

Parables of Evangelism

Jesus shared two parables that are easily paired together as we learn about evangelism and how to be witnesses of God's grace, mercy, forgiveness, and love in this world without being judgmental.

Introduction

We have spoken many times about the Great Commission. Jesus has commissioned all of us to go and make disciples or go and preach among the nations. We read this in the gospels just before Jesus' ascension into Heaven.

We have also spoken many times about Acts 1:8 which says:

Acts 1:8

(8) But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

The power we need to share our experience of Jesus' love, grace, mercy, and forgiveness with others is freely available to us through the Holy Spirit. This is the mission of all believers. This is evangelism.

Jesus had a unique way of sharing truths and wisdom as he taught. He used parables to make concepts understandable to those he was speaking to. These simple illustrations and hypothetical situations made understanding his plans and purposes easy for the common person. There are two such parables found in Matthew 13 that we are looking at today and discussing how they tie together.

Parable of the Sower

The first parable we want to read is titled the Parable of the Sower. This is one of the parables that Jesus shared with a group and then explained to his disciples so they would fully understand. Let us read this parable found in Matthew 13:1-9.

Matthew 13:1-9

(1) That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. (2) Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore. (3) Then he told them many things in parables, saying: "A farmer went out to sow his seed. (4) As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. (5) Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. (6) But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. (7) Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. (8) Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. (9) Whoever has ears, let them hear."

Many preachers and teachers have taught on this parable. It is often referred to when speaking about our own hearts and being sure we as individuals have a heart that is fertile ground for the seed of the gospel to be planted in. This is a great point and true and is a great personal application of this passage of scripture. But it also speaks to a method of evangelism.



Evangelism in the Parable of the Sower

Notice how the farmer in the parable did not carefully plant his seed just in the places where it would grow best. We read that as he was scattering his seed some fell along the path, some fell on rocky places, some fell among thorns, and some fell on good soil.

Many teachers of the scriptures will tell us to conserve our teaching and time and only use it to sow the seeds of the gospel of Jesus Christ in places where it is likely to be received and planted in hearts that will then produce fruit in people's lives. These same teachers of the scriptures will tell us to avoid sharing the gospel with those where it will most likely not take root if it is heard at all.

We believe there is something deeper in this parable than that. There is more to what Jesus is sharing and teaching. The farmer in Jesus' parable is scattering his seed as he goes. We are to spread the seed of the gospel wherever we go and in whatever situation we find ourselves. Woe be to us if we hold back from sharing our experience with Jesus and the truths of his gospel with people we think may not receive it.

People have twisted this parable into the teaching of conservation of our resources instead of the teaching of freely sharing Jesus with everyone and everywhere regardless of the likelihood of their acceptance. We believe and teach that the preaching of Jesus' gospel and the teaching of scripture is always appropriate. We base this on the next parable we are going to read and tie together with this parable.

The Parable of the Weeds

Matthew also records the parable of the weeds in chapter 13. Jesus is still teaching those assembled and shares this parable in Matthew 13:24-30.

Matthew 13:24-30

(24) Jesus told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. (25) But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. (26) When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared. (27) "The owner's servants came to him and said, 'Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?' (28) "'An enemy did this,' he replied. "The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?' (29) "'No,' he answered, 'because while you are pulling the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them. (30) Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.'"

As we share the gospel of Jesus Christ with others and sow the seeds of the Kingdom of Heaven, we must understand that some of those seeds will fall on deaf ears or hardened hearts. Sometimes we will share with someone who will spring up fast but will fall away quickly when hardship or difficult times come. The devil also will try to ruin the harvest by sowing seeds of doubt, worry, and fear as we sow seeds of grace, mercy, forgiveness, and love.



Knowing that weeds are also being planted did not worry the farmer in the parable. He told his workers to let them grow also so the newly growing crops would not be harmed, but to pull the weeds first at harvest and burn them.

Evangelism in the Parable of the Weeds

The weeds in this parable refer to the things of this world in a person's life. They refer to the day-to-day worries and fears along with the individual's bad habits and ungodly behaviors. These are all from this world and planted by the enemy of our souls who only wants to separate us from God.

Jesus is teaching us here that we do not need to worry too much about those bad habits, fears, worries, and doubts. They may grow some, but the truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ will grow also. These truths of grace, mercy, forgiveness, and love will grow along with the weeds and when the time is right, the Holy Spirit will start to point out bad habits, fears, worries, and doubts in the individual and help them pick them out and get rid of them from their life. Then all that remains is the good of the gospel.

We often want to immediately start to reform a new convert to Jesus. We want to point out all that is wrong or ungodly and start to clean them up, so to speak. That is the job of the Holy Spirit. Our job is to scatter the seed and reap the Lord's harvest. Just as Jesus shares in this parable.

Conclusion

We must understand what God has asked us and commissioned us to do. We are to be witnesses to the ends of the earth of all Jesus has done in and through us. We are to spread his message far and wide. Yes, sometimes what we share will fall in places where it will not grow or produce much. Oftentimes when we share with someone ready to hear and make a true commitment to the Lord the devil will plant seeds of fear, worry, and doubt. Our job then is to continue to cultivate and encourage that person and when the time is right, and with the prompting of the Holy Spirit, start to help the person get rid of the weeds in their life.

Scatter the seeds of the gospel freely, and do not hurt the spiritual growth and discourage someone by consistently pointing out the bad things in their life. Only act on what the Holy Spirit prompts you to act on. The Holy Spirit knows when and how to take care of those weeds. We just need to be ready and obedient to the Lord.

