

Puzzling Parables

The Hidden Lamp

Part 5 – October 9, 2016

Welcome to where we seek to overcome confusion.

Are you content with confusion?

We may *complain* about not hearing God's voice; or, understanding His will and His ways; but, **if we don't bother reading His text messages, we're settling for uncertainty in our faith.**



Two years in, Jesus is at His home office in Capernaum, in a boat, telling at least nine parables to a massive crowd along the shore.



[Regarding that day, Mark later writes] **With many similar parables Jesus spoke the word to them, [this is how Jesus taught the Word] as much as they could understand [depending on how faithful each had been to, "Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates" (Deut 11:18-20)]. He did not say anything to them without using a parable [A real downer for the disobedient] ... [Matthew adds] So was fulfilled what was spoken through the prophet: [So, it's not like they weren't warned] "I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things hidden since the creation of the world." [Psalm 78:1-6] – Matthew 13:35; Mark 4:33-34a NIV**



Proverbs, com'parables, and riddles, are a big way by which God communicates. And, just as you can't fake learning the piano: **parables separate the wishful from the faithful.**

Anyone can sit down and plunk at God's Word. But, is that what you want? And, there are many simple songs to immediately enjoy. But, **serious playing requires passionate practice with purpose.** Proverbs is an instruction book for learning to play.

... for attaining wisdom and discipline; for understanding words of insight; for acquiring a disciplined and prudent life ... for giving prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the young ... for understanding proverbs and parables, the sayings and riddles of the wise. ... Listen, my son, to your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching. – Proverbs 1:1-8 NIV

Proverbs portrays God as Father; His Spirit of Wisdom as Mother.

Are you complacent with confusion?



I made the case to you, that **the OT contains a children's game of *Match the Com'parables*, a treasure hunt, embedded for young Jesus, so He could immediately begin to grow in wisdom.** (Lk 2:52)



[In Proverbs] Wisdom calls aloud ... **“the complacency of fools will destroy them;** but **whoever listens to me will live”** ... **“My son,** if you accept my words and **store up my commands** ... if you **call out for insight** and **cry aloud for understanding,** and ... **search for it as for hidden treasure,** then you will ... find the knowledge of God.” – Proverbs 1:20-2:5 NIV *condensed*

During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions **with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death** ... Although he was **a son,** **[the Son of God]** he **learned** obedience ... – Hebrews 5:7-9a NIV



My son, keep your father's commands and do not forsake your mother's teaching. ... For these commands are a lamp, this teaching is a light ... – Proverbs 6:20-23a NIV

I also made the case that **Jesus' parables contain OT comparables, all of which are interdependent and consistent in imagery.**

For instance, Psalm (199:105) says, **God's Word is a Lamp;** 2 Samuel (22:29) says, **God is our Lamp;** Revelation (21:23) says, **the Lamb is the Lamp** ... and, that **His name is the Word of God.** (Rev 19:13)

I want to review a passage, in a different light.

When he was alone, **[back in His home office]** the Twelve disciples and the others around him **[who wanted to understand what He meant]** came to him **[they sought and knocked]** and asked him about the parables. asked, “Why do you speak to the people in parables?” His disciples asked him what this parable meant. He said, “The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of God **of heaven** has been given **[didōmi: is given; is granted]** to you, **[who sought and knocked and asked]** but not to them **[who didn't come in].** to those on the outside **[content with confusion]** everything is said **[and remains, concealed]** in parables **Whoever has** **[echo: holds; owns; possesses (the inside story)]** will be given more, **[because they seek and knock and ask]** and he will have an abundance **[because that's God's desire].** **Whoever does not have,** **[echo: hold; own; possess (the inside story)]** even what he has will be taken from him. – Mat 13:10-12; Mark 4:10-11; Luke 8:9-10a NIV

He goes on to say that they fulfill Isaiah's prophecy regarding all those content with *not-seeing* and *not-hearing*. (Mt 13:13-15; Mk 4:12) And, **He tells these who've come inside that their eyes and ears will see and hear what others can only long for.** (Mt 13:16-17; Mk 4:13)

Because: “even what he has will be taken from him.”



