

Introduction:

As we continue our series on “The Life of Jesus: Matthew Edition” we come to Matthew 13 and the parables of Jesus. But before we zoom in on Matthew 13 let's look at where we are in Matthew. So Matthew 1-2 covered Jesus' birth and early life, Matthew 3-4 covered Jesus' preparation for ministry, Matthew 5-7 Public solo ministry authoritative teaching sermon on the mount, Matthew 8-9 We see that Jesus not only has authority in His teaching but He exercises authority over creation, disease, sin and forgiveness, and Demons. Matthew 9 ends with Jesus saying, ““The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”. Then in chapter ten, Jesus begins his public ministry with co laborers. Here we see that not only does the teaching and miracles done by Jesus and in His name increase but so does the opposition to Jesus. So we get this cycle where as Jesus and his disciples are reaching more people and doing more amazing things the Jewish religious leaders begin to hate Jesus even more and its during this time that they start really seriously looking for ways to get rid of Him.

So its in all of this that Matthew records many of Jesus' teachings in parables. Today we are going to look at the Parable of the Sower and ask the question what does the parable of the sower mean and why is it important for us as a church and as individuals today?

Before we dive into the text lets pray...

Read the Word Matthew 13:1-3:

Paint the Picture:

- That same day
 - Most of 12 and 13
 - Some question if this is meant to literally mean same day or simply a tool
 - Field plucking grain
 - Pharisees get mad
 - Synagogue heals a mans crippled hand
 - Pharisees seek to destroy Him
 - Jesus goes to a house cast out a demon

- Pharisees seek to discredit him by saying he does it through the power of demons.
 - Two requests
 - Pharisees ask for a sign
 - Mother and Brothers ask to chat
- Leaves the house goes to the sea and He teaches from a boat
 - Practical
 - Symbolic Casting a net

Transition:

But when he starts teaching them he does it in a way that wasn't uncommon for the time but we don't see much of in Matthew up to this point...

Read the Word Matthew 13:3-9

Paint the Picture:

- Gives them this parable and ends it with an invitation to understand
 - Not hiding the point from anyone
- Spoiler alert: Jesus is going to interpret this parable for us
- Point out a few things
 - Parables common
 - Jewish Rabbis
 - Recycle
 - The setting reflected the target audience
 - Connected the secular and the sacred
 - Authenticity of Jesus teaching

Transition:

We mentioned that this was kind of an unusual thing for Jesus up to this point and the question is "Why would Jesus choose to teach in parables?" Well the disciples were wondering the same thing, which we will see in the next verses.

Read The Word Matthew 13:10-13:

¹⁰ Then the disciples came and asked him, "Why do you speak to them in parables?" ¹¹ He answered, "To you it has been given to know the secrets^[b] of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. ¹² For to those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. ¹³ The reason I speak to them in parables is that 'seeing they do not perceive, and hearing they do not listen, nor do they understand.'

Paint the Picture:

- Jesus invited them and they came Mark
- Worth breaking down what He says

Ask The Questions:

- V: 11 At first is kind of shocking
 - Why is it for them to know but not the other people in the crowd and specifically the Pharisees in the crowd
- V. 12-13 The lack of understanding is not because Jesus is being too cryptic or purposely hiding the truth. The truth was hidden from some because they did not want to understand
 - Light in the morning
 - Rob and his texts
- Teaching in parables because it reveals the true desire of the heart.
 - Plucked grain they twisted it
 - Healed on the Sabbath they twisted it
 - He cast out a demon they twisted it
 - Allowed those who desired after darkness and misunderstanding to remain in darkness but invited all to come and learn.

Transition:

What is fascinating about this is that this was exactly what the Pharisees had asked for although probably not in the way they expected...

Read the Word Matthew 13:14-17:

¹⁴ With them indeed is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah that says:

‘You will indeed listen, but never understand,
and you will indeed look, but never perceive.

¹⁵ For this people’s heart has grown dull,
and their ears are hard of hearing,
and they have shut their eyes;
so that they might not look with their eyes,
and listen with their ears,
and understand with their heart and turn—
and I would heal them.’

¹⁶ But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. ¹⁷ Truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, but did not see it, and to hear what you hear, but did not hear it.

Transition:

Those opposed to Jesus asked for a sign and he gave it to them. It had been prophesied that by Isaiah that those who had closed their hearts, shut their eyes, and plugged their ears would be presented with the truth and not understand it.

The Pharisees and scribes who ask for a sign got their sign because by their own blindness chosen because they took a stance of opposition to Jesus they fulfilled the words of Isaiah.

But while the Pharisees and the Scribes fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah Jesus points out that the disciples and those who sought the truth at the feet of Jesus were experiencing the fulfillment of the hope of all the Prophets

Here Jesus is again claiming something unique and amazing about himself.

And those who sought the truth from Jesus have the amazing blessing and we have the amazing blessing of having Jesus interpret his own words in the next verses.

Read the Word Matthew 13:18-19:

- Asking two questions what is Jesus saying and how should we apply it in our lives and at River Rock Church today?

What is Jesus saying?:

- What is the seed?
 - The Good News of Jesus Christ
- What is the seed sown on the path?
 - People who hear the Gospel but nothing happens because they don't understand.
 - Drop tracts from the sky
 - Necessity for missions work
 - Relational Evangelism

How should we apply it?:

- What can we do to help people understand?
 - Children's ministry
 - Apologetics
 - Removing barriers
 - Our families

Transition:

Jesus continues to further explain the parable

Read the Word Matthew 13:20-21:

What is Jesus saying?:

- What about those sown a rocky soil, what does that mean?
 - Hear and understand
 - Jump head first
 - But when trouble comes they leave
- May not face external persecution
 - Internal doubts or hardships
 - Difficult questions
 - Suffering
 - Sin
 - Hypocrisy
 - In the last few years

How should we apply it?:

- How can we help people and ourselves not just have superficial, or shallow faith but actually have faith with roots?
 - Creeds
 - Past Christians
 - Not steering away from tough questions
 - Israel
 - Mark 9 the father of the demon possessed man

Read the Word Matthew 13:21:

What is Jesus saying?:

- What does it mean that some seed was sown among thorns?
 - Hear the word, understand and embrace it, but get so focused on the things of the world that they produce not fruit.
 - Ticket in hand Christians
 - Those are just works
 - Jesus called us to more than salvation
 - Jesus called us to an abundant life
 - Jesus gave us a mission
 - True discipleship does not allow us to be ticket I hand Christians

How should we apply it?:

- How can we help ourselves and others not fall in to ticket in hand Christianity?
- Support each other
- Challenge and encourage each other
- Small groups
- Study notes
- Service in the church and in our community
- Not become insulated

Read the Word Matthew 13:23:

Conclusion:

Here Jesus presents what should be the desire of all Christians. To hear the word, understand it, grow roots, and fully embrace the life Jesus is offering us.

Jesus has called you and I into an abundant life, devoted to Jesus, and committed to His Great Commission.

He has called and placed River Rock Church in this community to bring the Gospel, help people understand and grow roots and fully embrace the life Jesus has for us.

As we go into this new year and many years in the future there are going to be programs we could do, a lot of events, and places we can put our energy but we always have to ask...

Are we bringing the Gospel?

Are we helping people understand?

Are we giving into shallow Christianity or ticket in hand Christianity?

Or are we showing all of Jesus to all the world starting in our lives, our families, our church, and our community.