

Matthew 13:1-23

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Date: 24 April 2022

[0 : 00] Take your Bibles, go with me to the Gospel of Matthew, Matthew chapter 13, Matthew chapter 13. We'll just continue making our way through the Gospel of Matthew, picking up where we had left off a couple of weeks ago, so we have Matthew chapter 13.

Our text this morning will be verses 1 through 23. Matthew chapter 13, our text will be verses 1 through 23. You know, there are two Sundays that are really hard on a church calendar for congregations and for pastors, and it is the Sunday following Easter and the Sunday following Christmas.

Because it seems as if you have so much buildup for those times of the year and so much excitement that when you come back together, it's almost like you forget that the Savior was born and the tomb is still empty. But the reality is, is He is still risen.

The tomb is still empty. We have a great opportunity to meet every week on a Sunday, not because that is our schedule of service or that's what falls in our bulletin or is our tradition.

The reason the early church began meeting on the first day of the week is because that was Resurrection Day. So I'm thankful we get to come together on this Resurrection Sunday, and we continue to celebrate our risen Savior, and we continue to look at His teachings, and we continue to look at how they impact our life.

[1 : 11] And my prayer this morning is that we wouldn't just go through the routine. We wouldn't go through the rut. Lord, forgive us where we begin to make it more of an academic search rather than a heart search, that we really would come to that place of reverential worship and awe, and being overwhelmed by the reality of who He is, and overwhelmed by the reality of all that He has done and continues to do in our lives as we stand in amazement at Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

So would you pray with me? Lord, we come, Lord, just honestly confessing so many times we gather together, it's because it's routine.

It's because that's what we do. It is the time to do it. It is the schedule of events. Lord, and it's so easy to go through the motions as a church member, as a teacher, as a leader, Lord, as a pastor.

It's so easy just to continue to do what we do. And Lord, not be amazed. Not stand in wonder of the gospel.

So we pray that this morning that we would not press forward, Lord, with the efforts of the mind, but Lord, right now we would stand and move forward with the movement of the heart.

[2 : 30] Lord, by the power and presence of your spirit, would you penetrate us to the very depth of our being? Lord, would your word grip us? Lord, would it call us back, Lord, just to that reverential worship and adoration?

Lord, the admiration of the Savior. Lord, the wonder of salvation. The glory of grace. Lord, would we be refreshed?

Lord, may it be the overflow of joy and not just the exercise of routine. Lord, let your word speak to us.

Lord, speak across every obstacle. Speak across every hindrance. Speak across every cause for stumbling. Lord, just speak to us, your people, and draw us closer to you.

May we commune with you around your word. Lord, just learn to love you greater. We ask it all in Christ's name. Amen.

[3 : 33] Now, take your Bibles. Stand with me if you're physically able and desire to do so as we read together the word of God found in Matthew chapter 13. Matthew chapter 13, starting in verse 1 and going down to verse 23.

Now, this is a very common account, something that we have heard since we were kids, something we've heard a number of times, but let's not let the familiarity of the text dull the sharpness of it.

That day, Jesus went out of the house and was sitting by the sea, and large crowds gathered to him. So he got into a boat and sat down, and the whole crowd was standing on the beach. And he spoke many things to them in parables, saying, Behold, the sower went out to sow, and as he sowed, some seeds fell beside the road, and the birds came and ate them up.

And others fell on the rocky places where they did not have much soil, and immediately they sprang up. And because they had no depth of soil, but when the sun had risen, they were scorched. And because they had no root, they withered away.

And others fell among the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked them out. And others fell on the good soil and yielded a crop, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty. He who has ears, let him hear.

[4 : 46] And the disciples came and said to him, Why do you speak to them in parables? And Jesus answered them, To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted.

For whoever has, to him more shall be given, and he will have an abundance. But whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him. Therefore I speak to them in parables, because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.

In their case, the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, You will keep on hearing, but will not understand. You will keep on seeing, but will not perceive. For the heart of this people has become dull. And with their ears they scarcely hear, and they have closed their eyes.

Otherwise they would see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and return, and I would heal them. But blessed are your eyes, because they see, and your ears, because they hear.

For truly I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it. Hear then the parable of the sower.

[5 : 48] When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the one on whom the seed was sown beside the road. The one on whom the seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy.

And yet he has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary. And when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away. And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word.

