Matthew 13 – The Parables Part 1

As Jesus sat by the seaside, a great crowd gathered.
From every village they came, fishermen, merchants, men and women alike, even some scornful Pharisees standing nearby with folded arms.
But multitudes do not equal disciples.
The fame of Jesus had spread across the land. The blind received sight. The lame walked. Demons fled at His command. The sick healed.
Jesus left the crowd and entered a boat, pushing out a short distance from shore.
Many came to witness miracles. Some came seeking bread. Others came to test and accuse Him. They heard His words, but their hearts remained untouched.
And on that day, by the sea, something changed.
He began to teach them. Not with plain, simple words of truth, but with stories in parables.

"*A sower went forth to sow...*" (3)

Simple words. Familiar images. Seeds. Soil. Fields. Things every farmer understood.
Yet hidden beneath that ordinary scene were mysteries of the kingdom of heaven (11).
As he sowed, some seeds fell along the path by the field. The birds quickly devoured them. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, lacking good soil. They immediately sprang up, but when the sun rose, they were scorched, for they had no depth of soil. Thus, they withered and died.
But some seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty.
The disciples noticed something unusual.
So they came privately and asked:

"*why speakest thou unto them in parables?*" (10)

Jesus gave an answer that reaches far beyond that shoreline and into every generation:

"*Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.*" (11)

The words must have stunned His disciples. For Jesus was revealing a solemn truth: not all hearing leads to understanding. Not all seeing brings knowledge.

There were many eyes looking at Christ... But few truly saw Him.
Many ears heard the sound of His voice... But few received the truth of His message.
Parables became both revelation and judgment.
To hungry hearts they opened treasure.
To hardened hearts, they concealed it.

Those who desired truth would lean in, search, ask, and understand.
But those who had already closed their hearts would walk away hearing only stories about farmers and seeds.

Let's pause here and ask a question. What truth was hidden in the parable?
The answer is in verse eleven.
"*The mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.*"
What exactly is the "kingdom of heaven?"
That exact phrase appears 32 times in the King James Bible, interestingly, all in Matthew's gospel.
It refers to Israel's promised earthly kingdom, as shown in the prayer Jesus gave His disciples, the so-called Lord's Prayer.
Matthew 6:9-10 "*Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.*"
The "kingdom of heaven" is an earthly kingdom wherein the will of the Father is done, as it is in heaven. A reference to Israel's prophesied Millennial Kingdom.
So, the parables speak to the "kingdom of heaven," Israel's earthly kingdom, not the Church, as we are His body and not a kingdom.

Back to the parables.
To explain the reason for speaking in parables, Jesus quoted the prophet, Isaiah:

"*By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive.*" (14)

For centuries, Israel had resisted God's voice. Prophets had spoken. Warnings had come.
Calls to repentance had echoed throughout the land.

Yet hearts had grown dull. Ears had become heavy. Eyes had closed because men repeatedly refused the light placed before them. Rejected truth eventually produces spiritual blindness.

And perhaps the most tragic words were these:
"*Lest at any time they should see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.*" (15)

Their Messiah stood before them. The King Himself had come. Yet many would reject Him.

But then Jesus turned to His disciples and spoke words filled with grace:
"*Blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.*" (16)

The mystery was not hidden because God delights in secrecy. It was hidden because truth is revealed only to those who desire it, who seek it.

Jeremiah 29:13 KJV - "*And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.*"

Then Jesus added:
"*...many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.*" (17)

The disciples were indeed gifted in seeing the Messiah and His miracles. They were blessed with knowledge and understanding that many before them desired and dreamed of.

The Parable of the Sower Explained

The disciples had heard the story. A farmer, a field, and seeds scattered across the land.
But Jesus drew them away from the crowd and unveiled the mystery hidden beneath the parable.
The story was never about agriculture. The seed was not mere seed, but Jesus' words.
The soil was not farmed earth, but the heart.
The field was not a plot of land, but the world.
Jesus said:

"*Hear ye therefore the parable of the Sower.*" (18)

Jesus now explained the heavenly meaning hidden within the earthly story.
And suddenly every piece began to come alive.

