

Matthew 13:24-43 Part 2 Bible Study Transcript

We are still in Matthew chapter 13 in the section of verses 24 through 43. Last week we took verses 24 through 32. Our focus this morning will be on verses 33 through 35, three verses this morning. As we study the last parable in this series of parables, it is important to understand what the elements in the parable represent. So, in Matthew chapter 13 we are studying The Parables of the Kingdom. There are eight parables in chapter 13. Verses 1 through 43 present the first four parable and verses 44 through 52 present the last four parables.

So far, we have studied the first three parables:

The Parable of the Sower (verses 1 through 23)

The Parable of the Wheat and Tares (verses 24 through 30)

The Parable of the Mustard Seed (verses 31 through 32).

The first four parables that we are studying, were given all at the same time and in public. The last four parables were given privately to the disciples. So, they are sectioned off into two groups of parables.

According to the grammar, and we presented that to you last week, according to the grammar of the first four parables they are to be received or understood together, collectively, and all mean the same thing, except with different stories. So, in verses 24 and 31, two verses in this chapter, I pointed out to you last week, The Parable of the Wheat and Tares and The Parable of the Mustard Seed. Before each of those parables (it would be the second and third parable in this set of four) there are two grammatical statements:

- (1) One is the word *another*, "Another parable He presented." It is another of the same kind, which means He is going from one parable to another teaching the same truth, only with another parable of the same kind of truth.
- (2) Secondly, instead of literally, "He placed forth another parable," it is literally, "He placed alongside of." So, He is placing these parables alongside of each other so that we can see the thread going through them and the meaning of them.

Actually, He gave us the understanding of The Parable of the Sower. Next week we will get into the end of this section, where He will answer the question of the disciples as to what does the wheat and tares mean. But, for the third and fourth parables: The Parable of the Mustard Seed and The Parable of the Leaven (that we are going to study today), He gives no explanation because He expects people to connect the dots. Whatever He's saying in each parable of these four parables, it all has to do with the same truth. So, it all means the same thing, but it is presented in different stories.

So, The Parable of the Sower in verses 1 through 23. There's one field with four different soil conditions and these soil conditions represent the conditions of people's hearts as they hear the Word, how they receive the Word. Only one out of the four produces fruit. One out of the

four produces fruit. So, you have fruit bearing and unfruitful people mixed together in the same field, but under different conditions.

The Parable of the Wheat and Tares that we took last week. This is the wheat and the darnel, or the bearded wheat, the false wheat, growing in together in the fields, the wheat and the tares. And you remember the slaves of the homeowner or household master, they wanted to go out and pull out the tares from the wheat. And the housemaster said, "No, let them all grow up together so that in the harvest we will cut it all down, and then we will separate the wheat from the tares. We will take the wheat and gather them into my barn, and we will take the tares and burn them in fire." So, again we have fruit bearing in and amongst that which is not bearing fruit, in fact is false.

As I said you last week, the wheat and the tares look exactly the same as they are growing together. You can't tell the difference. Not until the end when it's harvest time and each of the stalks become ripe, then you can tell whether its wheat or tares. Or as Jesus would say in Matthew 7:20, "By their fruit you shall know them." And the Lord has led me to press that home this week with a lot of people who have responded and come back to me with, "Well what about this? What about going to church?" It's the fruit. It is the fruit of God's Spirit. Not works. Not human effort. Not human dedication. Not human commitment. It's the fruit of God's Spirit in and through the life of the believer that makes that person belong to Christ. Not anything else. Everything else is a byproduct from that.

So, verse 38, that we will get into next week tells us about the wheat and the tares. That the wheat represents the sons of the Kingdom, whereas the tares represent the sons of the evil one. Interesting you have the saved and the unsaved mixed together. But the housemaster says, "Don't remove the unsaved because the root system is intertwined underneath, and if you pull out the tares you might pull out some of the wheat with it." And we find that in many, many ways. Especially when you have church fellowships, church groups, Bible study groups, where there is a social and emotional connection there, and you know that some people are not saved, in fact, are causing problems for other people. And you really have to pray for wisdom, whether God wants those people removed, because if they're removed they pull other family members, they pull other friends with them, for whatever personal reasons they have. So, you have to let the Lord do it, most of the time. Unless there's a great disturbance where you can't even get into the Word together because of people disturbing.

