

- iii. When we **respond** by *putting it into practice, there in that act* is the kingdom of heaven.
- iv. That *act*, empowered by the Holy Spirit, means the Kingdom of God is upon us (12:28)!

C. Understanding Matters

LIVE THE STORY

The Gospel is intended to be learned and lived in community. The following questions are designed for use in our Community Groups as an aid to growth in the Gospel and Community.

- Did Jesus always teach in parables? Why did he choose to do so here? What do parables require us to do?
- What is the parable of the foolish farmer about? How do we know?
- What might we learn from the story told by when Matthew informs us that Jesus sits down in His gospel (5:1; 13:1-2; 19:28; 25:31ff)
- What do you think about the idea that it's not necessarily a bad thing for you to hear a sermon and walk away without understanding? Assuming it was a message faithful to Scripture, how would that call you to respond (specifically)?
- What made the hearts of the people (v15) insensitive? How might the double meaning of the word translated *calloused* (both *fat* or *rich* and *insensitive*) speak to prosperous believers today?
- What do you think of the idea that there is spiritual warfare happening when God's word is being preached?
- This parable calls for self-evaluation. Which kind of soil are you? Do you need to press in for understanding? Are you putting Jesus' message into practice?
- Why is understanding important? How does it relate to putting the message into practice?

DISCIPLE 1.0 The Parable of the Foolish Farmer

Jerry Cisar — October 6, 2019

Text: Matthew 13:1-23

Introduction: A Foolish Farmer (1-9)

I. Why Parables? (10-17)

A. Why Parables?

- i. Enigmatic stories, or stories with a hidden meaning.

Douglas Hare: Parables are "intended to tease the mind into insight rather than communicate a simple idea by means of an illustration."

- ii. *Because understanding requires pressing in.*

iii. Who has and who doesn't?

- a) Use it or lose it.
- b) Whoever has received the message of the kingdom must put it into practice. As we put it into practice, it's meaning and message become more and more clear, and therefore we are given even more! Those who hear it and think about it, but do not put it into practice, even what understanding they thought they had will be taken away!

B. The people's blindness and inability to understand (13-15)

- i. The Bible says much about human responsibility and does not picture humans as pre-programmed *automatons*.
- ii. An honest observer must admit, however, that in most of the major events in any of our lives, we had no free will.
- iii. Understanding v15 from its setting in Isaiah
- iv. This word for *calloused* means both *fat, or rich and insensitive*.

II. Unfruitful Soil (18-22)

- A. Jesus gave a clue to the meaning of the parable at its close (v9).
 - i. Each section of the explanation begins with a description of how people hear *the message of the kingdom* (19, 20, 22, 23).
 - ii. This parable is about how we respond to the message of the kingdom.
 - iii. The message about the kingdom is most clearly expressed in the *Sermon on the Mount*.
- B. The Unfruitful Soils
 - i. Those Along the Path (19)
 - a) There is a spiritual power that wants to keep you from understanding God's word.
 - b) 2 Cor. 4:3-4

- ii. Those on the Rocky Ground (20-21)

- iii. Those Among Thorns (22)

III. Fruitful Soil (23)

- A. How does one bring forth fruit?
 - i. Understanding is proven by putting it into practice!
 - ii. In Matthew 7, Jesus connected fruitfulness to "doing the will of the Father," and "putting [Jesus' teaching] into practice."
 - iii. Jesus tells these parables on the same day He declared that His true family is made of those who are putting into practice his teaching... doing the Father's will (1).
 - iv. Jesus' "sitting" tells a story (1-2).
 - a) He sits to teach the Sermon on the Mount.
 - b) He sits to give a parable about how we respond to it.
 - c) He sits to render judgment about how we respond to it.
 - v. The fruitful ones are the ones who put Jesus kingdom message into practice!
- B. The fruit of the Kingdom message is the manifestation of the Kingdom of heaven on earth in our midst.
 - i. The **summary** of Jesus' message is, "Change your lives, for the kingdom of heaven has drawn near" (4:17).
 - ii. The **content** of the message is the Sermon on the Mt.