

Lesson 13: The Parables of the Kingdom

Objective: To know that how we hear and receive the Word of God determines whether or not there be fruit in our lives.

Background: Matthew chapter 13 is a landmark in Jesus' teaching ministry. From this point on, He often taught in parables. The parables of Jesus were simple stories known to the Jews, and Jesus used them to illustrate some spiritual truths about the kingdom of God, the central theme of his teaching and ministry. The kingdom of God, primarily means "*the rule of God*" not "territory," has *two aspects: present and future*. Jesus announced that with His coming *the Kingdom tomorrow is here today, the spiritual kingdom;* and yet, He also taught that *the kingdom is still tomorrow, the eschatological kingdom* .

Instruction: Read Matthew 13 over and over again until you are familiar with the parables.

Let's Think: Keep in mind these parables were told two thousand years ago.

1. In the parable of the Sower, what do the first three kinds of soil have *in common, and unlike* the fourth kind of soil? Explain it in your own words the problem of each. (Mt 13:1-9, 18-23)
Which soil seemed to characterize your life? Is it the kind of soil you would like to be?
If not, what would you do about it?
2. What truth does the parable of the Sower teach about evangelism? For what would you pray when you share the Good News? Why?
3. When applying the parables of the Weeds and the Nets to the church, what does it reveal about the state of the church? (Mt 13: 24-30, 36-43; vs.4 7 -50) Is it a picture of your church? What would you do with the weeds? Why? By the way, how does the enemy sow weeds today?
4. Are you looking forward to "the harvest"? Why or why not? (Mt 13: 36-43; 47-50)
5. In what way was the ministry of Jesus like the mustard seed? Would the parable *inspire optimism* in that small band of disciples? If so, how? What was Jesus projecting about His ministry? (Mt 13:31-32) Should a small beginning be always regarded as insignificant? If not, could you give an example for your answer?
6. In what way does God's work, initiated by Jesus, like a leavening process? Can the work be stopped? How would this parable encourage the disciples, a small band of His followers? (Mt 13: 33) Explain. How would the parable encourage you in your ministry?
7. To what does Jesus compare the kingdom of God (which means "salvation" here) in Mt 13: 44,45? What decision does the man and the merchant *each make* with the discovery? Why?
Answer honestly, what does the kingdom of God mean to you? If you substitute your name for either the man or the merchant, how would the story read? Try it.

Let's Remember: Jesus said, "He who has ears, let him hear." (Matthew 13:9).