And the worry of the world, and the deceitfulness of wealth, choke out the word, and it becomes unfruitful. And the one on whom the seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and brings forth some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty.

Matthew 13, verses 1 through 23. You may be seated. I think I mentioned the last time we were together, if not, I think I mentioned it Wednesday night, that Matthew 13 is a transition time within the gospel of Matthew itself.

Up until this time, we have seen the presentation of the king, we've even seen the offer of the king, and we've seen the validation of the king. And here we're beginning to take this transition time throughout the 13th chapter, because the 13th chapter contains seven parables.

[7 : 09] Eight, as some count it, being the very last one, but seven parables in one chapter. All of them are revolved around a certain theme, and that is the revelations or the picture of kingdom realities.

In these seven parables, we have kingdom realities being presented to us in its fullness. Some of these seem to be very obscure. This one that is at the very beginning is something that we have heard quite often.

And then there is the parable of the mustard seed, and the dragnet, and all the other parables that seem to kind of be thrown in there at the end. This is the longest one of them, and this is a chapter of transition, because starting in chapter 13, the ministry of Christ looks totally different.

It is not necessarily that he's making changes to his plans. It's not that he's having to regroup and reconsider what he has been doing and doing it another way, because he has known from the very beginning.

He is the lamb slain before the foundation of the world. This is not God adjusting his plans and saying, well, that didn't work, so let's do it this way. This is the plan. Even though it seems to be a time of transition, and it is, we need to understand this is not a transition in response to something that was unforeseen or unknown, but rather was the very plan of God from the very beginning.

[8 : 27] We catch the reality of this transition because it says, on that very day, on that very day. Now, that doesn't seem significant to us, but it is significant, because on that day, it points us back to what has just been happening prior to this in the 12th chapter and even a little bit in the 11th chapter, and if we go back and we look once again, which we're not going to do this morning, we would find that Jesus is standing before the religious people or the Pharisees and the scribes and the teachers of the law, and he has been before them, and he has been in a very, really, central location.

He's been inside the synagogue. He's been inside the house of teaching, and he has had one purpose. He has presented himself and the realities and the truths of the kingdom to the religious leaders, to the leaders of the nation of Israel and the things of God, and there has been a consistent theme that we have seen, and it is their rejection of it.

He has shown that he is greater than the Sabbath, and they rejected that, that he is greater than demons, and they reject that, that he is greater than everything else. He is greater than the law, and they reject that over and over and over again.

Jesus is teaching inside the house or inside the synagogue, and he is teaching these truths of the kingdom, and he is presenting them before those who really should have been searching for them more than any other, those who made it their habit to daily study the law of God or the things of God, and consistently each one of them rejects it, and on that day, Jesus moves from inside the house to on the seashore, and that's very important because what we see is a transition from teaching the religious elite to bringing it into the common folks of the street.

He is moving it from teaching it inside the synagogue to literally open air evangelism is what we would call it.

[10 : 30] He is now teaching. You say, well, what about the Sermon on the Mount? Well, yes, I understand. We don't know that chronologically it happens in 5, 6, and 7. We know that that is teaching of Christ. I think that it is one great teaching moment of Christ, but here is our transition point within the book that no longer is Jesus concerning with presenting the kingdom to the religious folks.

Now he is making it accessible to all folk or to all men, and now on the surface, that doesn't seem that great because as we have seen from the very beginning is the kingdom is for all mankind.

The kingdom's appeal is not just to those who have it all together. The appeal of the kingdom is for those who are broken, those who are searching, those who are yearning, those really who are untouchable and impure and unclean, the man with a withered hand, the people who are possessed by demons, really the outcasts of society are welcomed into the presence of the kingdom.

But the greatest transition is not just the moving from inside to outside, from the religious company to the world company. The greatest transition is from this moment on in connection with the other gospels, we see this reality that no longer is Jesus facing Galilee and the Pharisees and the religious.

Now his face is set towards Jerusalem. There is a place in the gospel accounts that says that Jesus set his face towards Jerusalem, and he was moving towards Jerusalem.

[12 : 08] I believe it is in the gospel of Luke. And from that moment on, everything else changes because his face is set towards Jerusalem. It is really the time in which he knows it is now time for me to be the lamb slain from the foundations of the earth.

