

MATTHEW 13, PART 8

I) Review

Please note the review from last week about how to interpret the parables.

II) How should we interpret Matthew 13:31-35?

I benefited much from our study last week! Not only did I appreciate the substance of the conversation, but I also valued the way in which it occurred. Differing perspectives are a virtue when held in a loving environment but can be destructive in a selfish environment. Last week, our differing perspectives were a virtue.

So then, how should we interpret Matthew 13:31-35? Otis emailed me on Thursday with a helpful way to clarify our differing interpretations. To Otis, the kingdom of heaven being “like” something must mean a positive comparison because the kingdom is good by nature. Likewise, Otis sees the parable giving a general truth about the transformative power of the kingdom, rather than specific details that we are to allegorize. This is a similar approach to what Steve voiced last week.

On the other hand, I have difficulty seeing leaven as a positive influence when the rest of the Scriptures portray it negatively. Likewise, I see the woman’s act of hiding as a purposeful contrast to the revealing work of Jesus. My email last Thursday noted my additional realizations about the parable after class was finished.

So which interpretation is right? Rather than focus on my own rightness or wrongness (James 3:18), I would recommend that the process of discussion that we are engaging in is a sign that we are headed in the right direction. Jesus meant for His parables to be discussed and meditated upon. Perhaps we will all gain clarity through another Scripture at some point in the future. But let us keep discussing, keep growing, and living out the kingdom of heaven to which these parables are pointing.

III) Outline of Matthew 13

- I. The Purpose of Parables (13:1-23)
 - A. The Parable of the Sower (13:1-9)
 1. Explanation from Isaiah (13:10-16)
 - B. The Explanation of the Sower (13:18-23)
- II. The Kingdom & the Field (13:24-50)
 - A. The Parable of the Weeds (13:24-30)
 1. Two Parables (Mustard Seed & Leaven, 13:31-33)
 - a) Explanation from Psalm 78 (13:34-35)
 - b) Explanation of the Parable of the Weeds (13:36-43)
 2. Two Parables (Treasure & Pearl, 13:44-46)
 - B. The Parable of the Net (13:47-50)
- III. The Effects of the Parables (13:51-58)
 - A. New & Old (13:51-52)
 - B. Rejection of Jesus (13:53-58)

III) Matthew 13:47-58 (same questions from last week)

1. What does the parable of the net teach us (13:47-50)?
 - a. How do OT allusions help us to understand the purpose of the net (Hab. 1:14-17; Ezek. 32:3; & 47:10)?
 - b. How does this parable synthesize the parables of the mustard seed/leaven with the parables of the hidden treasure/pearl? See also Mt. 3:12; 7:17-18; Mt. 12:33; 13:39-42; 22:9-10; & 25:31-32.
2. What does the parable of the net teach us (13:51-52)?
 - a. What is the treasure (see Mt. 12:33-37)?
 - b. What does the old/new contrast mean (see Mt. 9:14-17).
3. How does the story of Jesus' rejection in Mt. 13:53-58 bookend the parables in Matthew 13? Compare Mt. 12:22-39.