The seed represented the Word of the kingdom—the message of God going forth into the world that the kingdom of heaven was at hand if Israel would believe it and receive it. What gospel did Jesus and the disciples preach? The gospel of the kingdom.

Matthew 4:23 KJV - "*And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom...*"
Mark 1:15 KJV - "*...The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.*"

But the issue was never the power of the seed, the word, or the gospel.
The issue was the condition of the ground upon which it fell, the heart.
For the same seed was sown everywhere.
Yet not every heart responded the same. Not all ground is fertile.
First came the wayside, the hardened path. Ground beaten down by countless footsteps.
So compacted that the seed never penetrated beneath the surface.

Jesus explained:

"*When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart.*"

The seed landed. The words were heard.
But before it could sink deeply into the heart, the enemy came. Like birds descending swiftly upon exposed grain, Satan snatched away what had been sown.

The problem was not a lack of hearing.
Their heart had become a trampled pathway, hardened to spiritual matters wherein the seed could not take root. The seed could not penetrate the hardened soil. The word cannot penetrate the hardened heart.

Psalm 10:17 "*LORD, thou hast heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear*:"

Only a humble heart receives the word of the Lord.

Then Jesus spoke of another, the rocky ground. Shallow earth spread thin over hidden stone.
At first, it looked promising. The seed sprang up almost immediately. Green shoots burst forth with sudden enthusiasm. Life appeared. Everything looked hopeful.
But underneath, there was no depth.

Jesus explained:

"*He that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon (immediately) with joy receiveth it.*" (20)

Joy came quickly. Excitement appeared. Emotions surged.
But true roots require depth. And depth requires humility, patience, and endurance.

For when the sun rose, and heat intensified, the underlying weakness became visible.

"*Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while.*" (21)

Those words carry sadness. Because temporary faith is quickly tested. Tribulation comes. Pressures arrive. Affliction appears. Persecution rises because of the Word itself.
And what once looked alive suddenly withers beneath the heat.

Not because the seed failed—but because there were no roots beneath the surface. The word of God was not allowed to take root in the stony heart. The joy expressed upon hearing the Word was superficial and casual, not heartfelt and inspiring.

Then came the third soil, which is among thorns.
This ground had potential. The seed entered. Roots began to grow. Life emerged.
But something else was already present. Something hidden and competing.

Jesus explained:

"*He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word…*" (22)

The Word entered the heart, but it was not alone. The worries of life moved beside it. The cares of this world. The pursuit of riches. The distractions of earthly desires and pleasures.

And slowly… Silently…
The thorns wrapped themselves around the growing plant. Not overnight. Not suddenly.
But gradually.

The worries multiplied. The ambitions increased. The distractions consumed attention until the Word itself became crowded, choked out, and silenced. Not by persecution. Not by opposition. But in everyday life.
The deceitfulness of riches promised satisfaction yet delivered emptiness.
And the plant that should have borne fruit remained barren.

Then Jesus spoke of the final soil. The good ground. Not perfect ground, but prepared ground.
Humble ground. Receptive ground.

"*He that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it…*" (23)

The seed entered deeply. Roots extended downward. Life grew steadily.
Even though trials, storms, and heat came, this soil held firm. Because true faith produces fruit.
Not merely emotion. Not mere excitement. Not temporary enthusiasm.
But fruit, a belief and acceptance of the word in the heart, leading to a changed life.

Real evidence. Visible transformation. Some thirtyfold. Some sixtyfold. Some a hundredfold.
Each had a different calling, yet all bore fruit.
As the disciples listened, they realized something astonishing:
The parable was never about four different kinds of seed.
The seed never changed. The Sower never changed. Only the soil changed.
And even now, across every generation, the Sower still walks through the field of humanity.

The Word still goes forth. The seed is still scattered.
And every heart still answers the same question:

What kind of ground am I?

The Wheat and the Tares

The crowds still stood along the shoreline. The waves gently moved against the edge of the boat.
The people listened. Some leaned in carefully. Others only curious.