Because the wickedness of man really has reached his pinnacle that the greatest of man rejects the kingdom. The religious elites, the Pharisees, if you will, those who should have known, those who are really a picture of man at his best with a number of laws and do's and don'ts and a number of ordinances and a number of things that would keep them really bound to legalism, even they cannot find access into the kingdom apart from a savior.

And from that moment on, his face is set towards Jerusalem. And on his way, he begins to teach these principles of the kingdom because these principles or parables, if you will, that we find in Matthew 13 are really there to highlight for us realities of kingdom life.

In the first one, the parable of the seeds and the sower and the one that we know so much with the soil and all those things. In this first one, we see that the kingdom is really rejected by the majority.

There is a majority rejection of kingdom realities. Now, this shouldn't surprise us. Many people today would like to convince you that in the end, we all make it.

[13 : 46] That in the end, everybody makes it to heaven. That in the end, more will be in heaven than will be in hell. That in the end, more will be in eternal security than there will be in eternal punishment. But the reality of scripture is that is absolutely not the case.

Because the Bible says that broad is the path that leads to destruction, but narrow is the way that leads to eternal life. And over and over again, Jesus himself taught these things.

And here in the parable of the soils, we see it as well. A full three quarters of the soil is found rejecting the realities of the kingdom.

There is only one soil that is fruitful. And by the way, was it not Jesus who said, by your fruits, they will know you. Did he not also teach in John 15 that I am the vine and you are the branches if you abide in me?

Now listen to this. You will bear much fruits. He doesn't say you might or you may. There is an emphatic you will bear much fruit.

[14 : 54] So the evidence that we have in scripture over and over again is that the reality of the kingdom is displayed in the fruit of the individual's lives. And when we come to the parable of the soil, we see that three out of the four soils bear no fruit.

That is, they have no kingdom reality. We would call that rejection. We would say that they did not accept kingdom principles at least to the very depth of their being.

They may have acknowledged them. They may have nodded their head to them. They may have agreed with them. They may have said, yes, that sounds good. They may have said, no, that sounds pretty appealing. But the realities of the kingdom never literally took root in their life because there was no fruit to show for it.

And as Jesus begins to explain these truths, he is setting his face towards Jerusalem to be the individual who brings them into this. The sad thing is that the message of the gospel is available to all because we see it here.

It says there is, in those days, he told this parable, he said there was a sower or the sower went out into the field to sow the seed. There is this singular sower and he begins to broadcast the seed.

[16 : 08] Now we understand the explanation of it because Jesus himself tells us that this is the gospel message. But one thing that strikes us about this message is that it is available to all because the seed is sown on all four soils even though only one of them will ultimately receive it.

It is amazing to understand the reality that the majority of the individuals who hear the gospel will at some point decide that it is not sufficient for the need of their life.

Now that's a sad thing. Now I'm not talking about inside our church walls. I'm talking about in the world in which we live in. But that does not dictate to us that we should not be scattering the seed of the gospel message because we don't know the condition of the soil.

We see this reality when Jesus says the sower went out to sow the seed. And the same seed fell on the good soil that fell on the bad soil.

And over and over again we are reminded of this and we are reminded of the evidence that is there. This kingdom has a singular source. There is but one source of the kingdom and that source is Jesus Christ.

[17 : 30] And there is but one way to come into the kingdom and Jesus says I am the way, the truth, and the life. These realities are seen and that many people see this source and decide to reject it or to turn away from it.

Reading this morning very shortly I was reading a commentary on Martin Lloyd-Jones. If you've never read Martin Lloyd-Jones you need to read him. D. Martin Lloyd-Jones. Some of it's a little academic some of it's a little above.

Great series on the Sermon on the Mount. Great series of books of preachers called Preaching and Preachers. Martin Lloyd-Jones one of the most influential pastors around London for a time until his death sometime 25, 30 years ago.

Martin Lloyd-Jones while writing an introduction to the book of Romans started talking about how the wording there in the book of Romans is that people saw God and they looked to God but yet they rejected God and he broke that word down.

He said really it is like the refiner puts to test or tries a mineral to determine if it is precious. It is the refiner who takes this clump of mineral and says is this pure gold and they look at it and they test it and they try it and they say oh no that's not gold.

[18 : 39] The wording there that Paul uses in Romans is that man in the majority has tested God and according to their test they have found that God is unworthy of their devotion because there's but one source.

and when man tests the singular source and determines by man's untesting that he is not worthy of their devotion then they have discounted the reality of the kingdom for themselves.

