



World Christian Fellowship

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Parable of the Scribe Matthew 13:51-52

Matthew 13:51-52, *Jesus said to them, "Have you understood all these things?" They said to Him, "Yes, Lord." ⁵² Then He said to them, "Therefore every scribe instructed concerning the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure things new and old."*

Eight and the final Parable.

The **first two parables** are about the nature of the mystery form of the kingdom.

The kingdom being hidden from those generations past and now revealed to us.

The parable of the soils: In this kingdom there will be those who believe and there will be those who do not. So, this part of the kingdom has believers and non-believers.

The parable of the wheat and the tares: The believers and the nonbelievers will grow together until the harvest that comes in the end.

The **second two parables** about the **power of the kingdom**.

In spite of the good and evil are growing together, the good will triumph in the end.

The parable of the Mustard seed: The small mustard seed planted in the field, which ultimately grows to massive proportions so that though the kingdom began very small with just the Apostles, when Jesus comes to establish His kingdom, it will fill the whole earth.

The parable of the leaven: The leaven represents the kingdom, buried as it were in the dough of the world which, ultimately, will penetrate, permeate, and influence the whole earth.

The parable of the leaven shows the internal permeating influence of the kingdom which touches every dimension of human life.

The **third 2 parables** about the appropriation or entering of the kingdom.

Parable of the Treasure the person finds the treasure accidentally and sells everything to buy the field.

Parable of the Merchant searches for the one pearl and sells everything and gets it.

First 2: The nature of the Kingdom.

Second 2: The Power of the Kingdom.

Third 2: Entering the Kingdom.

Seventh Parable: Judgement of the Kingdom.

Last Parable: Responsibility

Bible wouldn't make sense before you trust Jesus. But you will come to love, read, and understand after you trusted Him.

The spiritual principle behind the inner transformation with respect to God's word.

Paul was writing to the Corinthians about his ministry of preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. He spoke of how he sought to preach it plainly and clearly to the Corinthians.

2 Corinthians 3:13-14, *unlike Moses, who put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the end of what was passing away. ¹⁴But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ.*

Even though the Old Testament pointed to Christ, the Jewish people could not understand what it was saying to them about Him.

Even though they had the Scriptures, revered them, and studied them, they couldn't see Him in them.

They suffered under the same condition that we suffered when the spiritual veil was over their eyes that obscured their view of Christ.

But the day that Jesus came into our life was the day that the veil was lifted.

Personality the same with me, at last, I could understand!

The same thing happened to the Jewish people to whom Paul preached, and who believed on Jesus.

In fact, the same thing happens to any man or woman to whom God gives the grace to believe, and who then trusts in Jesus.

The veil is finally lifted from their eyes. They can understand!

At long last, it all begins to come together and make sense!

2 Corinthians 3:15-18, *But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart. ¹⁶Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. ¹⁷Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. ¹⁸But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the*

Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

The key to understanding God's truth is not found in human wisdom or skill of understanding. Rather, the key is being in a relationship with Jesus Christ by faith.

“Seek not to understand that you may believe but believe that you may understand.” **St. Augustine.**

The truths of the Bible cannot be understood apart from a personal relationship by faith with the One who is the main subject of the Bible—**Lord Jesus Christ.**

When the heart of a man or woman turns to the Lord Jesus, the veil is taken away.

That's what happened to me.

Countless numbers of people, who have trusted Jesus as their Saviour, have the same testimony.

Jesus taught seven kingdom parables.

Some of the parables were ones that Jesus taught to the multitudes at large and they didn't understand what He said.

Some of them were ones that He taught to His disciples privately. Jesus explained all that He said to His disciples in a personal way.

All from the context of a relationship with Himself.
Jesus is the great theme of the kingdom parables!
Because Jesus is the King!

The mysteries of this kingdom cannot be understood apart from Him. But a personal relationship with Him by faith, the veil is lifted away.

Such a man or a woman soon finds that they are hungry almost starving to know more of what God's word says about His kingdom program because it's all beginning to make sense.

The Holy Spirit, who the Lord Jesus places in them, serves as that resident Teacher teaching them all things concerning Him.

1 John 2:27, *But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him.*

They gain new insights into Jesus, and of His Father's great program for Jesus' kingdom reign on earth. Old truths become

fresh and relevant in the light of the new. The new truths become added to the stock of the old.

We gain a new perspective on God's plan for the ages.

Even the things we see in the daily news begin to make sense in the light of Jesus' teaching concerning His kingdom.

Jesus calls his disciples scribes. Were they really?

