

**PARABLE OF THE HOMEOWNER**  
**MATTHEW 13:51-52**  
**ABC 5/17/20**

Communication always has the chance to be misunderstood. Logging miscommunication Understanding what's being communicated is key. That's what we see in today's passage. As we come to the last parable of Mt 13 this morning, let's do some review. We've had 7 parables, can you list them? 1<sup>st</sup> we have the parable of the sower or of the soils. Though good seed is sown, it's sown in different kinds of soils. 3 of the 4 kinds of soils don't produce fruit. We learn from this there will be many, though the gospel is shared with them, who will reject it. Though the kingdom message is to go out to all, not everyone will respond favorably to it. There were many more who rejected Jesus during His earthly ministry than accepted Him. It was important for the disciples to not be surprised by that.

Then we have the parable of the wheat & the tares which teaches that the kingdom will be imperfect until God's day of judgment. The disciples were expecting a nationwide welcoming of the Messiah, Jesus, & all the righteous would be inside the kingdom & the wicked would be outside it. But in this parable Jesus tells His disciples the kingdom in its present form will be mixed. It won't be until the final judgment that there will be a perfectly pure kingdom. Until then, the wheat & the tares grow together & sometimes are hard to distinguish.

Then we had the parable of the mustard seed which teaches us not to despise small beginnings in the work of the gospel. The disciples were expecting Jesus to establish His glorious kingdom. They were even vying for what seats they'd sit at in His kingdom. But He's now told them that many people will reject Him. He's told them the kingdom would be mixed. & now they're thinking, *This kingdom doesn't look anything like what we were expecting.* & they may be tempted to undervalue it. So He says to them,

*Though the kingdom is like a mustard seed, it will grow. Don't despise the small beginnings of the kingdom. Though we may be small now, the kingdom will grow to be the largest of the garden plants. God's Word will work, the kingdom will grow, you just be faithful, do your work, & be confident that I will be faithful to My word.*

Following that we had the parable of the leaven, which carries a similar message as the mustard seed. In it we're taught not to underestimate the impact of God's kingdom. Like the yeast in bread

rises, not drawing attention to itself, it permeates every part of the bread. Likewise, the leaven of the kingdom is working. & even if it's outwardly unimpressive, it's making a difference. So we're not to underestimate the impact of God's kingdom.

Next were parables #5 & 6, the parables of the hidden treasure & the pearl of great price. Through these Jesus reminds us the true value of the kingdom is absolutely priceless. It's the most precious thing in the world, but it's hidden to some. Not everyone sees the value of the kingdom. In that way it's like a hidden treasure. Those who find that treasure rejoice over it & are willing to sell everything they have to obtain it. But many walk right over it & never see it. Jesus repeats in the pearl parable that belonging to the kingdom is worth more than anything else in the world. Just as the merchant was willing to sell everything to get it, so also the kingdom is more precious than anything else. Knowing the King, being in His kingdom is the most important thing in life.

Last week we looked at the parable of the dragnet. Here Jesus reemphasizes a truth He's already taught in the parable of the tares & the wheat. That is, though the kingdom is mixed in this present age, there is a separation & judgment coming.

Which brings us to Mt 13:51-53. If we're truly citizens of God's kingdom, these truths will make a difference in our lives, in our thoughts, in our priorities, in our attitudes, & in our words & actions. Let's read God's Word in **Mt 13:51-53**.

This isn't a dramatic parable. There's no joyful embrace at the reunion of a father & his wayward son. There's no beaten & bloody traveler left for dead on the side of the road. No, it's just a man, a master of a house, & he brings out of his treasure what is new & old. It's very simple without much detail. But the teaching of this parable is foundational for how we live the Christian life. All of us, I'm sure, have been asked that question, *What do you want to be when you grow up?* Some of us haven't heard that question in a long time! This parable teaches all of us as Christians both what we're to be when we grow up & what we're to be right now, no matter what age we are.