Then Jesus spoke another parable:
"*The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field.*" (24)

A farmer walked across fertile land beneath the morning sun. In his hand was seed carefully chosen.

Pure seed. Good seed.

Nothing corrupt. Nothing mixed. Nothing harmful.

The field had been prepared. The seed was scattered.
And when the work was complete, the farmer departed, trusting the natural process hidden beneath the soil.

Then Jesus spoke words that must have caused His listeners to pause:

"But while men slept..." (25)

Night had fallen. Darkness covered the field. Silence settled across the land.
Yet while eyes were closed and vigilance faded... another figure entered the scene.
Not a friend. Not a servant. But an enemy.
Quietly, he walked through the darkness. Silently, he carried his own seed.
Not wheat. But Tares.
Imitation grain. Counterfeit plants. Appearing genuine at first glance, but later bearing no grain.
Under the cover of night, he scattered corruption among the wheat. Then he disappeared. No announcement. No warning. Only deception.

And when morning came, no one noticed. Days passed. Rain fell. Sunlight warmed the earth. The field began to grow. Tiny green shoots pushed upward from the soil. Everything appeared normal. Life was emerging. Growth had begun.

But then something strange happened. As the wheat matured, another plant appeared beside it.

Something foreign. Something unexpected. Something that had not come from the hand of the farmer.

The servants stared in confusion.

"Master..."
Their question carried both surprise and concern:
"*Didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? From whence then hath it tares*?" (27)
The servants knew something was wrong. The farmer had sown only good seed.
The problem was not the seed. The problem was not the field. Something else had entered unnoticed.
And with only a few solemn words Jesus revealed the source:

"*An enemy hath done this.*" (28)

Not by chance. Not an accident. Not natural causes. An enemy.
Deliberate corruption. Intentional deception.
The servants immediately offered a solution.
"*Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up*?" (28)

Let us pull them out, remove them, separate the counterfeit from the genuine immediately. Destroy the problem now.

But the farmer answered:

"*Nay.*"

For the roots had already become intertwined. The wheat and the tares had grown together.
And in trying to remove the false, they would also uproot the true.

So he said:

"*Let both grow together until the harvest.*" (30)

Grow up together, side by side. Under the same sun. In the same field. Until the appointed day.
Because the harvest reveals what growth often conceals. The day would come when separation would happen. Not by human hands. Not by human wisdom. But by the Lord of the harvest Himself.

For while men see outward appearances... the Master sees what lies beneath. And perhaps the listeners looked at one another that day and wondered:
Who are the wheat?

Who are the tares?
For Jesus was revealing a mystery larger than agriculture. A truth reaching through every generation.
For wherever God plants truth... the enemy plants lies.
Wherever light shines... darkness lurks nearby.
Wherever God builds... the adversary attempts corruption.
And until the harvest comes... both continue growing together.

But the day of separation is coming when all shall be exposed and judged.

The Wheat and Tares Explained

The crowds had departed. The shoreline had grown quiet.
The voices that once filled the air slowly faded into the distance as evening approached. The multitudes had heard the parables... but many left carrying only stories.

Jesus entered the house, and His disciples came to Him privately. There was urgency in their voices.
For one parable lingered heavily upon their minds. The story of the tares in the field. The enemy. The harvest.

And they asked:

"*Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field.*" (36)

The crowds had heard the story. But now the King Himself would unveil the mystery to His disciples.
And suddenly the earthly scene gave way to a far greater reality.

Jesus said:

"*He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man.*" (37)

The Sower was not merely a farmer; he was Christ Himself.
The One who came into the world, planting truth and righteousness. Planting the children of the kingdom.

Then Jesus said:

"*The field is the world.*" (38)

Not merely Israel, but humanity itself. Across generations. Across kingdoms. Across all the earth.
And within that vast field, seeds were continually being planted. But then came a startling revelation:

"*The good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one.*" (38)

The enemy had his own planting, his own counterfeit work. His own imitation harvest. Not everything growing in the field belonged to God. Not everyone standing among the wheat was truly wheat.