Scribes were Torah scholars, and very few of them followed Jesus. **If scribes wrote things down, and Matthew wrote this down, was he thinking of himself?**

Why was the householder laying out his treasure so obviously?

Was he showing off for his family? His neighbours? His guests?

What's the new and the old Jesus referred to?

1. Be an eager learner. (Receive)

V 51, *Jesus said to them, "Have you understood all these things?" They said to Him, "Yes, Lord."*

When Jesus asks, "Have you understood these things?", it was because first they had asked Him to explain them.

Matthew 13:10, *And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?"*

What was the response from Jesus?

Matthew 13:11-15, *He answered and said to them, "Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. ¹²For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. ¹³Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. ¹⁴And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: 'Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, And seeing you will see and not perceive; ¹⁵For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed, Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them.'*

Matthew 13:36, *Then Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field."*

Jesus did explain to them.

Do you see the attitude of their hearts?

They wanted to know more.

They were eager to understand the little hints of truth that Jesus was dropping before the multitudes.

They went to Jesus privately and asked that He explain it to them. He was very glad to do so.

This is the reason when it was all over Jesus asked them, *“Have you understood all these things?”*

The things that Jesus is teaching us in these parables are among the greatest truths people could know.

They disclose to us God's program for history on this earth. How it all comes together in Jesus returning to this earth to receive to Himself the kingdom that He is, even now, establishing and spreading throughout the world.

A man or woman who has these precious truths dropped before them would be foolish not to grasp hold of them eagerly.

How do you receive them?

It is as if Jesus is turning to you and saying, *“Have you understood all these things?”*

What is your answer to Him?

Do you respond by yawning and saying, “Sorry, Lord. I wasn't listening. What things are you talking about?”

Or, do you say, “Yes, Lord. I understand a little bit about these things. My heart is stirred by them.

But there is much I don't understand.

I am hungry to understand more.

I want to know the mysteries of Your kingdom that You have revealed in these parables.

I believe on You.

I present myself to You as Your humble student.

I am eager to grasp these things.

I hunger to know them.

I long for them.

Please, teach me more.

There are passive listeners who are only mildly curious about them. They are meant to be received by eager, hungry learners who love Jesus Christ, have ears to hear Him, and a heart to go forward and follow Him.

They are for those whose heart-cry is “Thy kingdom come!” Apart from Jesus Christ, the truths in these parables cannot be understood. But through an authentic relationship with Him by faith, they can be.

- Let us be sure that there is nothing that dulls our interest in His glorious kingdom program.

- Let us be hungry enough for these things that we would go to Him to gain a deeper grasp of them.
- Let us prove ourselves to be the kind of eager learners that He sees fit to impart a fuller understanding of the mysteries of His kingdom!

That's one of the ways that we are to respond to His parables about the kingdom by becoming eager learners of the truths they teach.

What we need is understanding.

We need a way to find out about these things without having to try each of them.

We need a way to know the difference between the true and the false, without investing most of our lives in the process.

1 John 5:20, *And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.*

That is the great theme of the good news of the gospel!

It is a faithful revelation to us of the way things really are. The truth as it is in Jesus is the way that God has set life up.

It is going to be that way,

- whether we accept it or reject it,

➤ whether we like it or do not like it.

Those facts are going to stand unshakable. That is what Jesus meant when he said, "*Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall never pass away,*" (**Matthew 24:35, Mark 13:31, Luke 21:33**).

Why?

Because His word is Truth.

"Do you understand these things?"

That is where it begins. There must be a clear understanding that what God is saying is true, and that you know what he means.

So, when Jesus finishes his message, this is what he asks them. And the disciples answer very naively, "Yes."

I don't think they were being dishonest. They were just like we are.

They meant that they had an intellectual apprehension of the words that Jesus used. They knew the meaning of the symbols He employed.

So, they said, as perhaps many of you are now saying after this series of messages on these parables, yes, we understand them. We know what you meant.

But obviously, as we watch these disciples, they reveal that they do not understand what He meant. Their actions soon show that they have only a very limited and shallow understanding of what he was talking about, just as do we.

It is true that we must start with that mental comprehension but that is not all there is to it.

Our Lord must go on to show them what else is necessary to bring them to a true understanding of what they have heard.

We can easily identify with them. Suppose somebody asked you, "Do you understand beauty?"

How foolish you would be to say, "Yes."

Who understands beauty, or love, or death, or life?

These are but words.

We may understand the definitions of the words but **who really understands the subjects?**

None of us.

2. Study to be a Scribe. (Retain)

V 52, Then He said to them, "Therefore every scribe instructed concerning the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure things new and old."

A scribe was a man who served an important role in the Jewish culture of Jesus' day.

