

Study Guide



Matthew 13:1-23 – The Parable of the Sower March 4, 2018

Welcome (40 Minutes)

Be intentional to have authentic relationships...

Worship (5 Minutes)

As the group transitions from of a time of fellowship to a time of intentional study of the word, it is important to facilitate that transition with a time of worship. This can look like praying together, singing songs together, or rejoicing in what the Lord has done throughout the week.

Word (45 Minutes)

As we look at Jesus' five discourses in Matthew, we see Matthew and the other disciples "at the feet of Jesus." These teachings are in the context of Jesus' calling and equipping the twelve apostles to go and make disciples of all nations. In our nine months of studying Jesus' five discourses of Matthew we will be sitting at the feet of Jesus learning the ins-and-outs of being disciple-makers ourselves. Our prayer is that we will be challenged to understand that we were saved in order to be disciple-makers and that we will be inspired to sit at the feet of Jesus to be equipped for our calling to be disciple-makers.

For further study on this weeks study please check out the following pages...

Action Step

This week go out and sow. Share the gospel with others and pray it lands on good soil, pray it takes root, pray the devil doesn't snatch it up or the world will not choke it out. Challenge yourself to cast the gospel freely.

Calendar

March 4th- April 15th— Connection Group
March 4th- April 15th— Kids Shine
March 9th— Firm Foundation Fundraiser
March 16th- 18th— DNOW
April 1st— Easter
June 11th-16th— Youth Camp

Welcome (40 Minutes)

As you fellowship with one another, please be intentional about sharing what the Lord is doing in your lives. Get to know one another and encourage one another. Are your conversations pointing one another toward Christ?

Worship (5 Minutes)

If you are looking for a song to sing this week, here are the lyrics to "[King of My Heart](#)":

Let the King of my heart
Be the mountain where I run
The fountain I drink from
Oh He is my Song

Let the King of my heart
Be the shadow where I hide
The ransom for my life
Oh He is my Song

You are good, good, oh
You are good, good, oh
You are good, good, oh
You are good, good, oh

Let the King of my heart
Be the wind inside my sails
The anchor in the waves
Oh He is my Song

Let the King of my heart
Be the fire inside my veins
The echo of my days
Oh He is my Song

You are good, good, oh
You are good, good, oh
Yes, you are good, good, oh
You are good, good, oh

You're never gonna let, never gonna let me down
You're never gonna let, never gonna let me down
You're never gonna let, never gonna let me down
You're never gonna let, never gonna let me down

You are good, good, oh
You are good, good, oh
You are good, good, oh
You are good, good, oh
When the night is holding on to me
You are holding on

When the night is holding on to me
You are holding on
You are good, good, oh
You are good, good, oh
You are good, good, oh
You are good, good, oh

When the night is holding on to me
God is holding on

When the night is holding on to me
God is holding on

Commentary: Read Matthew 13:1-23

We come to Matthew 13 and Jesus begins His third major teaching (discourse). Here in Matthew 13, Jesus' teaching largely takes the form of parables. These parables tell of a kingdom that, despite being unrecognized and rejected by some, is already accomplishing its purpose in the world, and it will one day be gloriously completed, resulting in eternal judgement for those who reject the gospel and eternal life for those who genuinely trust in Christ and treasure His reward.

So, what is a parable and why does Jesus speak in parables? In short, a parable is a practical story, often framed as a simile, that illustrates spiritual truth. These stories draw a comparison in order to illustrate a spiritual truth. The disciples hear Jesus' story in 13:1-9 and then ask the same question we ask. "Why are you speaking in parables (10)?" Jesus responds with an explanation just to them. In vs. 11 he says, "This privileged information is only given to those of faith". Jesus reveals the truth to those who were believing (faith) the secrets, the mystery. Parables allow the truth to be given and those who are sincerely interested, teachable, receptive will seek out further understanding. Jesus says he speaks in parables, because "looking they do not see, and hearing they do not listen or understand (13)". Jesus understands there will be various responses to His message and in Matthew 13 we see these responses. Will the hearer have a heart of understanding (faith) or not? Will their be fruit or no fruit? What kind of soil (heart) will the message (seed) of God's kingdom fall on?

Let's look at Jesus' explanation (18-23) of three bad soils and one good soil. The sower casts seed (the message of the kingdom of God) out over different soils as he walks. In verses 18-19 we come to the first unfruitful seed. This seed is described as only being "heard" but there is no mention of "understanding". The message of the kingdom of heaven was given and "heard" but is never truly grasped or understood. It is rejected. In the second scene of the unfruitful seed (20-21) we see the seed is initially "heard" and "received" with excitement, however, again there is no "understanding" which is revealed through suffering (sun). The people were excited based off external circumstances but because of suffering were completely "withered away". The final unfruitful seed (22) is described only as being "heard" again with no mention of "understanding". The lack of understanding (commitment of faith) is revealed through thornful worries of the world - worldliness. The wealth and cares of the world can not be a priority before God. Worldliness will not deliver security and will eventually "choke" the seed and will not produce crop for the kingdom of heaven. All three of these fruitless responses are due to the soil of the heart. The problem is with the lack of faith and heart commitment from those "hearing" the message of God's kingdom. The good soil (23) is the fourth kind of soil that Jesus refers to as "good ground". This is the fruitful heart that hears the word and understands it and then bears fruit. So the one who has faith, has understanding, is given more faith/ understanding (12), and produces fruit. However, even within the good soil there are different levels of fruitfulness. The level of fruit may be different from person to person but there is fruit nonetheless. The fruit of the word will be evident in people's life in the world.