For Satan had entered the field. Not to create something obviously evil. But something deceptively similar. Counterfeits growing beside the truth. Imitations standing near the genuine. Looking alike. Growing together until the appointed day.
Then Jesus revealed the identity of the enemy:

"*The enemy that sowed them is the devil.*" (39)

No mystery remained. Behind the corruption stood a real adversary. A deceiver. A destroyer. Satan himself. One who had opposed God from the beginning. And his evil work had been unfolding silently throughout the ages.
Then the scene shifted forward in time. Far beyond Galilee. Far beyond that present moment.

Jesus said:

"*The harvest is the end of the world.*" (39)

The harvest. A day of reckoning. A moment when hidden things would be revealed. A day when separation would finally come, the tares would be divided from the wheat, evil from the good.

And Jesus said:

"*The reapers are the angels.*" (39)

Not mere men. Not earthly governments. Not religious institutions. But Holy Angels. Servants of Heaven sent forth by divine command. And suddenly the field that once seemed ordinary became terrifyingly solemn.

For Jesus said:

"*As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world.*" (40)

"*The Son of man would send forth His angels.*"
"*And they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity*;" (38)

All deception. All lawlessness. All rebellion. Everything hidden. Everything counterfeit. Everything false. Nothing would escape His eyes. Nothing would remain concealed beneath the appearance of light and truth.
John the Revelator wrote of this: "*And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.*" Revelation 14:15-16.

Then came Jesus' words of dreadful warning:

"*And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.*" (42)

The disciples stood speechless. For the One speaking these words was not a prophet of doom. Not merely a teacher. This was Jesus. Gentle in mercy. Patient in grace. Yet unflinching in truth. Because the Judge of all the earth sees beyond appearances.
John also wrote:
"*And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.*" Revelation 20 verse 15.
But then, after judgment came hope. Light broke through the darkness.

Jesus said:

"*Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.*" (43)

Shine as the sun. No more mixture. No more deception. No more counterfeit kingdom. No more enemy sowing corruption by night.
Only righteousness, truth, and the glory of the King.
And then Jesus ended with words that echoed like thunder:

"*Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.*" (43)

Not merely hear the words, but heed the warning. Hear the truth and grasp it with your heartstrings. Like water on parched earth. Let His word dwell in you richly.

Because the field is still here. The wheat still grows. The tares remain. The enemy still works.

But the harvest is still coming.

This begs the question. When does the separation occur?

For the Church, the body of Christ, the Rapture will separate us from this present evil world just prior to the 7-year Tribulation.

However, Israel will suffer the time of Jacob's trouble, Daniel's 70th week, the 7-year Tribulation. The separation for Israel, the children of the kingdom, occurs after Jesus second coming at the end of the 7-year Tribulation. At that time, the reapers, His angels, shall gather out of His kingdom, the world, all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire, hell's fire, where there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth."

Then the wheat, the children of the kingdom, saved Israel, will enter the kingdom prepared for them by the Father from the foundation of the world:"

During the Millennium, Jesus reigns over the entire world, not just Israel.

Revelation 11:15 KJV - "*And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.*"

Everything on planet earth offensive to Jesus Christ will either be removed or destroyed! Jesus' reign begins with the Millennial Kingdom but continues "for ever and ever," both on this earth and the new earth and New Jerusalem to come.

The Mustard Seed

Again, Jesus spoke to the multitude in parables.
The sea stretched quietly behind Him.
The crowds listened along the shoreline, unaware that the words they heard contained mysteries concerning Israel, the kingdom, and the ages yet to come.

And Jesus said:

"*The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed…*"

A mustard seed. Tiny. Insignificant in outward appearance. Small enough to be overlooked entirely.
Yet hidden within that seed was the potential for astonishing growth.
And Jesus planted that image before the people because the kingdom being offered to Israel had arrived in humble form. The King Himself stood before them.
Not clothed in earthly glory. Not accompanied by angelic armies. Not seated upon David's throne in Jerusalem.

But humbly walking among fishermen. Teaching beside the sea. Healing the sick. And calling Israel to repentance. The kingdom had been announced.