The scribes took their job of preserving Scripture very seriously. They would copy and recopy the Bible meticulously, even counting letters and spaces to ensure each copy was correct. We can thank the Jewish scribes for preserving the Old Testament portion of our Bibles.

Scribe was skilled in the study and interpretation of the Jewish Scriptures. He would serve the community by helping people understand the meaning of God's word. Showing them how that word should be applied to the practical and spiritual matters of life.

They were esteemed as the “biblical scholars” of the day.

Jesus says his disciples are scribes.

It is startling because the scribes were enemies of Jesus!

In the Old Testament well known scribes are Ezra and Nehemiah. Ezra was the first of the scribes. He was a leader among the remnant of the Jews who returned to Jerusalem from Babylon after the Captivity. The first arrivals had found the city of Jerusalem in utter ruins, the temple completely destroyed.

Ezra 7:6, *this Ezra came up from Babylon; and he was a skilled scribe in the Law of Moses, which the Lord God of Israel had given. The king granted him all his request, according to the hand of the Lord his God upon him.*

The Jews were authorized to rebuild the temple and the city to restore the worship of God in the temple. In order to be able to do so, the spirit of the people first had to be built up.

To do that Ezra took the Law of Moses and began to teach the people out of the Law. **Nehemiah 8th Chapter** records that a pulpit of wood was built for him. This is the first time a pulpit appears in Scripture. Standing upon it he began to speak to them from the Scriptures, and to interpret the Law of Moses, explaining what it meant.

That was the beginning of the ministry of the scribes. At first it was a very helpful ministry. But as almost always happens in the ministry of preaching or teaching, men soon came in who carried on the form of this ministry, but whose words were narrow and rigid and who offered interpretive opinions unsupported by the Scriptures.

The scribes, who were the authoritative interpreters of the Law, became a group of legalistic, self-righteous teachers, as our Lord found them in his day.

They were widely respected by the community because of their knowledge, dedication, and outward appearance of Law-keeping.

If we read through the Gospel accounts, we find that there were three classes of people who opposed our Lord's ministry and were constantly throwing obstacles in his path.

- a) Chief priests,
- b) Members of the Sanhedrin, the ruling council), and
- c) Scribes.

These three groups continually tried to trap Jesus in his own words and thus to get him into trouble with the Roman authorities.

This was particularly true of the scribes.

They were the ones who came to him with questions designed to trick him. They were the ones who constantly tried to stir up the people against him.

Mark 11:27-28, *Then they came again to Jerusalem. And as He was walking in the temple, the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders came to Him.²⁸ And they said to Him, "By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority to do these things?"*

Luke 11:52-54, *“Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge. You did not enter in yourselves, and those who were entering in you hindered.”* ⁵³And as He said these things to them, the scribes and the Pharisees began to assail Him vehemently, and to cross-examine Him about many things, ⁵⁴lying in wait for Him, and seeking to catch Him in something He might say, that they might accuse Him.

Yet when our Lord comes to the close of this message he says to his disciples, "You are scribes who have been trained for the kingdom of heaven."

Jesus' use of a scribe in this parable illustrates the kind of attitude we should have toward the truths of the kingdom.

We are to be careful “scholars” in these things.

Our Lord expects us to recognize the immeasurable value of the truths He is imparting to us, and then to respond appropriately by putting in the time and effort and discipline necessary to understand them.

Jesus is exhorting us in accordance with our own unique capabilities to put forth effort to work hard to be careful “scribes who are instructed in the kingdom of heaven”.

The writer of Hebrews once wrote to the believers under his care. He wanted to write to them about some of the deep

things of the faith. But was a bit frustrated. He couldn't write to them as he wished.

Because they had become “dull of hearing”. At a time when they ought to have made progress, they were still too immature in their understanding. He told them,

Hebrews 5:11-14, *of whom we have much to say, and hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. ¹²For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. ¹³For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. ¹⁴But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*

Hebrews 6:1, *Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,*

There is an expectation placed on us with respect to the mysteries of the kingdom.

We aren't supposed to sit passively and receive information about the kingdom as if the Lord wants to merely pour knowledge into empty heads.

Rather, we are expected to work at growing in what we are taught.

We are to have a good foundation of the basic truths of the faith. Once that foundation is laid, we are to move on and grow up in our understanding of kingdom truths.

We are to be like 'scribes' who are disciplined", carefully instructed and trained in the mysteries of the kingdom.

We are to be trained scholars in the school of the kingdom of Jesus Christ, who work hard at understanding and applying the kingdom truths He imparts to us.

