

The Parables of Jesus, pt.1, 4.20.03

Clue

Matt.13.1-17

Begin a new series on the parables of Jesus.

Intro. How many love to: put together things – puzzles, jigsaw puzzles, laying out a garden, planning a vacation, designing a house, seeing who a child looks or acts like; figure out how things work or made – computer, relationships, just stuff, food; what about mysteries – trying to figure out who did what and how did they do it (Perry Mason on late at night), law shows, conspiracy shows.

How many of you like playing games where you have to use strategy, listen for clues, outwit your opponent – chess, online game, hide & seek, board games like Clue.

God likes playing Clue. God had designed us to enjoy discovery, a challenge, to be inquisitive. He enjoys giving us clues to see if we will pick up on them and then try to make sense.

The reason I say that is because of how Jesus communicated to us when he was on earth. Jesus used a lot of different ways to communicate truth: lecture, illustrations, object lessons, through acts of mercy & power. He also communicated by giving us clues of spiritual realities by telling parables.

A parable is a story taken from everyday life that communicates a truth about the Kingdom of God. The word means “a comparison.”

Why did Jesus communicate through parables?

1. So we would remember it. My message at the beginning of the year on
2. So the non-seeker couldn't understand it

3. They have various levels of application and possibly meaning. The old understanding that parables are trying to make one point. This maybe true of some parables, but certainly not all.
4. He wants to get a response from you. It's God's way of giving us a clue and seeing whether or not we will seek out the deeper meaning/experience.

Read Text

Explanation of text

13.1–2: Large crowds – lots of people at all different spiritual stages – genuinely seeking, curiosity seekers, arrogant, religious elite, etc.

13.3–9: Don't want to do explanation, but make these two observations. One, the seed is the same; two, there is a difference in the soil

13.10 – Why do ... parables? Good question. If you were trying to build a following, wouldn't you make things clear to your potential followers.

13.11 – Parables contain the knowledge of the Kingdom. It shows us how the Kingdom of God works. It's not given to everyone.

13.12 – Those who have been responsive to God's message and activity will be given more and those who haven't been responsive to God's activity will not be given much and, in fact, it will be taken from them. You can't store God's seed it has to be scattered. Look at the parable of the seeds, v.3–9. It's the spreading of the activity of God

This increase has to do with God's activity in your life, not His word, the Bible. The seed is the message of the Kingdom (v.19) and the Bible contains the message of the Kingdom, but just b/c you know the Bible doesn't mean you understand the message of the kingdom. You can quote every passage of the Bible from memory and not understand the kingdom of God.

Jesus is saying, “You have responded to the clues and invitations that my Father has sent your way. Others have not. The Father hasn’t hid it from them like he didn’t want them to hear. No, the same seed was thrown in their direction that was thrown in your direction. The only difference, your spirit was receptive.”

13.13–15: Many of these people saw and experienced the same Jesus as the disciples, but their heart wasn’t as responsive. How many of you know a tornado can go through a neighborhood and destroy one home and the next not be touched? What’s true in the natural is true in the spiritual. When the activity of God is cast among us, you have the chance to respond to God’s clues and seek after him or you can shrug it off and say I’m not that interested. You can either be moved by the Spirit or unmoved, but the choice is yours.

What happened to Pharaoh then happens to you – when you make the conscious decision to reject the activity of God and your heart is hardened.

The Message translation

13.16–17: They responded to the activity of God in the person of Jesus. God put this big clue out in front of people and at first only a handful really decided to examine the clue, now today millions have examined the clue and searched out God in a new way.

What’s the point of this message? What does a study of the parables of Jesus have to do with my walk with God?

1. God has created within us a desire to search & discover. 2. God plants clues all around us for deeper understanding of the Kingdom. 3. When we begin looking for those clues and then find them, we will see a larger manifestation of the activity of God in our lives (13.12). Some of you are at the point of burnout and it’s b/c you quit looking for the clues.

Exercise of seeing a tree.

1. What do you see with your natural eyes.
2. What spiritual principles can we learn from trees?
3. What do trees teach us about God's heart for his creation? God's creation are huge clues that reveal God's heart for mankind.

In your relationships, at work & school, God's dropping clues around you all the time and he saying, " if you'll take the time to examine them you will find my activity you will have a deeper, more meaningful relationship with Me."