But within the fellowship of believers there is both fruit bearing and non-fruit bearing, saved and unsaved. There is both wheat and tares, saved and unsaved. The Lord is trying to get across the point that evil and unbelief is mixed in with and is part of God's kingdom until Christ comes back. We can't expect it to be perfect. We can't expect the judgment. This is not a time of judgment. This is a time of grace, where God's grace goes out with the gospel in order to save people. The judgment is coming and the wheat and the tares will be separated. In the meantime, both will grow together.

Then we saw The Parable of the Mustard Seed, in verses 31 and 32. The mustard seed, the smallest of all agricultural or garden seeds, is planted and it grows into a tree. They've been

known to grow as high as 12 to 15 feet high over in Palestine, especially around the area of Lake Gennesaret. That symbolizes the growth of the Kingdom. It is going to start small, we saw from Acts chapter 1.

Even at this stage, and there are times when I say to myself, "I should know this by now," but the Lord continues to reveal new stuff and new things in a different way. Is that, after three years of public ministry of Jesus: of healing people, of thousands of people being attracted to Him because of His miracles (of course they left after they heard Him preach, because He said, "These miracles just prove who I am, now you have to come to Me, not the miracles," and they left.). That after three years of public ministry, Acts chapter 1 tells us that after Jesus ascended up into heaven, there were 120 believers in Jerusalem waiting for the coming of the Holy Spirit. 120. After three years.

That's why Jesus said, in Matthew 7:13 that the road is wide and broad that leads to destruction, but the road that leads to eternal life, the gate is narrow, and the road is straight, and very few that find it. We have to be careful because there are a lot of people that are attracted to Jesus. Did you hear the word that I used? Attracted. So, over the years, I have found in ministry that when I got together with others in the ministry of that church, or of that fellowship, there was a plot and a plan on how to attract people. "What programs? What activities can we do to attract people?" And yet, I find with Jesus, He performed His miracles to reveal who He was but when the people were attracted to Him, He says, "If you want to be My disciple, you must deny yourself and take up your cross daily and follow Me." And after three years of that, 120 people were waiting for the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost in Acts chapter 1.

So, it starts small, but the Kingdom of heaven grows to be large.

We also saw that the birds come and lodge in its branches. And if you've done some research, you know that there are some very good Bible teachers, some very good brothers, that teach that the birds are not evil; that they are people of the world coming into the church, or church members, that the birds represent good people. But we know from verse 4 in The Parable of the Sower, that the birds came and took away the Word from the hearts of those who had hard hearts so that they would not believe. In verse 19 Jesus said the birds represented the evil one. So, the birds represent evil.

I was reading this week in Revelation chapter 18 if you want further information about the birds. When there was an announcement that Babylon the Great, which would be the religious system in the tribulation period. Right before the great judgment happens Babylon the Great will be judged; and the angel cries out in Revelation 18:2 that, "Behold Babylon the Great has fallen, has fallen, that great harlot, in whom are devils and that harbor evil spirits and that cage all unclean and hateful birds." Birds in Jewish literature represent evil. Jesus said, "The birds represent evil." There is no reason not to, plus the fact these parables are taken to mean the same thing. The same evil of the tares is the same evil of the birds, which is the same evil of the unfruitful people in The Parable of the Sower. So, the birds come, there will be evil nesting in the branches of the Kingdom, just like tares will be in and amongst the Kingdom.

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Now here's another side note. At this time in the Lord's ministry, and you might pick up here and start reading of the rest of Matthew, but halfway through the Lord's ministry, the first half was miracles and drawing people to Himself. Attracting people to Himself only for the purpose of telling them they must surrender their life to Him, which they didn't want to do. People today are still attracted to Jesus, and church, and church programs, but they're not interested in surrendering to Jesus Christ. Give it up. Church today offers people to come and express themselves, not deny themselves. We are trying to build up the numbers of our church. Jesus attracted people in the numbers with miracles, but when He told them the truth and taught them the truth they left. You find more people leaving than receiving.

But here's another side note. So, the first half of the Lord's ministry He revealed Himself. The last half of the Lord's ministry, and we will see that later on in our text today, the last half of the Lord's ministry was Him speaking in parables and concealing the truth from people. He spoke in public in parables from here on out. So that the people would not understand. So, it would remain a mystery unless they came to Him to find out what it meant. Now I don't know about you, but that just blows my mind. To use a phrase we used to use a long time ago. "It just blows my mind!" How that He would purposely conceal Himself, not reveal Himself, but conceal Himself in the last half of His ministry. And only reveal Himself and minister to those disciples who responded to Him and came to Him. It gives you some insight as to how far away from the truth in Christ we are in the body of Christ today. We are trying to attract people. Jesus is trying to conceal Himself in the last part of the ministry, and only reveal Himself to those people that were drawn to Him and became His disciples.