**1. The Training of a Christian** Look at vs **53**.

You might not think so but this is a key vs in Matthew. It's probably not a vs you've underlined. & if your version is like mine, this vs begins the next paragraph. But it's the conclusion of this section

of the gospel going back to the beginning of chapter 13. 5x Matthew uses this or a similar phrase to mark the end of a section of Jesus' teaching. In fact, Matthew's gospel is structured around 5 major discourses from Jesus' ministry. The Sermon on the Mount in Mt 5-7 is the most famous of them. But chapter 13 is one of His teaching discourses as well. This phrase is Matthew's way of calling our attention to what Jesus has been saying. **When Jesus had finished these parables.** There have been 4 parables that Jesus teaches to the crowds & 4 He teaches to His disciples after they've withdrawn from the crowds & gone into a home. So when we read vs 51, it's a question from Jesus to His disciples. & He says to them, **Have you understood all these things?** What are **these things?** What has Jesus been teaching them? About the kingdom of heaven. He's been training them to understand more of what His kingdom looks like. The word **understood** literally means bringing or putting together. *Have you rightly put **all these things** together?* Jesus was asking. ***Have you understood** what I've been saying about the kingdom?*

*Do you understand not everyone will receive My kingdom? Do you comprehend the truth that the present form of the kingdom will have good & evil in it? Do you realize that believers will continue to grow in numbers & to permeate & influence the world? Do you know that entering the kingdom involves the recognition of the worthlessness of everything a person has apart from salvation in Me? Do you see that the final separation of the righteous & wicked is inescapable, & that the fate of both is eternal--the righteous to everlasting life & the wicked to everlasting punishment?*

The disciples answer & **said to Him, Yes.** But from what they later said & did, we know their understanding was far from perfect. Some of the things Jesus is teaching won't become clear to them until after His resurrection, ascension, & the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, but here they say, *yes*, they understand what He's been teaching. It strikes me as funny the way it's just this one-word answer to Jesus' big question, to such a profound subject. The disciples might not take in all of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but what Jesus has been teaching them here in chapter 13 they think they understand. Since they understand what has been communicated in the previous 7 parables, what was to be their responsibility in light of these truths? The parable in vs 52 answers this question. Jesus accepts their response as genuine; otherwise He wouldn't have given them the next parable. On the level at which they were able to understand at that time, they **understood**. So what does Jesus do? Based on their response, Jesus gives them another parable to show them what they're to do & to be. **52**

We don't usually think of **scribes** as having anything positive to do with Jesus as they were always in opposition to Him. **Scribes** were experts in the Law. They were the ones who knew all the interpretations from the former teachers & the interpretations of it that had been passed down from generation to generation. They applied those interpretations to current events of their day. Remember what people said about Jesus' teaching? They said He taught with authority & not like the scribes (Mt 7:29). The scribes relied on someone else's authority. Jesus taught with His own authority. & that, at least in part, is why the scribes hated Him. They wanted to trap Him in His words. They wanted to turn the crowds against Him. Literally, a **scribe** was one who wrote. But among Jews the term carried the meaning of a man who was a learner, interpreter, & teacher of the law, of God's revealed Word that we call the OT. Although the scribes & rabbis had added so much tradition that it often took the place of & contradicted God's Word (Mt 15:6), their supposed task was to study & interpret Scripture. They were the theologians of Judaism & many were members of the Sanhedrin. But here Jesus redefines what a **scribe** is. He redefines a **scribe** in terms of being trained for the kingdom of heaven. The word translated **trained** is the verb form of the word that means *disciple*. Jesus is talking about someone who's been disciplined in the kingdom of heaven, which is exactly what He's been doing for these men. That's who they are, they're disciples. Under Jesus' instruction, each of His disciples was becoming a learned **scribe** & a true **disciple of the kingdom of heaven**. They were to be **like a head of a household, who brings forth out of his treasure things new & old**. J.I. Packer, in his book, *Knowing God*, asks the question, *What is a Christian?* & he says, *The question can be answered in many ways, but the richest answer I know is that a Christian is one who has God as Father.*<sup>1</sup> A Christian is a child of God & that captures the beauty of the relationship of salvation that's given to us. But how else could we answer the question, *What is a Christian?* We could say a Christian is a saint, a set apart one, a member of the body of Christ, a new creation, a sojourner, a stranger, & a citizen of heaven. Packer, in the same book, also says, *True Christians are people who acknowledge & live under the Word of God. They submit without reserve to the Word of God written in "the Book of Truth" (Dan 10:21), believing*

