

"BLESSED ARE YOUR EYES"

I. Matthew 13:10-17

A. Today we excavate a message actually sandwiched inside a parable...

- 1) Right after Jesus' Sermon on the Lake where He tells the *Parable of the Sower or Soils*, the disciples ask Jesus why He teaches in parables...
- 2) Greek: *Parabole*: "placing aside." It's an illustration or comparison to help with understanding the truth being taught... (Jesus told 30-some parables...)
- 3) Parables reveal and conceal, they serve to soften or harden hearts...

B. Matthew 13:10-17 Jesus tells why He uses parables...

- 1) While His followers are given the secrets (mysteries) of the Kingdom of Heaven, those who are not His followers are kept in the dark...
- 2) Jesus quotes Isaiah 6:9-10 and applies it to those who come to hear Jesus but reject His message because their hearts are calloused... (Isaiah's calling)
- 3) They are unable to hear it, see it, or comprehend His words...
- 4) But the disciples and other followers of Jesus have been blessed with eyes to see and ears to hear His words. That includes us!
- 5) Jesus says that the prophets of old longed for this privilege...

C. Of course with privilege comes responsibility...

- 1) We are given the privilege of hearing and believing the Message and the responsibility of sharing it with others...
- 2) What we are not given is the responsibility of being the eyes & ears of those we speak to... Only God can open a heart--make the blind see and deaf hear.
- 3) Maybe you thought you had to present the Gospel like the Sham Wow guy, or like Bill Clinton, or like Jack McCoy on *Law & Order*... No--you just have to be a witness, to faithfully open your mouth and share about the hope you have...
- 4) Eyes, ears, and responsive hearts are left in God's hands...

D. And what about these secrets of the Kingdom, what are we talking about?

- 1) Beware of Greeks bearing gifts and so-called preachers bearing deep spiritual secrets! When the guy or gal looks glassy eyed into the TV camera and says something like, '*God has revealed to me a deep mystery,*' switch channels!
- 2) When a spiritual leader says or implies that he has special revelation that you can't get from anyone but him, exuding the notion you need him, walk away!
- 3) Quote from Benny Hinn; Ether story about Oliver Wendell Holmes...

E. Let me share 4 Scriptures about the mystery that has been revealed...

- 1) Rom. 16:25-27; 1 Cor. 2:1-10; Col. 1:24-27; Eph. 1:3-10...
- 2) We're not defending the existence of Big Foot or Nessie or Mothman!
- 3) We are blessed with eyes to see and ears to hear but also mouths to proclaim (along with hands & feet to demonstrate) the revealed *mystery-no-more* truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

F. Sermon excerpt by Charles H. Spurgeon...

- 1) "*But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. For I tell you the truth, many prophets and righteous men longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.*" -- Jesus
- 2) Close with Prayer...

Scriptures & Videos

Open Their Eyes: Doing What Only God Can Do--John Piper

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J3E87uC4_r4

I'm Sending You To Open Their Eyes--John Piper

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gO95nsSmhg0>

"How Great Thou Art" Awesome! (Thank You Pastor Terry Borah!)

http://www.youtube.com/watch_popup?v=dxCRIF0m79w&feature=related

Benny Hinn--Special Revelation on the Trinity

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JrmorMYt4pk>

Ronnie

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t20GJ8T_9o8

The Lost Tapes--Mothman

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=78qG8eCfSng>

"Up Above My Head" by Sister Rosetta Tharpe

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JeaBNAXfHfQ>

Matthew 13:10-17 (NIV)

10 The disciples came to him and asked, "Why do you speak to the people in parables?" 11 He replied, "The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them. 12 Whoever has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. 13 This is why I speak to them in parables: "Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand. 14 In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: "'You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving. 15 For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.'" 16 But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. 17 For I tell you the truth, many prophets and righteous men longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.

Romans 16:25-27 (NKJV)

25 Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began 26 but now made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith-- 27 to God, alone wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen.

1 Corinthians 2:1-10 (NIV)

1 When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. 2 For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. 3 I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. 4 My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, 5 so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power. 6 We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. 7 No, we speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. 8 None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. 9 However, as it is written: "*No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him*"-- 10 but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.

Colossians 1:24-27 (NIV)

24 Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church. 25 I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness-- 26 the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. 27 To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Ephesians 1:3-10 (NLT)

3 All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ. 4 Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. 5 God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure. 6 So we praise God for the glorious grace he has poured out on us who belong to his dear Son. 7 He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins. 8 He has showered his kindness on us, along with all wisdom and understanding. 9 God has now revealed to us his mysterious plan regarding Christ, a plan to fulfill his own good pleasure. 10 And this is the plan: At the right time he will bring everything together under the authority of Christ--everything in heaven and on earth.

