hundred, sixty, or thirty times what was sown.” — Matthew 13:23

Central Truth

The kingdom of heaven grows through the Word of God in receptive hearts, it is worth more than everything we own, and at the end of the age God will separate the righteous from the wicked.

Matthew 13 in One Sentence

Through seven parables, Jesus teaches that God's Word bears fruit only in receptive hearts, that good and evil grow together until the final harvest, that the kingdom starts small but grows great, that it is worth everything we have, and that His own hometown's unbelief shows how familiarity can blind people to the truth.