"*The kingdom of heaven is at hand.*"

The prophets had spoken of it for centuries. Isaiah foresaw it. Zechariah prophesied the coming King.
The promises to David pointed toward it.
Yet when the King came unto His own... His own received Him not.
Israel looked for visible power. National exaltation. Immediate deliverance from Rome.
But instead, they rejected the One sent to bring the kingdom.
The religious leaders hardened their hearts. The nation stumbled in unbelief.
And because of that rejection, the kingdom did not arrive in its promised glory in the first century.
The throne of David was not established. The nations were not subdued. The wolf did not dwell with the lamb. Jerusalem did not become the center of the earth's government. In fact, years later, Jerusalem was ransacked, and the Temple destroyed.

The prophetic kingdom spoken by the prophets was postponed.

The seed had been planted... but the full tree had not yet appeared.
For first would come rejection. Then the cross. Then Jerusalem's judgment.
Then long centuries in which the kingdom remained in mystery form while the King Himself sat at the right hand of the Father awaiting the appointed time.
But the story of the mustard seed does not end in smallness.

Jesus said:

"*When it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree.*"

The day is coming when the King, once rejected by Israel, will return in power and great glory.
Not hidden. Not lowly. Not riding a borrowed donkey.
But descending from heaven on a white steed as the Son of David, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords.

Then the kingdom will no longer remain unseen.
The stone cut without hands from Daniel's vision will strike the kingdoms of this world.
The Gentile powers will fall. The throne of David will be established in Jerusalem.
Israel will be restored.
And the kingdom will expand across the earth like a mighty tree rising from the smallest beginning.
Then the imagery of the tree reaches its fullness.
Strong branches spreading outward.

Nations coming under its shelter. The governments of the earth submitting to the reign of Christ.
Peace flowing outward from Jerusalem. The knowledge of the Lord covering the earth as the waters cover the sea.
What once appeared insignificant beside the shores of Galilee will fill the whole world.
For God often begins with what man despises.
A mustard seed. A carpenter's son. A rejected King.
Yet hidden within those humble beginnings was the future government of the entire earth.
And though Israel rejected the kingdom in that generation... the promises of God have not failed.
The seed still lives. The King still reigns in heaven.
And the mighty tree is still coming.

Well, that concludes Part one. Please watch Part two, wherein I continue with the parables of the leaven, the hidden treasure, the pearl of great price, and the dragnet.

Matthew 13 – The Parables Part 2

The Leaven

Again, Jesus spoke another parable unto them.

The crowds still stood along the shore listening to stories that seemed simple on the surface... yet concealed mysteries hidden since the foundation of the world.

And Jesus said:

"*The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven...*" (33)

Leaven. A strange image. Unexpected. Throughout the Scriptures, leaven often symbolizes corruption spreading silently through that which it touches. At Passover, Israel was commanded to remove leaven from their houses. It symbolized impurity. Defilement.
Something hidden that works beneath the surface until its influence spreads through the whole.
Yet now, Jesus used that image to reveal another mystery about the kingdom's course and destiny

"*The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took...*"

Quietly. Secretly. Almost unnoticed.
No armies marched. No visible throne appeared. No earthly kingdom arose in glory.
Instead, something hidden began working beneath the surface of history.
The King had come unto Israel.

The kingdom had been announced.
But the nation rejected her Messiah.

And because of that rejection, the glorious kingdom promised by the prophets did not immediately appear.

Instead, a mystery period unfolded. A work hidden during the absence of the King.

And Jesus said the woman:

"*hid [the leaven] in three measures of meal...*"

Hidden. Not openly displayed. Placed within the meal, where its influence would quietly spread.
Then came the solemn words:

"*Till the whole was leavened.*"

Slowly... silently... the leaven permeated everything.
Yet during the absence of the King, the leaven became powerless, ineffective, and lifeless.

What began in simplicity in Galilee would become dormant, replaced by another set of mysteries revealed to the apostle Paul—the Dispensation of Grace, the Church, the body of Christ.

The leaven would not live again and spread until the King's return.
Not because the kingdom promises had failed... but because the King Himself had been rejected.
The visible manifestation of the kingdom was to await a future day.