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<sup>1</sup> Packer, J. I. [Knowing God](#), electronic edition, chpt 19

*the teaching, trusting the promises, following the commands. Their eyes are upon the God of the Bible as their Father & the Christ of the Bible as their Savior.*<sup>2</sup> We could also say, according to this parable, that a Christian is a **scribe**, a student of the Word of God & the ways of God's kingdom. Every Christian is a **scribe** in the sense that we must take & apply God's Word for today's needs & demands. A Christian is a **scribe** who's been trained for the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, a Christian is like a master of a house who brings out of his treasure what is new & what is old. What does this mean? It's not immediately clear, at least it wasn't to me. But after some research I found that the **head of a household** was responsible for the entire welfare of the family & a major part of his duty was to maintain adequate supplies of food, clothing, & other **things** the members of the **household** might need. He kept the supplies in a storehouse, or **treasure**, from which he would get things as they were needed. The wise householder was frugal & careful not to waste his supplies. When they were reusable, food that was uneaten & clothing that was no longer worn, they were returned to the **treasure** to be used again. When other needs arose, common sense demanded that these **old** supplies would be used 1<sup>st</sup>, before any **things new** were issued. The disciples (learners) would become the apostles (sent ones). Through these, along with Paul, the apostle appointed **last of all** (1 Cor 15:8), Jesus entrusted the new revelation of His Word & the founding of His church.

**2. The Treasure of a Christian** What is this treasure? What does this parable mean? Here's how, *The Message* paraphrases this vs: *Every student well-trained in God's kingdom is like the owner of a general store who can put his hands on anything you need, old or new, exactly when you need it.*<sup>3</sup> Have you been to stores like that? You feel lost by all of the merchandise & lack of arrangement & yet the owner can take you to exactly what you need. Growing up, we had a drawer like that in our kitchen. I'm not sure why it was in the kitchen & I don't even remember what all was in this drawer, but if you needed a screwdriver or rubber bands or super glue or tape or whatever, the junk drawer was the 1<sup>st</sup> place to look. The master of the house was something like that. He needed

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<sup>2</sup> chpt 11

<sup>3</sup> Peterson, E. H. (2005). [The Message: the Bible in contemporary language](#), Mt 13:52

a storehouse because he was a jack of all trades. He had a very multi-dimensional job. The master of the house is the one that managed all of the details of the household. He was responsible for hiring & paying the workers. He watched out for intruders & welcomed guests into the home. He did a little bit of everything, & so he would've needed to have access to both new & old things. He would have needed to know where they were & how they worked & when to use those things.

The Greek word for **treasure** in this parable is the Greek word from which we get our word *thesaurus*. What's a *thesaurus*? A treasury of words with similar meanings. It's a storehouse of words that we can go to to find & pick out the right word for just the right situation. So many of today's problems aren't new problems. They may come to us in a different packaging or under a name or in a different form. What do we need for that? We don't need new revelation. What we need is the old truth from God's Word. We need what Jeremiah points us to, the ancient paths where the good way is, & we must walk in them & find rest for our souls (Jer 6:16). We can take those old truths, the old ways of God's Word & apply it in new ways, but it's the same truth. That's what a master of a house does. That's what a Christian does. The Christian knows God's Word & is able to apply it to whatever the current situation is. He brings out of his treasure, something new or something old, so he can be faithful in God's calling. It means we're able to make decisions & navigate changes in our lives with biblical wisdom. It means facing a crisis & going through a trial with courage & hope. Charles Spurgeon says a Christian *is not weary of the old; he is not afraid of the new. Old truth is made new by a living experience; new views of truth, if indeed it be truth, are only the old in a fresh light.*<sup>4</sup> The disciples knew the **old** truths & were being given additional truths that were **new**. They were to proclaim the significance of both. **Brings forth** carries the idea of casting out, scattering, or distributing widely. It also indicates generosity, giving out the truth of God both wisely & liberally. Apart from the Lord Himself, the apostles were the supreme Bible scholars, preachers, teachers, & theologians of all time. They were scribes & disciples without equal (Mt 11:11). As is clear from the parables of the sower, the wheat & tares, & the dragnet, the message of the gospel isn't simply the offer of heaven but also a warning about hell. What makes

