

A note from Kathy

I have a favorite daily devotional that I have read for many years. It is The Daily Walk Bible. I had it open on my desk, so I turned the pages to see the notes for Matthew 13. The "Insight" section was titled "Teaching Techniques from the Master Teacher." It went on to say that "His goal was to communicate truth, not to impress his audience." Then it posed a question. "Is that your goal in teaching?" This gave me an opportunity to stop and consider my motives for all I say and do. Teaching is much more than time spent in front of a group. We are all teaching someone. Someone is watching and learning and taking their cue from us. Whatever I do or say today may I do it all for the glory of God.

Observation

1. Since this chapter contains several parables, I believe it is important that we define the word "parable." A parable is a comparison or analogy drawn from daily life or nature and used to impart or enforce a spiritual truth; an earthly story with a heavenly meaning.
The Life Application Bible says, "A parable compares something familiar to something unfamiliar. It helps us understand spiritual truth by using everyday objects and relationships. Parables compel listeners to discover truth, while at the same time concealing the truth from those too lazy or too stubborn to see it. To those who are honestly searching, the truth becomes clear."
2. Jesus presents 8 parables in this chapter. Read through the chapter and number the parables in the margin of your Bible.
3. Parable #1, the parable of the sower. Label the picture at the top of page 2 with all the facts found in Matthew 13:1-23. Be sure to look for the who, what, where, when and how of each. I will help you start. Who is the farmer? _____ The seed is the same in each illustration only the soil changes. What is the seed? _____

THE PARABLE



OF THE SOWER



OR THE PARABLE OF THE FOUR TYPES OF SOIL

Illustrated by Rene Scholten

4. Go back and read the chapter again. This time circle or highlight every time you see the phrase **"The kingdom of heaven is like..."** This is a key phrase. Every time we see this phrase it gives us another glimpse at what God's kingdom is really like. We join that kingdom when we place our trust in Christ as our Savior. Keep this phrase in mind as we look at the next 7 parables.
5. The weeds that the enemy sowed in the man's field went unnoticed until they bore fruit. Experienced farmers knew that even though they were hard to distinguish, one was a weed and one was the crop. What action did the servants suggest?
6. Why was the land owner unwilling to do what they suggested?
7. There would come a day of harvest when the servants would go out. What instructions were they given for harvesting the weeds and the crop?
8. Now let's look at verses 37-43 and see Jesus explanation.
Who is the farmer/landowner?
Who is the field?
Who are the good seeds?
Who are the weeds?
Who is the enemy who came in and sowed weeds seeds?
When is the time of harvest?
Who are the harvesters?

9. According to verses 40-42, what was the outcome for the weeds?
10. What is the outcome for the righteous?
11. Verse 44 tells us "The kingdom of heaven is like..." _____
12. Verse 45 tells us "the kingdom of heaven is like..." _____
13. In verse 44 we see a man who was probably nothing more than a hired laborer when he came across a very valuable treasure. In verse 45 we see an experienced merchant who looked diligently for fine pearls and found one. What do both of these men have in common? What did they both recognize when they saw it?
14. What were both of these men willing to part with in order to have the valuable treasure they had found?
15. The next parable is the parable of the net in verses 47-50. What did Jesus say the kingdom of heaven is like?
16. How did Jesus apply this great haul of fishes to the end of the age? Who will be responsible for separating the good from the bad, the wicked from the righteous?
17. I am sure Jesus' words in verse 52 were of great comfort and encouragement to the disciples that day. The disciples would have understood his reference to them as the owner of the house. What was the old treasure that they had stored in their (hearts) house and what was the new?
Remember his words to them in Matthew 5:17 *"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them."*
18. This chapter ends on a very sad note. Where was Jesus in verses 53-58? What happened to him while he was there?
19. How is this city different from the others we have seen Jesus visit?

Application

1. As you filled in the details of the parable of the sower on page 2 in this lesson, were you reminded of people you know? Did you notice the liberality of the sower, he threw the seed out as far as he was able? Were you moved to pray and share with a new sense of urgency?
2. As you read Matthew 13:11, were you happy to know that God wanted you to understand the secrets of the kingdom of heaven? That is why the parables are in God's word. The greater our understanding, the greater our thankfulness for what God has done to restore us to a relationship with him. Why not write a prayer of thankfulness and praise for the gift of salvation. It is free to us, but it was not without cost.
3. Have you ever prayed and asked God why all the wicked remain on the earth? Have you ever wondered why he does not come in and gather them up so that things might be easier for his children? After studying the parable of the weeds (wheat and tares), do you feel you have any greater understanding?
4. In the parables of verses 44-46, we see one man who accidentally came across a treasure and another man who had been diligently searching and found the treasure. Remember Jesus desires for us to understand what the kingdom of heaven is like. What do you see in these two parables that can help you understand God's kingdom better?
5. Both of these men gave up all the previous resources they would have had as their security in order to have this new treasure. We of course do not purchase our salvation, but what must we be willing to part with in order to be saved?
6. In the parable of the net, Jesus used the illustration of fishermen out on a lake dragging their net and catching all kinds of fish. What do you believe this is illustrating for us? Do you recall Jesus' invitation to Peter and Andrew in Matthew 4:19? Do you believe we should be selective when sharing the good news? Does this parable help you picture yourself sharing the gospel in a new way?
7. Jesus asked the disciples that day if they understood all these things. What was their answer? What is your answer to that question?

8. Do you have a greater understanding of the kingdom of God after your time in Matthew 13? Please write a short paragraph that you can share in your small group stating what you have learned about the kingdom of heaven.

9. When Jesus returned to his home town of Nazareth, what was the reaction of those who lived there? Have you ever been treated this way by those who knew you as you were growing up? Often those who knew us before do not want to hear about the changes God has made in our heart and life. The only thing they can see is the person they knew before. It can be very discouraging. I cannot imagine how discouraging it must have been for Jesus to know that those he grew up around were not interested in the salvation he came to bring. They could not get past the image they had of him.