They have turned away from it. Friend listen to me. The kingdom is made available to all in only one way. So when you are offering someone a kingdom principle or you are offering someone a kingdom reality you say what do you mean?

If you're telling someone wouldn't you like to spend eternity with Jesus Christ? Wouldn't you like to be forgiven for your sins? Wouldn't you like to have a secure eternity? Wouldn't you like to know? Wouldn't you like to have a peace that passes understanding?

Wouldn't you like to have all of your sins forgiven? Don't offer anything else but the gospel. There is but one source of kingdom realities and it is Jesus Christ. And this is the one thing the singular thing that can lead us to the second reality of the appeal.

[19 : 51] See I made it a point not to tell you what my first point was because sometimes I think we get carried away trying to keep up with the pastor's points including myself. There is a single appeal and the appeal is this when the seed is scattered the sower of the seed scatters the seed for one purpose and one purpose only to bear fruits.

this is a great time of year. this is a gardening time of year when the seed is sown and unfortunately I've been so busy I haven't helped as much as I should and my wife has got the garden ready and she's started planting a little bit and I'm looking forward to helping sow a little bit of seed but I don't put seed in the ground hoping that it just lays in the ground.

The only reason you put seed in the ground is because you want fruit from the seed and without fruit it's useless. Without fruit it's not beneficial to anyone.

Without the fruit of the seed the singular appeal to the seed that is sown is that it would bear fruits and when the gospel message comes into the life of the individual when it is scattered upon the soil of the heart the singular appeal is that it may bear fruit.

Friend listen to me if all our Lord and Savior wanted to do would give us a cure let me stop if all our Lord and Savior was offering us or desired of us was to spend eternity with him then you'll have to forgive me if it sounds harsh but I wish he would have called me to eternity the moment he saved me because the reality is he does not save us for eternity's sake alone eternity is the reward of what he gives us to do in history he saves us that we may bear fruits the appeal of the kingdom is to be fruitful be fruitful that is the singular appeal that is the one call this is the one principle this is the way we test and examine our own lives this is the way churches look at their ministries if it's not fruitful then why are we doing it if it is fruitful why are we not doing it if me as an individual am not being fruitful in my walking kingdom realities then what is going on it is not because the seed's not good it's because the soil has been tainted there is but one appeal and the appeal is that we may be fruitful now that fruit the fruit of the spirit is what love joy peace patience goodness self-control faithfulness gentleness all of these things we continue to go on now fruitfulness does not necessarily always mean numbers it means we're growing in love and patience that's a hard one to say and self-control and goodness and kindness and faithfulness and gentleness and all these are things that really penetrate my heart and they show us over and over again the fruits friends I want to tell you that if a church is bearing the fruit of the spirit then we won't have to worry about the numbers in the pews because those are things that the world is desperately seeking and that's the very fruit that

[23 : 09] God has called the church to bear for his glory there is but one appeal to the seed and that is fruitfulness and that appeal leads us to the assessment of the individual the sad reality is that everyone who reads this message and everyone who looks to this passage always wants to put themselves in the latter part of the series we always want to make ourselves the fourth soil and unfortunately we jump ahead because we assume that the reason man fails to bear fruit is because of all the bad things see there's a great benefit the disciples have the benefit the disciples have is they ask Jesus why he always speaks in parables and Jesus tells them to you it has been given to know which means kingdom realities are only understood in the presence of the savior you don't understand kingdom principles apart from the presence of the king on your own you'll never figure them out this is why

I read the bible for years and had no idea what it was talking to I had no idea what it was saying I had no idea the truth of it because I was reading it in my own efforts still to this day I open up scripture and I go wow I don't understand it that's deep but I understand more than I used to because it's not me who figures it out it's the king himself who speaks to me and teaches me see we have the benefit of the disciples Lord why do you do this he said to you it has been given let us never overlook the blessing of his presence we don't understand kingdom principles on our own we don't we understand them in the presence of the king himself he says but to them I speak in mysteries or in parables and now a parable is a ordinary event that really illuminates a spiritual reality something that the common man could understand in a agrarian society the common man would have understand and understood this sowing of the scene and this casting of it the common man would have understand fruit bearing but it would have taken him by surprise that it bore 30 60 or even a hundred fold because tenfold was counted as being a great blessing but even 30 fold fruit bearing is astounding but Jesus says they have ears and keep on hearing but they will not understand they have eyes and keep on seeing but they will never really perceive and he says this sad reality here because their heart has become dull unfortunately one thing that I have to guard myself against maybe you're not in this is being so familiar with the things of scripture that I become dull to the penetrating realities it teaches now who said that he said they are fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah

