

THE KINGDOM IS LIKE...

PART 1: THE PURPOSE OF THE PARABLES

MATTHEW 13:10-17, 34-35

Parables cause the hearer to pass judgment on things on which they were well-acquainted, and then to compel them to transfer that judgement to something to whose significance they had been blind.

-William Barclay

I. What is a parable?

II. Why were they used?

Getting to Know You:

1. Who is the wisest person you know? What is it that makes them wise?

Into the Bible:

2. Jesus declares the purpose of the parables is to make wisdom available only to those “who have ears to hear”. Paul makes specific reference to “hidden wisdom” in I Corinthians 2:7-13 and Colossians 2:3. Who is it hidden from? Who is it given to?

3. In this passage in Matthew, Jesus makes clear that the parables are really only for a select group of listeners. This raises the issue of fairness on God’s part. Does God have the right to selectively grant His wisdom to some and choose to withhold it from others? Obviously, one could argue that since it is His world and He makes the rules He has the right to do what He wants, but the issue is more one of consistency with His stated character. Is God being righteous and just in choosing some and not others to grant His mercy and wisdom to? Read Romans 9:14-20

4. Do people reject God out of ignorance? Was there (and is there) enough truth available outside the parables to convince Jesus' audience of his identity and convict them of their sinfulness? What was the attitude of his hearers just prior to this in Chapter 12? Also read Romans 1:18-21 and I Corinthians 1:18-26.

For Families:

5. Talk with your children about what God's mercy means.