So here is the takeaway, do not stop sowing, do not stop planting seeds, expect different responses, and do not be discouraged. Pray the message of the kingdom will fall on good soil. Continue to inspect your own heart. Are you really committing to God's message? Would you wither away because of persecution? Is Christ more valuable to you than the things of the world? Consider your faith and allow God to give you more understanding and make you more fruitful.

Discussion - Read Matthew 13:1-23

1. Discuss with your group how sharing the gospel went this last week? Did anyone do have a gospel conversation? Spend some time and pray for those who heard the gospel. This week go out and sow. Share the gospel with others and pray it lands on good soil, pray it takes root, pray the devil doesn't snatch it up or the world will not choke it out. Challenge yourself to cast the gospel freely.
2. Look at verses 3-9. What are the four types of soil that received seeds in this parable?
3. How would you describe the degree of carefulness of the sower in sowing the seeds?
4. What was the main factor that determined whether the seeds grew to maturity and bore fruit?
5. Look at verses 10-17 where Jesus explains why he uses parables in his teaching. What effects do the parables have upon those who are not believers (vs. 13)? What effect do the parables have upon the disciples of Jesus (vs. 11-12 and 16)?
6. In verses 10-13 what is the apparent reason why "they" (unbelievers) do not understand the "secrets of the kingdom of heaven"? In verses 14-15 what reasons are given to explain why "they" are not able to understand the "secrets of the kingdom of heaven"? How can the answers to questions 4 & 5 be rationalized and reconciled?
7. How do verses 18 & 19 describe the result of the seed thrown on the pathway? What do these verses say is the cause of this result?
8. How do verses 20 & 21 describe the result of the seed thrown on the rocky ground? How is the seed (the gospel) received initially? What happens to this seed and what causes it to soon wilt and die?

9. How does verse 22 describe the result of the seed sown among thorns? What are the two main influences that choke out the “word” and make it unfruitful?

10. What does verse 23 say about the result of seed being sown in good soil? What do you think the fruit in this verse represents (Matthew 7:16-18)?

11. What do you think the seed represents in this parable? Look at how the seed is described in verses 19,20,21,22 & 23. Who is the sower in this parable?

12. What message is Jesus giving to his disciples about how their sowing of the seed (spreading of the word) will be received?

13. In what ways could this parable apply to believers as well as unbelievers? Do believers ever experience thistles choking out the word? Do believers ever get stymied by suffering and persecution?

14. What does this parable imply about the sowing of the seed? Should the sower have been more careful about where he cast the seed? Or is it preferable to cast the seed liberally and know ahead of time that some will resist the seed completely; others will receive it but not grow to fruitfulness, and others will receive it and produce bountiful fruit? Why?

15. How would you apply the 3rd kind of soil (with weeds) to your own life? What are some kinds of weeds that choke out the word and how do they have that effect? What can you do to reverse the action of the weeds and find fruitfulness in your life?

16. Was there any other takeaways from the sermon? Convictions? Explain.

Gospel Resources

1. **Sharing your faith (Article):** (<https://billygraham.org/story/sharing-your-faith-101/>)
2. **Life Conversation Guide (Video):** (<https://www.namb.net/video/3-circles-life-conversation-guide>)
3. **Questions about Sharing your Faith (Article):** (<https://jdgrear.com/blog/ask-anything-friday-questions-about-sharing-christ/>)

Walk (30 minutes)

After enjoying fellowship, worship, and time in God's word together, it is now time to pray together as a group and encourage one another in the faith. It is very easy for this portion of the group time to be consumed by the other portions. However, this segment of the group time is crucially important. It answers the question, how do we apply what we are learning in Matthew to our lives today?

Many groups have found that it is helpful to sometimes break up into a men's group and a women's group for the purpose of being able to be more transparent and honest as we encourage one another and keep one another accountable. I encourage you to try this in your groups.

In addition to praying for, and encouraging, one another, this portion of the group time should also be used for planning how your group can participate in God's work outside the walls of our church – "neighbors and nations." Discuss with your group some ideas on how you can be intentional with building relationships with your neighbors and co-workers. What can your Community Group do to impact the area around you?

Here is a list of local ministries Norris Ferry is actively involved in:

Hub/purchased	Celebrate recovery
Young life	Samaritan counseling
Heart of hope	Last call ministries
First priority	Golden age ministries
Ark-la-Tex crisis pregnancy center	Rescue mission
Community renewal	Luke's lighthouse
Grief counseling	FCA

Here is a list of missionaries Norris Ferry is actively involved in:

Shannon & Carrie Lewis (South Sudan)
Matt & Angie Johnson (Panama)
Meggie Hickson (Tanzania)
Kyle & Suzy Jagers (New Orleans)

May the Lord bless and encourage you as you are in your groups this week! Know that we are praying for you on a weekly basis and that we are here to help you in any way that we can!

Walk Prayer & Missions

For further information visit
norrisferrychurch.org or contact Jared
Clary (clary@norrisferrychurch.org)

Calendar

February 22nd- March 3rd — South Sudan
March 29th- April 1st— NOLA
June— Serve Shreveport
July— Community Outreach