Again, evil is lurking in the branches. Why is that important? Is because Jesus is concealing Himself from here on in because evil, religious evil, is lurking in the branches of the kingdom. Evil religious leaders. Evil people are following Jesus. Look at all of Paul's travels in the book of Acts. Everywhere he went to preach the gospel there was always evil religious leaders, or just evil people following him around and attacking his gospel and attacking him. Evil is functioning side-by-side, but the kingdom of God is growing. There are people believing. There are people being saved, but not as many as we think.

So, for today, verse 33, The Parable of the Leaven. Verse 33, **Another parable Jesus spoke to them.** And again, the word *another* shows another of the same kind. But since this is the fourth parable in the set, He doesn't say to place alongside of. The wording here and the wording in the first parable are exactly the same. "And another parable He spoke to them," showing that these are bookends. First and fourth parables are the bookends. He says, **The kingdom of heaven is likened to leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, until which the whole was leavened.** The whole thing was leavened.

A couple of things to identify the meaning and the message of the parable. The word *leaven*. "The kingdom of heaven is likened to leaven." We don't use that phrase much now. Leaven is a yeasting agent put into bread to make it rise. It's a yeast. To a Jew *leaven* represents or denotes *evil*. You can probably figure that out because that's the meaning in the other parables as well. And there are some good Bible teachers, some good brothers, that teach that no it doesn't mean evil in this parable. But I will show you that it does.

First of all, in Matthew chapter 16 after Jesus was confronted with the Pharisees and He dealt with them, Jesus and the disciples left and when He left He told the disciples in Matthew chapter 16 at verse 6, Jesus said to them, **"Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees."** And so, the disciples began to reason among themselves, saying, **"It is because we didn't bring bread."** We forgot to bring bread and so He is saying, "Don't take bread from the Sadducees and the Pharisees. Find your lunch somewhere else." That's what they're thinking. **Now when Jesus perceived, He said to them, "Little faith ones, why do you reason among yourselves, because you did not bring bread? Do you not understand (or perceive) neither do you remember the five loaves of the 5000, and how many baskets you took up? Neither the seven loaves of the 4000, and how many baskets you took up?"** So, He says, "You were just partaking of two miracles where we had thousands of people and I took a little boy's lunch and multiplied it out to feed everybody. Why should you be concerned that we don't have bread? I can pull bread out of a stone. What are you worried about, about bread?" **"How is it that you do not understand that I spoke to not concerning bread, but that you should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees?"** Then they understood how that He said to them not, **"Beware of the leaven of bread,"** but, **"Beware of the doctrine of the Pharisees and the Sadducees."** False doctrine is like leaven. He says, "Stay away from it. Stay away from the Sadducees and the Pharisees, their doctrine will spread and influence you."

Secondly, at Passover, and you can read this in Exodus 12:15 as well as Exodus 12:18-19. Passover is one day. Six days after Passover the Jews celebrate The Feast of Unleavened Bread. So, the Passover symbolized salvation. The six days after Passover called The Feast of Unleavened Bread represented fellowship. The Jews were told to go into their houses and remove all leaven from out of their houses, because leaven represented evil in fellowship and interaction with God. And so, they were to rid their house of all leaven, because leaven represented evil.

Thirdly, in the teachings of the apostle Paul. In I Corinthians 5:6-8, Paul was dealing with a man who was committing sexual immorality in and amongst the group in the church in Corinth, and they couldn't get him to repent, and they didn't know what to do about it. So, Paul says in I Corinthians chapter 5 beginning at verse 6, **"Your boasting is not good."** They would boast because they had the gifts of the spirit. He says, "Your boasting is not good. You're not dealing with sin."

"Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?" A little sin in your group will spread and affect the whole group.

"Purge out therefore the old leaven, that you may become a new lump, as you are unleavened." Once you receive Christ, spiritually, you are unleavened.

"For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore, let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." The word *sincerity* in Greek means *to hold something up to the light of the sun, transparency*, basically, is what it means. To hold water, or something, up in the light of the sun that's sincerity, when someone is willing to be transparent.

Paul in Galatians 5:7-9, he was dealing with the Christians who lapsed back into law keeping instead of following the Lord by grace. In Galatians 5:7 Paul said, "**You did run well; who did hindered you that you should not obey the truth? This persuasion does not come from the One who is calling you. A little leaven leavens the whole lump.**" So, you can see amongst the Jews, amongst Paul's teachings and writings, that leaven represents evil.