Quote by Charles H. Spurgeon

Sermon Excerpt from "*Christ In You*" by Charles H. Spurgeon

Sermon #1720 delivered on Sunday, May 13, 1883 at Metropolitan Tabernacle, London, England

<http://www.gospelweb.net/SpurgeonMTP29/spursermon1720.htm>

THE Gospel is the grand secret--the mystery of mysteries! It was hidden from ages and from generations, but is now made manifest to the saints. To the mass of mankind it was utterly unknown and the chosen people, who saw something of it, only perceived it dimly through the smoke of sacrifices and the veil of types. It remained a mystery which wit could not guess nor invention unravel--and it would have forever have continued a secret had not God, in His infinite mercy, been pleased to reveal it by the Holy Spirit.

In a still deeper sense it is even yet a hidden thing unless the Spirit of God has revealed it to us individually, for the revelation of the Gospel in the Word of God does not, of itself, instruct men unto eternal life. The light is clear enough, but it avails nothing till the eyes are opened. Each separate individual must have Christ revealed to him and in him by the work of the Holy Spirit, or else he will remain in darkness even in the midst of the Gospel day.

Blessed and happy are they to whom the Lord has laid open the Divine secret which Prophets and kings could not discover--which even angels desired to look into! Brethren, we live in a time when the Gospel is clearly revealed in the Word of God and when that Word has its faithful preachers lovingly to press home its teachings. Let us take care that we do not despise the mystery which has now become a household word. Let not the commonness of the blessing cause us to undervalue it.

Strange & Errant Quote by Benny Hinn

[“God the Father, ladies and gentlemen, is a Person, and He is a triune being by Himself, separate from the Son and the Holy Ghost... God the Father is a Person, God the Son is a Person. God the Holy Ghost is a Person. But each of them is a triune being by Himself. If I can shock you- and maybe I should- there's nine of 'em... 'God the Father, ladies and gentlemen, is a Person with His own personal spirit, with His own personal soul, and His own personal spirit body. You say, I never read that.' Well, you think you're in this church to hear things that you've heard for the last fifty years? Ladies and gentlemen, this thing is in my book and was tested by three theologians... it's all in the Word...”] - Benny Hinn (TBN, October 13, 1990)

Oliver Wendell Holmes' Mysteries of the Universe

Famous poet, author and physician, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr. was very interested in the use of ether for surgical purposes. In order to know how his patients felt under its influence, he once had a dose administered to himself. As he was going under, in a dreamy state, a profound thought came to him. He believed that he had suddenly grasped the key to all the mysteries of the universe. When he regained consciousness, however, he was unable to remember what the insight was.

Because of the great importance this discovery would be to mankind, Holmes arranged to have himself given ether again. This time he had a stenographer present to record the revelation. The ether was administered, and sure enough, just before passing out the insight reappeared. He mumbled the words, the stenographer took them down, and he went to sleep confident in the knowledge that he had succeeded.

Upon awakening, Holmes turned eagerly to the stenographer and asked her to read what he had uttered. This is what she read: *"The entire universe is permeated with a strong odor of turpentine."* He went on to coin the use of the term, *"anesthesia."*

- Bits & Pieces, November 12, 1992.

Bonus Stuff

Christians Are Crazy

By A.W. Tozer

"A real Christian is an odd number anyway. He feels supreme love for One whom he has never seen, talks familiarly every day to Someone he cannot see, expects to go to heaven on the virtue of Another, empties himself in order to be full, admits he is wrong so he can be declared right, goes down in order to get up, is strong when he is weakest, richest when he is poorest, and happiest when he feels worst. He dies so he can live, forsakes in order to have, gives away so he can keep, sees the invisible, hears the inaudible, and knows that which passes knowledge."

