

THE PARABLE OF THE HOUSEHOLDER

Matthew 13:51, 52

I. INTRODUCTION

A. For the last ten weeks, we have been looking at the series of parables in Matthew 13 which describe for us what God is doing in this present age from the first advent to the second advent. These parables give us the mystery of history in which we Christians are given a glimpse of history from the divine viewpoint.

B. The Parable of the Sower explained the four different responses to the gospel when it is preached. The Parable of the Wheat and the Tares told us about the counterfeits to true Christianity. The Parable of the Mustard Seed spoke of the abnormal growth of the gospel in the professing church. The Parable of the Leaven explained how sin gets into the true church and destroys vital Christian fellowship. The Parable of the Hid Treasure showed us God's plan for the nation of Israel which will become a reality down towards the end of this age. The Parable of the Pearl told us of God's purpose for the church in which He is calling both Jew and Gentile to be one in Christ. And lastly the Parable of the Dragnet which explained that God is in control of all evil and evil men and they will one day be judged at the second advent of Christ.

C. The last parable in Matthew 13 - The Parable of the Householder - does not deal with the mysteries of the kingdom but it is a postscript or epilogue which Christ added to teach Christians the necessity of putting these truths of the kingdom to work in their lives. True believers have a responsibility to use the truths of Christ and His present spiritual kingdom in their experience. Head knowledge is not enough. There must be changed lives as men encounter the truth. Without The Parable of the Householder, our understanding of the other parables in Matthew 13 would be incomplete.

II. THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE DISCIPLES 13:51

A. The Lord Jesus asked a direct question to His disciples - "Have ye understood all these things?" The Lord wanted to know whether they had grasped these truths about the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.

B. The most amazing thing happened. The disciples answered, "Yes." They claimed they understood all that Christ was telling them. There seems to be no reservation on their part and intellectually they probably felt that they understood what Christ was teaching. NOTE: The disciples were not being dishonest. They had intellectual comprehension of the words, concepts and symbols of the parable but these things had not yet become an experiential reality. The disciples were probably not any different than many of you who have heard these messages on Matthew 13. You say, "Yes, we understand them," but have these truths been assimilated into your lives so that you know them experientially? Obviously, as one follows the lives of the Twelve Disciples through the Gospels, it becomes apparent that they really did not understand these truths fully in their experience. Their actions only showed a shallow and limited understanding because truth must be applied to one's experience. NOTE: Truth must first be mentally attained but truth must get into the life or it is not effective. We as Christians are told to grow in grace and knowledge of Christ (II Peter 3:18) but this is "experiential knowledge;" it is truth applied to the life; it is doctrine applied to the life by

faith-obedience.

II Peter 3:18: But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

III. THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE DISCIPLES 13:52

A. As soon as the disciples said they understood the truth of these parables, our Lord hits them with the responsibility to act on the truth that they claim to know. With light comes responsibility!

B. The first thing of significance here is that the disciples were compared to scribes. Scribes were teachers and preachers of the Law in the Old Testament. They were the teachers of the kingdom. They were the authoritative interpreters of the Word of God. Their task was to interpret the Bible for the Jews and apply the Bible to life. NOTE: Christ said that the disciples are compared to the scribes. Disciples of Christ are trained, disciplined or instructed in or for the kingdom. This applies to all true disciples of Christ, not just to the original Twelve. Disciples are to be interpreters of the Bible. They are trained for the kingdom in that they are men and women who instruct others about the kingdom. They are to know the Word and apply it to life. Disciples can speak authoritatively from the Bible and explain to men how God is working behind the scenes of history and how God works in the affairs of men. All disciples of Christ are to interpret truth to apply it to their lives and the lives of others. NOTE: It is the business of Christians to understand life. They are being trained to look at life from a divine viewpoint and see what God is doing in history. It is the business of Christians to learn how to live and to handle life rightly. ILLUSTRATION: Wrong View Of Life.

ILLUSTRATION: The world needs Christians who can speak authoritatively about Christ and His kingdom. People seem to get all upset over politics whether national or foreign. We find men arguing at the top of their voices about the pros and cons of this war or that war. Yet, God continues to allow war because it is ultimately working out His purposes which will culminate in the return of Jesus Christ to this earth. Men are beginning to panic about the energy crisis and this is going to be a very real thing, but this is all part of God's plan to bring this present age to a close. We must not ignore nor let the world ignore the Christian viewpoint of life. A Christian can relax and know that whatever happens is part of God's will for this world.

C. Our Lord then described a Christian who is being taught or schooled in the things of the kingdom as a householder. A householder was usually a privileged and trusted slave who was the house steward entrusted with the management of the household of his master. NOTE: How does a householder compare to a true believer? Christians have been made stewards of God's spiritual kingdom while Christ and His earthly kingdom are absent from earth. Each Christian has the responsibility to keep Christ's house in order while Christ is gone. True Christians are deeply involved in Christ's present kingdom program and must do all they can to further Christ's kingdom in a spiritual way before He sets up His earthly kingdom at the second advent. ILLUSTRATION: Stedman.