Even in Matthew. We are in Matthew 13, but I quoted you from Matthew 16 about the leaven of the Sadducees and Pharisees. Because the disciples knew what leaven meant but they misunderstood Him thought He was talking about bread, but in reality, talking about leaven.

So, the kingdom of heaven is likened unto leaven, which when a woman took, she hid in three measures of meal. I point out to you a factual statement. Notice that in all three parables leading up to this that there is a man who goes out and he plants a seed in the field. He plants the mustard seed in the field. But here we have a woman who is making this leavened lump of bread in three measures of meal. That is a factual statement. I don't want to make more out of it than what it says, because there's nothing that tells us exactly why would Jesus use a woman, except for the fact that women are the ones who made the bread. But I do point out to you, there is just something interesting, kind of put it off on the side, it is interesting that to the Jews that women are used to symbolize false religion and false doctrine.

Example in Revelation 17:1-5. Again, this is where Babylon the Great is being judged right before the second coming of Christ. And Revelation 17 verse 1 says, **And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials or bowls, and talked with me, saying, "Come here; and I will show unto you the judgment of the great whore or prostitute that sits upon many waters: with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication."** So, he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sitting upon a scarlet colored beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was clothed in purple and scarlet color and decked out with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of the abominations and filthiness of her fornication: And upon her forehead was a name written, **Mystery Babylon the Great, The Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth.** He says, **And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I marveled with great marvel.** In Jewish literature women are used to depict false religion and false doctrine.

Here, this woman, it says that she hid, again, emphasize that it in your text. This is not something that's seen by the outward observation, the leaven is hidden by this woman in three measures of meal.

There are several instances in the Old Testament when the Jews were told to bring sacrifices to the Lord and along with their sacrifices they were called upon to bring three measures of meal. And again, the *measures of meal* (the word *meal* by the way comes from our term for *grain* and *wheat*) and so it denotes *fellowship*. So, they were to bring this grain, this

wheat meal along with their sacrifice after they sacrificed they were to present these three measures of meal.

In Genesis 18:6, Abraham told Sarah to make three measures of meal of bread and bring it for the three visitors, the three angels that the Lord had sent to him in there in Genesis chapter 18. We know what *three* means. But the word *measure*, **σάτον** (*saton*), or *seta* in Hebrew. But a **σάτον** is 13 liters. So, three **σάτον** is 39 liters or almost 40 gallons of flour, all in one batch. That was a standard for the Jews to make from the Old Testament, both to present to the Lord and that was carried over. They just made three measures of meal there in Genesis 18. It was so that Sarah can make individual cakes from it for the visitors to eat both for them for then, and for then on out.

So, we have in our parable that evil is hidden in people's approach to the Lord. This is exemplified by false doctrine. It's hidden. Leaven that spreads within the kingdom of God. It doesn't defeat the kingdom of God, but false doctrine grows along with the kingdom of God like the wheat and the tares. Like the birds in the plants. Side-by-side. That's why all the New Testament is filled with warnings for believers. You would think, "Why would Paul or anybody else need to warn us as believers about beware of false doctrine? We are in the church. There is no false doctrine." Well as you know, and as I know, we are not naïve to the fact that there's evil in the church. In fact, I know a lot of birds that are leading the church, and a lot of tares that are leading the church. False doctrine, coupled with the woman, representing the false religion and false doctrine in and of itself, you see what the parable is saying. Evil grows. It grows with the kingdom, so that all four parables are ministering the same thing.

Let's go to verse 34 and 35 for a moment. The parables are over. These four anyway. The Prophetic Fulfillment of Parables.

Verse 34 tells us The Custom of Jesus. **All of these things Jesus spoke in parables to the crowds.** All of these things. Back in verse 3 it says, "And He spoke many things to them in parables." Now He's speaking all things in parables. He is not teaching publicly in revelation anymore. Now He is teaching and stories to hide the truth. And there is something very special here that I think you'll appreciate, next week, when we see the disciples come and ask Jesus, "What does The Parable of The Wheat and Tares mean?" That's the believer. The believer is drawn beyond the story. The believer is drawn beyond the text to find out what exactly it's talking about, because I want to know for myself and my relationship with the Lord.