Whatever field of occupation we may be in, whatever academic training we may have received, Jesus calls us to make the truths of His kingdom our most important field of study.

Jesus wants all of us to "major in 'Bible'".

This doesn't mean we have to be specialists in New Testament studies, or experts in the original languages. Rather, it's primarily a matter of the attitude with which we receive His teaching on the kingdom.

When we receive the truths of Jesus' kingdom eagerly, do we have a heart to then go on from there and do the hard work of making use of what was given to us?

Are we thinking carefully about the Bible's teaching about kingdom, and rightly interpret what Jesus says?

How the individual principles of the kingdom relate to the broader scheme of God's redemptive program as it is taught to us in the Bible?

Do we work out the practical ways that kingdom principles apply to our daily lives as kingdom citizens in the midst of a fallen world?

- Let us go beyond a mere 'superficial' understanding of the truths of the kingdom!
 - Let us pursue a godly 'scholarliness' about these things.
 - Let us please our Lord by seeking to be good 'scribes instructed in the kingdom of heaven'.
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- If we are willing to seize hold of what He has given us of the truths of His kingdom,
 - If we are willing to work hard to grasp them with a full understanding,
 - If we are willing to put what He has given us to good use,

Then Jesus will honour our efforts and give us more.

We are to welcome the truths of the kingdom of Jesus in a certain way.

First, we are to receive these things as eager learners.

Secondly, having received them, we are to lay hold/retain of these things by studying them as careful scholars.

Third we are to respond to these great truths.

How desperately such scribes are needed today!

3. Share the truth as a house holder. (Radiate)

Jesus goes on to show them that a deeper process is necessary.

V 52, is like a householder who brings out of his treasure things new and old."

Everyone who is being trained in the kingdom of heaven, man, or woman, boy or girl, whoever is learning to recognize how God works in human life, is going to have to go through this process. He will be like a householder, a homeowner, who takes out of his treasury things new and old.

The householder is the head of the house. He is an authoritative figure.

Jesus is the only one in the Scriptures who ever uses this term for a householder. In Greek the word is ***oikodespotes*** -- house-despot, house director.

Jesus says that every disciple who is learning the process of life is like a man who is the head of a home and who is constantly taking out of his resources two kinds of things. Things new and old and putting them together.

House owner was responsible for making sure that everything in the treasure-store was well-stocked. So that when anything was needed for the provision of each member of the household, and for the smooth operation of the house, it was provided.

When the householder goes into the storehouse to bring out something into the open, he discovers something else. Some valuable “old” thing that he had forgotten was there. He brings out not only the “new” but also to his surprise the “old” that now has new value and importance.

When someone is well-taught in the principles of the kingdom that Jesus has shared with us in His parables, they are just like that householder. They may have had a bit of Bible knowledge here or there before that time but once they enter into a relationship with Jesus Christ and become well-trained and well-schooled in His kingdom, they know even more.

It is as if the spiritual veil becomes lifted from their eyes and at long last, they finally begin to understand the truths of Gods' word.

New truths become added to their store of knowledge.
Old truths become fresh and alive to them in the light of the new.

They begin to make connections between seemingly unrelated old truths that were never made before.

It sometimes seems as if new truth was put into their Bibles overnight because they make discoveries in old passages that they never made before truths that were there all along, but that their eyes are suddenly opened to.

New insights into old truths cause those old truths to shine out with new relevance in everyday life. They become like householders, who discover in their treasure “things new and old”.

Notice that the householder doesn't just keep it all stored up in the storehouse.

He brings it out and shares it all with others.

The woman or man who becomes well-taught in the kingdom of heaven becomes a fountain of biblical truths. They help others to see the connections between the “old” and the “new” truths they discover in God's word.

They bless everyone around them with practical insights from God's word that apply to specific needs for daily living.

Conclusion.

The Bible tells us about a great scribe in the Old Testament a man named Ezra. He is one of my favourite Bible heroes.

The Bible tells us that he was a skilled scribe (**Ezra 7:6**). We are told that Ezra served the people of Israel well.

Why?

Ezra 7:10, *For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel.*

That illustrates how Jesus wants us to respond to the things He has taught us in His parables of the kingdom.

Jesus wants us to think carefully about how we,

- Receive them,
 - Retain them, and
 - Radiate them.
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- ✓ He wants us to receive these things by being eager learners who “seek” truth from Him.
 - ✓ Retain these things by being careful scribes who “do” what the truth says!
 - ✓ To be gracious householders who distribute/Radiate the truth by “teaching” them to others.

By God's grace, may we be good students in Jesus' school of the kingdom!