ILLUSTRATION: Christians are to be involved in Christ's kingdom program. That is why the scriptures always stress the fact that understanding Christianity consists of far more than merely believing a set of doctrines or creeds – it is demonstrating a life. Anything short of that is an abortive and distorted picture of the Christian life. Ray Stedman says,

I like to stress this because I find so many people who think becoming a Christian is just a way to

get to heaven when you die. Thank God, it does include that. That is a kind of fringe benefit you receive as a Christian, and there is a great future ahead for believers. But that is not why God has called you now to be a Christian. Or if it is, that is not why he has left you here, anyhow. He has left you to learn how to live, to learn how to be healed, to have the same struggles and the same problems as men and women who are not Christians but to learn how to solve them. When non-Christians look at our lives they ought to be able to see the problems increasingly being solved. That is what gives them the confidence to believe that the message we preach is a genuine message, a message of reality and truth.

If on the other hand, as has been happening so much in the last decade, non-Christians looking at Christians see nothing but the same miserable set of problems that they themselves are struggling with, if they see Christian homes torn with strife and bickering and quarreling and fighting, see marriages split right down the middle and see Christians getting divorces, if they see sexual immorality prevailing in Christian lives as much as in non-Christians, if they see all the evils and all the struggles and all the heartaches and the longings and loneliness prevailing in our lives as much as in everyone else's, then they say to us, "What is your message for? What does it do? Why should we be interested? You're not doing any better than we are."

D. The householder brings things out of his treasure, things new and old. The householder would have charge over the storehouse, and he would bring out of the storehouse food, money, provisions and all things needed for running a household. The householder is obviously a true Christian, but what about the "treasure?" The treasure probably refers to all the spiritual truths concerning the kingdom which are ours now because we are children of the kingdom. The Christian has a storehouse of knowledge that a non-Christian can never have because the Christian has spiritual understanding of life. NOTE: The whole kingdom program centers around Christ, and while Christ is not physically present in this world now, He is present in the hearts and lives of all true believers. The secrets of the kingdom revolve around Christ and Christ is spiritually present in every true believer (II Cor. 4:7). Christians have the Christ of the gospel indwelling their earthly bodies and He alone is our hope of glory (Col. 1:27). But Christ also gives us the power to live, and in Christ we are given all wisdom and knowledge (Col. 2:3). NOTE: Christians have Christ who is wisdom and knowledge, and the more committed we are to Him and the more we exercise deeper faith, the more we will learn of things in the spiritual realm and the more we shall view life from a divine viewpoint. NOTE: Christ is our power to become good scribes of His kingdom (Phil. 4:13). Without the power of Christ, we cannot effectively teach others of His kingdom. Without the power of Christ we cannot speak authoritatively about God. Without the power of Christ, we cannot effectively cope with life and apply the truths of Christ's kingdom to our lives.

II Cor. 4:7: But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

Col. 1:27: . . . Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Col. 2:3: In whom (Christ) are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Phil. 4:13: I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

E. Our Lord says that the householder "brings forth out of this treasure things new and old."

1. What are the things new and old? I do not know for sure, but it certainly must refer to the truths concerning Christ and His kingdom in the New Testament and the Old Testament. Christians have the benefit of both testaments to interpret the kingdom truths.

2. “Things old and new” may also refer to life, for the truths of the kingdom must be applied to life. The things that are new are the constantly changing experiences of our lives. Each one of us is always coming each day into new and fresh experiences, for each day Christ, our treasure, is exposing us to new truths and experiences. NOTE: Right now I am experiencing new things that I never experienced because I have never been 38 in November 1973 before. I am learning new things about life, about myself, about people, about the ministry, about being a husband and about being a father. I am running into experiences as a father which I have never encountered before, because I have never before been a father this old with children the current ages of my children. NOTE: You, too, are running into new experiences. Some of you are experiencing falling in love; some of you are just starting with the new experience of marriage; some of you are just entering the experience of parenthood; still others of you are experiencing sickness or crisis, and some are staring death in the face. You have never done this before and it is all fresh and new to you; no matter how many millions have gone through these things before you, you are experiencing it for the first time. In each of these experiences we must draw upon Christ for His power, wisdom and knowledge to cope with these new experiences.

3. What are the old things? They are the abiding things, the eternal, unalterable principles, the unchanging relationships which never vary but remain the same forever. The unchanging truths are found in the Bible. The Bible contains truths of God and man that never change. We can always count on these truths because God and His laws and promises never change. NOTE: One of the great lies being pushed off on this generation is that there is nothing which never changes; everything is changing; everything is always different. Situation ethics, the new morality, process theology, the abandoning of all absolutes is a great Satanic lie, for ultimately this human philosophy says God changes, but we know that He is the same yesterday, today and forever! NOTE: May I suggest to you that the key to understanding and coping with life is a blending of the new and the old. The secret to life is to apply the unchanging, eternal principles of God found in Christ to the constant changing experiences of life. Only the Bible, God and Christ can stabilize us, for life is changing and unstable.

IV. CONCLUSION

A. Perhaps there is someone here today who is frustrated and groping for the answer to life. Perhaps you have tried everything to fill the spiritual vacuum in your heart. Perhaps you have bought the Satanic lie that all things are changing – God changes, His laws change, right and wrong is changing – but you have not been able in all your ventures in life to find the key to still your inward frustration. Only Jesus Christ can fill this void.

B. This spiritual void in your life is due to sin and sin separates you from a holy God. You must change your mind about God, Christ and sin and receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior if you ever hope to be saved. You must abandon any hope of

saving yourself by good works and trust Christ to save you by His grace.

C. God never changes and the promises of Christ never change (John 5:24; 11:25, 26). If you will trust Christ as your Savior, He will never fail you. You shall be saved!

John 5:24: Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

John 11:25, 26: . . . I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.