And you might say, "Well how can the truth be concealed in our day, we have the Bible?" Well, I know that you're not naïve to seeing that all of the churches have Bibles, and all the churches say that the Bible says something different, because it's concealed. You can have this book with words on the page and read the words on the page and come up with something completely different. And what I have found over the years is those in ministry force it. They feel called to the ministry and they read the passage and they have no idea what it means so they just share with what it means to them. Why? Because that's their job, they've got to come up with it.

All these things Jesus spoke in parables to the crowd, and without a parable (separate from a parable) **He was not speaking to them.** Concealed. he truth must be revealed because Jesus is concealing the truth.

We learned from I Corinthians 2:14 before that the natural man cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God because they are spiritually discerned. They are spiritually understood, and the Holy Spirit comes and discerns and gives spiritual meaning to the text. And I know people have gotten off tangent with that too. "Well God's revealing to me," and they have some kind of weird stuff. If God reveals the truth to you, it will be the truth that's in the Word, not something way over in the bush country somewhere.

Then verse 35, The Content of the Prophecy. **He spoke in parables so that it was fulfilled that which had been spoken through the prophet, saying** So, He spoke in parables because the Old Testament prophecy said He would. So, He came in fulfillment of that. This quote is from Psalm 78:2, a Psalm of Asaph, who II Chronicles 29:30 tells us that he was a prophet. **So, that it was fulfilled that which had been spoken through the prophet saying, "I will open my mouth in parables, I will speak out things which have been hidden from the foundation of the world."** Hidden.

And again, you say, "We got the Bible, it is not hidden." Yes, it is. These are just words on a page, unless you understand what God meant by them. Secret things. Hidden things. Paul says, "The things of Christ are a mystery." People can't understand them unless it's revealed to them.

So, from the first coming of Christ until the second coming of Christ, that's our period right now. He came the first time. He's going to come a second time. From the first coming of Christ to the second coming of Christ, the things of the kingdom are hidden. They are secret. They are mysteries. Only for those who belong to Christ, will understand them.

Next week, we finish out this section. These insights, to actually stop and take it slow and realize not just the teachings but the environment, the methods, the approach of Christ in His ministry.

Again, we try to attract people to church. Attract people to Christ. But they're not humanly attracted to Him if you tell them it's going to cost them everything. You must surrender your life by receiving Christ in your life. You're not only receiving Him as your Savior who died for you on the cross, but you're receiving Him as your Lord. He is now the Lord of your life. And that's where people don't want anything to do with Jesus Christ.

I spoke with somebody this week who is in a Bible study group, teaching a group of men about the difference between accepting the Lord and receiving the Lord. Nowhere in the Bible does it ever say to accept the Lord. Nowhere. And why that changed, it can only be, to me, deception, because it used to be, you'd hear it all the time, "You must be born again." **But as many as received him he gave them the authority to become children of God.** It was always receiving Christ, now it is accepting Him. You say, "What's the difference?" Acceptance is a

mental agreement. Receiving Him means literally receiving His Spirit into your spirit. But to accept Him.

And then the phrase goes on further, "Have you accepted the Lord as your Savior?" The Bible doesn't say that. He died for you on the cross to be your Savior, but did you know that He comes into your life to be your Lord, because of what He did on the cross? People are professing, "He's my Savior." "Well, is He your Lord?" It is Lord and Savior. And we are in the phase in these last days where we are doing away with the Lordship of Christ. We are trying to attract people. We are trying to get them saved, but, in essence, what we are really doing is we are trying to get more people into the church to increase the numbers. But you don't hear about *surrender*. You don't hear about *deny yourself*, because it's not the gospel, the gospel of Jesus Christ. It might be a gospel that people get from Scriptures out of the Bible, but it is not what the Bible is teaching.

So, Jesus is saying the Kingdom of God starts small and begins to grow, but there's evil lurking along with the Kingdom work. Just like with Jesus Christ.

The summary statement of the culmination of evil along with the good of God's Spirit is at the cross. Evil crucified Jesus. Evil attacked Him while He ministered, side-by-side, right alongside of Him. It didn't stop Him. It doesn't stop the Kingdom of God from functioning. It doesn't stop the Lord from saving people.

But we have to understand, we have to be sensitive. Just because you sit in church, or in a Bible study, or you listen to a study on the radio, it doesn't mean that you're hearing the truth. Evil will be among the good. False religion and false doctrine is going to be accompanying alongside of God's people to try to get them away from the truth. So, we have to be careful. And that's why we spend so much time on Scripture. The more you know what God's Word says, that the less susceptible you are to being duped by false teaching and false doctrine.

Let's close with prayer.