Isaiah the prophet who had arisen among God's own people who were worshipping at the temple who were going through all the motions who were doing everything right said you may be going through the motions but you're dull to the realities of it because it is easy let's just be honest it is easy to become so familiar with the things of the kingdom that we become dull to the penetrating realities that it has on us it is easy to say oh that's a good message I remember teaching that in Sunday school I remember hearing about it in vacation Bible school and I remember all these things but here we come to the assessment of the individual because it says the first soil is he who hears the word but does not understand it and therefore Satan comes in and snatches it away by the way this is the only one of the four that Satan is attributed to doing anything to the individual and Satan takes it away because of a lack of understanding a lack of understanding not because of some rampant sin not because of some defilement but they do not understand it do you know why discipleship is so important what is discipleship by the way what is discipleship is it something evangelism is great evangelism is the proclamation of the gospel absolutely essential but Jesus in the great commission didn't tell us to go and just tell he says and teach them all things that's discipleship discipleship is the daily walking with another individual an iron sharpening iron teaching and holding each other accountable it is the messy part of life it is the saying you know have you considered this have you considered that is coming to a greater understanding of kingdom things and coming to a greater understanding of the gospel why must we push ourselves to go deeper because friend if we don't understand it

Satan comes and takes it away that is a sad reality and the only way we understand it is by being in the presence of the king and Jesus says where two or more gather together I am there as well I have a dear brother in Christ I'm just being honest with you right I'm very have struggled over the years in this discipleship aspect that is submitting to the discipleship of another individual I've had a hard time with that I have a dear brother that will call me he lives out of state and we'll have a conversation we'll talk for an hour an hour and a half at a time he's always challenging me challenging me and I love talking to him but at the same time I'm not real fond of it because it kind of gets me to the very depth of my being and then we just kind of go back and forth not in a bad way and you know and he's finishing up school and I'm still going through school and he's writing this paper and I say well have you considered this and we have conversations and talks that most of you think it would bore you to tears but it's good for us it's good for us and the reason it's good is because it pushes us to think and to consider the gospel in a greater way sadly more of us know more about the things of this world than we do about the things of the gospel because it's a lot easier to talk about the things of this life than it is to talk about the things of the next those are difficult conversations but those are the ones we must hold on to because

Satan will snatch it away if we don't understand it the second soil is the soil that comes in and they receive it with joy oh how often I've seen this but the moment persecution or tribulation or or trials arise because of the word that is it's easy to believe when everything's going good but the moment it starts going bad simply because you make a commitment to Christ I tell people all the time and I'll tell you you get serious in your walk with Christ and I guarantee you your enemy's gonna make it hard I guarantee you it's gonna get hard and you're gonna have to make decisions is my walk with Christ as important as the pain of the struggle because here we see them those who receive it with joy but the moment it gets hard they fall away because it's just too difficult and then the third soil you know of all four soils the third one scares me more than any the third one looks me in the face and confronts me more than any because it's the soil that's pretty good soil and the seed grows and it's getting to that real good stage of fruit bearing but then it's choked out by the worries other gospels say pleasures and the deceitfulness of riches in this life the first soil is taken away from a lack of understanding

[31 : 44] Satan snatches it the second soil it is because it gets difficult and the pain is not worth it but the third soil there are good things that seem to be more important pleasures of this life things that don't feel bad but they're enjoyable and if we're not careful the good stuff chokes it out as well but then there's that fourth soil who hears the word understands the word and hears that appeal and bears fruit for the word some 100 some 60 and some 30 because the reality of the kingdom is the majority reject it but those who accept it are fruitful and the fruit abounds more than anybody could imagine and it is that fruit which changes the course of history for his glory let's pray

Lord we thank you for this day God we thank you for your word Lord we pray that your word would just penetrate us to the very depth Lord show us where we're at show us who we are Lord draw us ever closer to your side may we be those who address the heart condition in our own heart in our own life may we be those who bear fruit for the sake of the kingdom not for our glory but for yours we ask it in Jesus name amen so Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[36 : 23] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[38 : 53] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[41 : 23] Thank you.