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<sup>4</sup> *Record of Christian Work*, edited by Alexander McConnell, vol 21, p 153

the gospel such *good news* is its power to save us from the indescribably *bad* destiny toward which every person without Christ is headed. A person doesn't have to choose hell to go there. He only has to refuse the claims of Jesus Christ or simply do nothing at all with them. Jesus' charge to the disciples is given to every believer, each one of us, because every Christian is His witness & has been called to teach & proclaim His Word. It's an awesome responsibility to warn the unsaved about hell & to show them the way of escape through Jesus Christ. **Therefore knowing the fear or terror of the Lord**, Paul says, **we persuade men** (2 Cor 5:11). Your heart is cold if it isn't concerned about those around you who are heading for an eternity of hell. To have the gift of eternal life but refusing to share it with others is the epitome of selfishness & lovelessness. Citizens of God's kingdom understand what the Bible reveals, that Jesus is the fulfillment of all the Bible's promises. We know Jesus has conquered sin & death by His death & resurrection, & has given the forgiveness of sins to those who trust Him. We know He rules over all & we serve Him as our Lord.

**3. The Task of a Christian** What then is our task according to this parable? Don't confuse going to more meetings with growing in holiness. Never confuse busyness with godliness. That's never it. There are at least 4 things we can learn here. **A. Christians Hear** Very simply, a Christian hears. Mt 13 is all about hearing correctly. Jesus says, **He who has ears to hear let him hear** (9, 43). That's what distinguished the disciples from the crowds. They had ears of faith & were committed to hear what Jesus had to say. Hearing is the starting point for their training. Studies have shown that those who regularly hear God's Word are likely to be more mature Christians. For example, LifeWay Research did a survey last year. Here are a few conclusions:

*Jesus' prayer for His followers was that they would be sanctified by the truth of God's Word. It's not surprising that the lives of those who spend time reading the Bible look more like Christ.... This is a case in which the action of reading the Bible influences one's thoughts. This mindfulness on God's truths has additional benefits of influencing other actions & speech.<sup>5</sup>*

Christians who read their Bibles regularly are likely to spend more time in prayer, to be active in Sunday School & small groups, to give generously to the church, & to be involved in ministry.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.bpnews.net/53216/reading-your-bible-daily-study-gives-closer-look>

That's not giving you a legalistic formula to be a successful Christian, but it's saying God speaks to us in His Word & His people, His disciples, listen.

**B. Christians Understand** We aren't just to read our Bibles but we're also to understand what we read. Jesus asked in vs 51, **Have you understood all these things?** & the disciples say, **Yes**. That wasn't always the case. Even earlier in this chapter the disciples had come to Jesus & asked, *What do these things mean?* (Mt 13:36) & Jesus explained further & brought them to an understanding. We don't always understand everything the Bible says, do we? How do we come to an understanding? We pray & look to the places that are more clear & those Scriptures often explain the less clear places. & then we take what we're reading, studying, hearing, & turn it into prayer & we pray God's Word back to Him. & He, by His grace, by the work of His Spirit, makes those things plain to us over time so we can come to a further understanding. Why is the understanding of the truth so important? Because the mere hearing of the word profits no one. Jesus Himself, over & over, calls the disciples not to be hearers of the word, but also doers of the word. It isn't enough for our ears to be brought within the reach of the sound of the preacher's voice. Our hearts, our minds, our consciences, our lives must be brought within the reach of the judgment of the Word of God so that we might be changed, transformed. Because God isn't simply trying to interest us, He isn't trying to entertain us through the proclamation of His Word, He isn't even, ultimately, simply trying to fill our minds with information, as important as that is. He's desiring to see our lives transformed. We're to be like the Bereans in Acts 17, right? What were they doing? Searching & examining the Scripture to find out whether the things Paul was preaching were true & right. They were diligent & are a model of examining & coming to an understanding of God's Word. But remember also the people in Athens. What were they like? They were known for enjoying nothing more than to hear & to discuss some new thing; to hear a good speech, to hear someone gifted at rhetoric. They enjoyed having their ears tickled. Sometimes we can fall into that same pattern. We can fill our calendars with Bible studies & church events or we go from one podcast to another of our favorite Bible teachers without ever applying what we hear, simply enjoying their voices & stories. Followers of Jesus are to be listeners, we're to hear, learn, & understand. But also ...



