

Lesson 15 Matthew 13. 1-35 (v9)

The persistent use of the ears

The connection between this lesson & the last is that both took place on the same day. The Lord clearly broke off talking to the multitude and the disciples sitting around him in a home-either Peter's or his own. Peter's was it appears of a circular nature (cf. Mark 3:32) The Lord took the family along the beach-as He did Peter in John 21. It was one way to be semi-detached from the crowds. Jesus often said, "He who has ears to hear let him hear" God gave us ears and expected us to use them to gain a diagnosis of our heart's need and to learn obedience. Hearing is a vital sense among the five God given senses-and is thought to be "the last to go". Hearing is also developed very early. Babies in the womb can hear their mothers singing by vibration. There is no excuse for not using our ears. Hearing and obeying are one word in Hebrew. Preaching is better than a book or a picture in that it gets to the ear which conveys a message to the brain which in turn can be interpreted and elicit an immediate response within a mini second.

The parable

First the story of "the seed of God's word" shows the word can be taken away by evil forces or it may be unable to penetrate the heart because of persecution or it may be squeezed out by other interests or concerns or it may gain entrance and grow. Harvests depend on the reception of seeds. In one sense Parable is timeless -in quite another it can be prophetic -for the latter reason it is a most valuable tool of the master. So Isaiah and other prophets used stories which pointed to **vital** truths and to days long in the **future** when these truths would emerge clearly- truths of the birth of a child; the fall of a star; the suffering of a servant.

The parabolic method-queried and defended by Jesus as diagnostic

The disciples ask "why toss out such stories?" Jesus replied epically, because they are not using their eyes to see (who I am and what I am doing) and their hearing is also impaired-though it is the better faculty. He quoted the prophet Isaiah on "the tired eyes and heavy ears of the people".

The necessity of "holding on to the truth taught" *εχων* v8 & v12 Jesus bids the disciple "hear" the parable at a second level-making the comparisons between soils and types of people-responses. The purpose of the word is to "heal the soul" but people need to hear the diagnosis! It is as if the doctor were to say "Let's see what's wrong?" and use a thermometer and the patient were to say, "I have no pain in my mouth!" The thermometer is discovering a deeper condition.

A second Parable-the word is the principle of final judgement

The farmer sowed good seed -his enemy sowed bad seed in the same field. The servants of the farmer were willing to hoe out the dandel. The farmer said, "Wait till harvest." It is not ours to judge and cast men away on account of the ideas they have accepted. God will deal with men and their acceptance or rejection of truth in the judgement.

A third parable-the seed will grow magnificently

The gospel seed as an idea might at first have appeared the least significant principle of all-hardly a rival for the Roman or Greek ideas that ruled in that era. In late ages the Christian faith has shown its strange and beautiful power among the nations so that the Faith of Jesus has taken hold widely and deeply and even once hostile powers have come to rest in its various church branches-whether Anglican, Orthodox, Catholic, Assyrian, Ethiopic, Protestant or Evangelical.

A Fourth Parable-the dilution of truth

The leaven in the lump is a sign of something unhappy taking place in respect of the bread. The secular aspect is to be noted in this connection. The church worldwide in the later era would take on in accordance with this teaching of Christ an unholy secular or state-like character. This first began in the time of Constantine in a serious way and it affects the world at large where Church and State merge to the detriment of both.

Holding the truth

The word of the gospel will always meet with 4 main responses. The day of judgement is certain and will be based on what one does with the gospel word. The beauty and world spread of the church in the latter days was to be expected. The secularisation represented by Christendom in its quasi political dress again was predicted in parable. All of these truths have been contested and even today militant persecutors of Christians will not allow themselves to hear the absolute claims of the gospel. Secularists and atheists and others will not hear of the judgment. Persecutors still will not hear of the crown rights of Christ and count His followers "infidels"



From paper to practice

Why did Jesus use "parable"

What is the "seed" in the first sortie of parables?

Give some of the dangers of not hearing the truth!