The Teaching Of Jesus

Reformation Study Bible, R.C. Sproul--General Editor, pp 1373

Jesus was the Son of God incarnate, and His teaching, given Him by His Father (John 7:16-18; 12:49, 50), will stand forever (Mark 13:31), finally to judge its hearers (Matt. 7:24-27; John 12:48). The importance of paying attention to it cannot be overstressed. Jesus taught as Jewish rabbis generally did, by short sayings rather than in flowing discourses, and many of His most vital utterances are in parables, proverbs, and isolated pronouncements responding to questions and reacting to situations. All His public teaching was marked by an authority that brought amazement (Matt. 7:28, 29; Mark 1:27; John 7:46), but some of the teaching was enigmatical, requiring thought and spiritual insight ("ears to hear," Matt. 11:15; 13:9, 43; Luke 14:35), and baffling the complacent and casual. Jesus' reason for teaching so cryptically about His messianic role, His atonement, resurrection, and future reign, was partly that only events could make these things clear, and partly that He was calling people to be His disciples through His personal impact on them, and then teaching them about Himself within that relationship, rather than offering detailed theological instruction to the uncommitted (Matt. 11:25-27; Mark 4:11, 12). But Jesus' statements often are clear, and many of the fuller presentations in the epistles of the New Testament are best read as expansions and explanations of what Jesus said.

Jesus' teaching had three regular points of reference. The first was His divine Father, who had sent, and was directing Him, and to whom His disciples must learn to relate as their Father in heaven. The second was to people, both individuals and groups, the recipients of His constant and many-faceted calls to repentance and a new life. The third was Himself, the Son of Man, and the Messiah of Israel.

Out of Jesus' witness to His Father, to people in their need, and to His own messianic role, three theological themes emerge:

1. The kingdom of God. This "kingdom" is the reality that came with Jesus as the fulfillment of God's plan for history, of which Old Testament prophets had often spoken (Is. 2:1-4; 9:6, 7; 11:1-12:6; 42:1-9; 49:1-7; Jer. 23:5, 6). The kingdom is present with Jesus; His miracles are signs of it (Matt. 11:12; 12:28; Luke 16:16; 17:20, 21). The kingdom takes command of a person's life when he or she submits in faith to the lordship of Christ, a momentous commitment that brings salvation and eternal life (Mark 10:17-27; John 5:24). The kingdom will be preached and grow (Matt. 13:31-33; 24:14) until the Son of Man, now reigning in heaven, reappears to gather His elect from every corner of the world.
2. The saving work of Jesus. Having come down from heaven at the Father's will to bring chosen sinners to glory, Jesus died for them, calls and draws them to Himself, forgives their sins, and keeps them safe until the day of resurrection (Luke 5:20, 23; 7:48; John 6:37-40, 44, 45; 10:14-18, 27-29; 12:32; 17:1-26).
3. The ethics of God's family. The new life comes to sinners as a gift of God's free grace and must be expressed in a new lifestyle. Those who have received grace must be thankful; those who are greatly loved must show great love to others; those who live because they are forgiven must themselves forgive; those who know God as their loving heavenly Father must accept His providence without bitterness, honoring Him at all times by trusting in His protecting care. In a word, God's children must be like their Father and their Savior, and be utterly unlike the world (Matt. 5:43-48; 6:12-15; 18:21-35; 20:26-28; 22:35-40).

Gnosticism

From Zondervan's KJV Study Bible we learn that "Gnosticism was one of the worst heresies in the first two centuries of church history. It elevated "dualism," a belief that matter is evil and spirit is good. From dualism emerged five errors in the early church:

1. Man's body and the physical creation is evil because it is matter, contrasted with God, who is spirit and thus good. This is not biblical. God proclaimed Creation and Man as "very good."
2. Salvation provides escape from the evil body. This is achieved through special knowledge from the Greek word *gnosis* from which we derive the word Gnosticism.
3. Christ's true humanity was denied. Some said that He only "appeared" to have a real body. This view was called Docetism. Others said that the divine, (spiritual) Christ joined (the physical) Jesus at His baptism and left Jesus before he died. This view was called Cerinthianism named after a teacher, Cerinthus.

This view formed part of the background for 1 John seen in 1:1, 2:22, and 4:2-3. John wrote 1 John to expose false teachers and to give assurance of salvation. "In keeping with his intention to combat Gnostic teachers, John specifically struck at their total lack of morality (3:8-10), and by giving eyewitness testimony to the incarnation, he sought to confirm his readers' belief in the incarnate Christ (1:3)."

4. Asceticism arose from a view that the body is evil. Ascetics treated their own bodies harshly. The ascetic Gnosticism formed the background of part of the letter to the Colossians (2:21-23). ..."why... do you submit to regulations - 'Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch' (referring to things that all perish as they are used) - according to human precepts and teachings?" (Colossians 2:21-22).

5. This view also led to licentiousness because it was thought that the body did not matter. One could do what he wanted with it." (Zondervan KJV Study Bible 2002).