**C. Christians Teach** To be a master of a house who brings out new & old is to teach the ways of God's kingdom. 1<sup>st</sup> to teach & apply those things to our own lives so it impacts our decisions, how we fight temptation, how we interact with those around us. But we also teach others. That may be in one-on-one conversations. It may be in the car or in the kitchen. It can be in a small group or counseling a friend or maybe in front of an audience or behind a pulpit. But a follower of Christ is to teach. That's ultimately what Jesus is telling His disciples in this parable. He's been bringing out new & old for them. He's been training them for the kingdom of heaven. Have they understood? Yes. Now what are they to do? They're to bring out new & old for others & to train others for the kingdom of heaven. Jump to the end of Matthew's gospel.

**D. Christians Disciple** As I mentioned, Matthew records 5 major discourses of Jesus in this book & then Jesus gives this charge, this commission, to His followers at the very end. Mt 28:19-20 says, **All authority has been given to Me in heaven & on earth. Go therefore & make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father & the Son & the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; & lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.** Do you see what Jesus is saying? Making disciples involves teaching what He's commanded. How do we know what to teach as we go & make disciples? It's the teaching of Jesus. *Have you understood these things? Then go, teach, & make disciples.* Be like the master of a house who brings out of his treasure what is new & what is old. That's our charge. That's our commission from Jesus. We're to hear & to understand & to teach & to make disciples. & that doesn't matter what your job is or isn't. It doesn't matter if you're a mom or a dad or a husband or a wife, a brother or a sister or a friend. It doesn't matter if you're a doctor or a lawyer or a housewife or a builder or a teacher. It doesn't matter how old you are or how young you are. If you're a disciple of Jesus Christ, if you're a Christian, then you are to make disciples because whatever you do & wherever you go, you take with you the treasure of the kingdom. Why? So you can bring out what is needed when it's needed & you can do that in relationships & situations that are unique to you. You're involved with people you have access to that no other Christian does. So Jesus is saying be like a master of a house & bring out things new & old to reveal the ways of the kingdom & to make disciples. Who do you

know who may not be a Christian? What opportunities do you have in casual, every day conversations & interactions to tell them about Jesus & the kingdom of heaven? Where are you being called to make disciples, to be like this master of the house? Let me ask, are you basking in the glory of God that's revealed in Scripture? In the beauty of Jesus in His work & His person? Do you delight in the great salvation we have in Jesus Christ? Are you hearing & reading God's Word? Do you seek to understand it? Are you teaching others? Are you making disciples? Don't keep God's truth to yourself. Yes, listen to it. Read it. Understand it. Delight in it. & then we must teach it & make disciples. Each of us is to be a scribe, a learner, & a disciple, one who lives what he's learned. Jesus ends this discourse with this parable & says, *Here's what disciples do with God's Word.* & what do they do? Very simply, they imitate Jesus & they live lives that are intentional to make disciples. The mark of a disciple trained for Christ's kingdom isn't simply that they know, love, & want more of the truth. It's that they share the truth they delight in with others so that they may come to delight in it too. They're working at opening the treasury to display the beauty of Jesus to everyone around them. Are you this kind of disciple? Do you understand these things? Jesus is calling you today to be His disciple so that you might bring His gospel to those around you, to bring from the treasury of Scripture beautiful gems that sparkle with the magnificence of Jesus. Do you understand these things? No doubt there's much you don't understand, just as there's much I don't understand. But do you believe what you *do* understand, & are you prepared to act on your understanding & come to Jesus? Admit you are a sinner, in rebellion against God, deserving His judgment. Believe that in spite of those facts God sent His Son to be your Savior. Then commit yourself to Jesus Christ, promising to follow Him as your Master, Lord, & Savior. May God be gracious to us to train us for kingdom living by wielding His word with power in our hearts today & in the days ahead.