How? By who or what? The birds, the heat, and the thorns. He then goes on to explain the meaning of the symbols of *The Sower*: it's by confusion, suffering, and worries & busyness. (Mt 13:18-23; Mk 4:14-20; Lk 8:11-15)

But the one who received the seed [*“the Word of God”* (Lk 8:11)] sown on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, and understands it. accept it, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop thirty, sixty or even a hundred times what was sown. – Mat 13:23-; Mark 4:20; Luke 8:15 NIV

It so depends on the desire of the heart that's receiving it. **Is it intent to understand, accept, retain, and persevere? Or, is it content to settle for randomly plunking in the dark?**

Remember, another symbol for *God's Word*, besides *seed*, is *a lamp*. So, now watch how Jesus wraps up His answer, as to why He speaks in parables, with reassurance that God's heart isn't to confuse, but to challenge, strengthen, and reward those who seek truth.

He said to them, “Do you bring in a lamp to put it under a bowl or a bed? [What's the answer? Well, actually, yes; if it's not lit ... BUT] “No one lights a lamp and hides it in a jar or puts it under a bed. Instead, he puts it on a stand, so that those who come in [like the Twelve and the others who were determined to get the inside scoop] can see the light [Of the Lamb, the Word in flesh, who was with God, and is God]. For [take heart] whatever is hidden [in the proverbs and parables and sayings and riddles] is meant to be disclosed, [To who? Those who aren't content with “Chopsticks”, but practice with passion and play by ear. In fact] there is *nothing* hidden that will not be disclosed, [One of His parables this day will be about treasure hidden in a field, that a man finds and conceals again (Mt 13:44)] and nothing concealed that will not be known or brought out [Another parable will involve a Teacher who knows about the kingdom, bringing out new treasures along with the old. (Mt 13:52) The Light of the world doesn't desire to keep us in the dark; He wants to fulfill our free will with the full light of the Lamb'p] whatever is concealed is meant to be brought out into the open. [The only limiting factor is your heart's desire as expressed through your actions] Therefore consider carefully how you listen. [Not, how you talk; but, how you listen. And, we listen by implanting every word that proceeds from the mouth of God into our heart] If anyone has ears [that desire] to hear, let him hear.” [For hear he shall; just as those content with confusion will remain outside] “Consider carefully what you hear,” he continued. [God's Word isn't something you skim] “With the measure you use, [to seek and ask and knock] it will be measured to you—and even more. [30, 60, even 100 times what was sown] Whoever has [the good heart] will be given more; whoever does not have, [this fertile soil] even what he has [the seeds in the path, on the rocks, or among the thorns] even what he *thinks* he has [securely planted] will be taken from him [by the enemy of confusion, the heat of hard times, or the smothering comforts of life].” – Mark 4:21-25; Luke 8:16-18 NIV

Those who sought more truth that day received an abundance.

But, those on the outside, who were seeking a miracle, a good story, or an argument, couldn't make heads or tails of His parables.

Acting on truth always qualifies us for deeper truth.

And, if we don't act on what we receive, try as we might to hold onto it, it'll slip right through our soil, and out of our ears. I'm mixing my metaphors, but you get the picture.

If we don't quickly obey, truth is taken away.

This separates the truth-seekers from the self-seekers.

Are you content with confusion?

I sure hope not!

Don't be deceived into thinking God's Word is dull.

It's just your ears that're dull. And, *they* can be *trained*.

Difficult? Absolutely! It wasn't designed to be easy, *that* would be boring. It's designed to be exciting, inspiring, challenging, puzzling, and rewarding. But, *easy*? *That's just dim.*



Who wants a mystery that's easy to solve? Or, a video game without levels? Or, a sport without an opponent? Or, a puzzle without pieces?

Why do we climb mountains, dive oceans, and dig for treasure?

Because, *that's* the stuff of life!

So, be careful how you listen; or, you might long for less.