

CAPITAL BIBLE CHURCH

July 2, 2017

SERMON NOTES

PASTOR BILL HAKEN

"Secrets of the Kingdom"

The Kingdom of God

Matthew 13:1-3, 10-17

Big Idea – Jesus used simple stories to teach great truths.

1. What is a parable?

-- A common definition of a parable is "an earthly story with a heavenly meaning"

transliteration of the Greek "parabole" (para-bow-LAY)

Vine's Expository Dictionary of N.T. Words, it "signifies a placing of one thing beside another with a view to comparison"

Wiersbe's said... "a story that places one thing beside another for the purpose of teaching"

A parable can usually be identified by the use of the word "like" - cf. Mt 13:31,33

Used in the New Testament, a parable...usually a story or narrative drawn from nature or human circumstances from which spiritual lessons can be made by comparison

2. Why did Jesus use parables to teach?

Primary purpose was to "conceal"...

Jesus began speaking in parables because of the hardness of many people's hearts - cf. Mt 13:10-17

The disciples' attitude was that they were blessed to learn "the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven" - Mt 13:10-12,16

But because of the hard hearts of many in the multitude, Jesus began speaking to them in parables - Mt 13:13-15; cf. Mk 4:10-12

He would then explain the parables in private to His disciples - Mk 4:33-34

By using parables, Jesus effectively separated the truth-seekers from the curiosity-seekers!

People seeking the truth would say "Explain to us the parable..." - Mt 13:36, whereas the simply curious could easily be sent away

Jesus also used parables to carry out Divine judgement...

Matthew 13:12 Those who have understanding will be given more, and they will have all they need. But those who do not have understanding, even what they have will be taken away from them.

Another purpose was to "reveal"...

Once the disciples understood the basic meaning of the parables...the comparison of the "known" (earthly) truths with the "unknown" (heavenly) truths would shed further light on the unknown

With Lord's explanation of His parables we can learn more about "the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven" - cf. Mt 13:34-35

General rules for Interpreting the parables of Jesus

Two extremes to avoid...

1. Seeking to find some spiritual truth in every little detail
2. Saying that there is only ONE spiritual truth in each parable

Guidelines for proper interpretation:

Learn from explanations Jesus gave in those parables He explained

Understanding the parable of the sower helps us to understand other parables - Mk 4:13

Look for the CENTRAL truth of the parable, making sure that any other truths gleaned from the parable are in harmony with it

Consider carefully the CONTEXT of Jesus words...

Don't use the parables to formulate new doctrine because parables were originally told to conceal, so they are not always that clear in their meaning. So don't try to build a case for a doctrine based solely on a parable

3. What was the general theme of the parables of Jesus?

The general theme is "the kingdom of heaven"... Mt 13:11

"The kingdom of heaven is like..." - Mt 13:24,31,33,44,45,47

"the kingdom of heaven" was the theme of...

Jesus' itinerant ministry - Mt 4:17,23

His sermon on the mount - Mt 5:3,10,19-20; 6:10,33; 7:21

4. Kingdom of heaven or kingdom of God?

Any Difference?

Some try to make a distinction (e.g. Scofield Reference Bible)

comparison of the gospels indicate that the terms refer to the same thing

Matthew 13:11 Jesus answered, "You have been chosen to know the secrets about the kingdom of heaven, but others cannot know these secrets."

Luke 8:10 "Jesus said, "You have been chosen to know the secrets about the kingdom of God. But I use stories to speak to other people so that: 'They will look, but they may not see. They will listen, but they may not understand.'"

Why the different expressions?

Matthew used the expression "kingdom of heaven" almost exclusively, while the other gospel writers used the phrase "kingdom of God"

Perhaps since Matthew wrote his gospel to the Jews, he chose to use the phrase "kingdom of heaven"...because of the Jews' reluctance to use the name of God (out of reverence), and also

because of the Jews' misconception of the coming kingdom

Many anticipated a physical kingdom

The expression "heaven" (literally, "heavens") would emphasize a spiritual kingdom

So, no basis for difference between the "kingdom of heaven" and the "kingdom of God"

What is meant by "kingdom of heaven?"

Two aspects of God's kingdom:

1. Universal Kingdom

Simply means that God rules everything and everyone forever. He is the Sovereign God, the Creator the Sustainer, the beginning and the end. He rules over all.

Psalm 29:10 The LORD rules over the floodwaters. The LORD reigns as king forever.

Psalm 103:19 The LORD has established His throne in heaven, And His kingdom rules over all.

He's King over everything, even the devil Satan. That's why Matt.10:28 says to "fear the One who is able to destroy both soul and body in Hell." Satan will be cast into Hell along with all the demons and unbelievers. (Revelation 20:10, 15).

But the second aspect of the Kingdom of God is what we call the

2. Mediatorial Kingdom

God's kingdom on earth "mediated" by humans.

"thy kingdom come thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven"

In OT through Adam & Eve, then the Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac & Jacob, then the nation Israel, various prophets, priest and kings. In the NT, through Jesus Christ, then through his apostles, and now the church. In the Tribulation time 144,000 Jewish evangelists preach, and then Christ comes back to restore the Kingdom on earth during the Millennium.

Interesting fact is that not everyone identifying themselves with this kingdom is truly a believer, not saved, not a child of God through faith in Christ. 2 Illustrations of this in Bible:

Matthew 8:12 "But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

John 15:6 "If any do not remain in me, they are like a branch that is thrown away and then dies. People pick up dead branches, throw them into the fire, and burn them."

Dead, have no life in them, like Judas Iscariot, son of perdition.

So Christendom, modern day Christianity has both saved and unsaved, what Jesus calls in His one parable, the wheat and the tares.

We live in a time when the kingdom of God is a spiritual kingdom here on the earth, in between the time when the King, Jesus, came and was rejected, and the time when the King, Jesus, comes back and sets up his earthly kingdom. This is called the church age, the age of grace, and is referred to as a "mystery" here by Jesus in Matthew 13:11, and by Paul the apostle in Ephesians 3:5, 6.

What we are about to study in these parables concern things which Abraham, Moses, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and many others looked forward to, but did not fully understand in their lifetime!

"But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear; for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it." - Mt 13:16-17

these "mysteries of the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 13:11), containing "things kept secret from the foundation of the world" (Mt 13:35), are now being made known through the preaching of the gospel of Christ:

"Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began, but now has been made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures has been made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith;" - Romans 16:25, 26