Yet even this unfolding mystery did not escape the sovereign plan of God.
In this parable, the "kingdom of heaven" was likened to the leaven. But symbols do not always carry the same meaning in every context. A lion can symbolize Satan seeking whom he may devour, yet Christ is also called the Lion of the tribe of Judah. A serpent can represent evil, yet Moses lifted up a brazen serpent that foreshadowed Christ. The meaning of a symbol must ultimately be determined by its context rather than by every other occurrence throughout Scripture.

In this parable, the emphasis is not on the spread of corruption, but on the permeation of righteousness. The Lord's focus is that the leaven continues its work "till the whole was leavened." Within the framework of Matthew 13, this can be understood as a picture of the Kingdom's eventual expansion throughout the earth after the return of the King. Though the Kingdom was postponed because of Israel's rejection of her Messiah, it will one day be established exactly as the prophets foretold. Beginning from Jerusalem, the reign of Christ will extend outward until the knowledge of the

Lord fills the earth as the waters cover the sea. The entire world will come under the righteous influence of the King.

Matthew then declared:

"*All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables...*"

The people heard stories about fields, seeds, pearls, trees, and leaven.
But hidden within those stories were prophetic truths concerning Israel, the rejection of the King, the long mystery period, and the coming kingdom still awaiting fulfillment.

"*And without a parable spake he not unto them.*"

For Israel's leaders had hardened their hearts. The nation stood at a turning point.
And now truth itself became veiled within parables—revealed to believing hearts, yet concealed from those refusing the light.

Then Matthew reached back to the prophets:

"*That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet...*"

"*I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.*"

Secrets hidden across the ages. Mysteries not fully revealed in the days of Isaiah, Daniel, or Ezekiel.
Truths concerning the kingdom's postponement. Its hidden course.
And its future glorious fulfillment when the rejected King finally returns.

And the hidden kingdom that now awaits will one day appear openly in power and glory across the whole earth. This is Israel's Millennial Kingdom!

The Hidden Treasure

The crowds had heard many parables that day. Seeds scattered across fields. Wheat growing beside tares. Mysteries hidden beneath ordinary things. But then Jesus spoke only a single sentence—
brief... simple... yet carrying immeasurable depth.

"*Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field.*" (44)

A treasure hidden. Not displayed openly before the world. Not resting upon a pedestal for all to admire. But buried beneath ordinary ground where few would think to search.
And somewhere in that field, a man made a discovery that changed everything.

Perhaps he was merely laboring beneath the heat of the day. The field looked ordinary—common soil, rocks, nothing outwardly remarkable. Yet hidden beneath that ground rested wealth beyond imagination.

Then suddenly, his hand struck something solid. A sound different from stone. A discovery unexpected. He began clearing away the dirt. Slowly. Carefully.
And there before him lay a treasure. Not small riches. Not temporary wealth easily dwindled in the marketplace. But a treasure so valuable that the moment he saw it, everything else in life lost its former importance.

Jesus said:

"*Which when a man hath found, he hideth...*"

Why? Because he understood something others did not. The field itself possessed unimaginable worth. Then came one of the most striking phrases in the parable:

"*And for joy thereof...*"

Joy. Not obligation. Not a reluctant sacrifice. Just Joy!
He was overwhelmed by what he had found. The treasure so surpassed everything he owned that selling all things suddenly seemed small by comparison.
The man was not mourning what he would give up.

"*And selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.*"

Everything. His possessions. His security. His former priorities. All surrendered for one purpose.
To obtain the treasure.
For once a man truly sees the value of the kingdom, the things of this world no longer appear the same.

The treasures men fight over... The riches they pursue... The kingdoms they build...
All begin to fade beside the surpassing worth of what God offers. And perhaps those listening that day wondered:
What is the treasure?
For hidden within the parable was a mystery concerning the kingdom of heaven itself.
Something concealed from the eyes of the proud. Something the religious leaders often overlooked.
Something hidden from those seeking earthly power and visible glory.

Because the spiritual things of God often do not arrive with outward trappings.
His treasure is often hidden from worldly eyes.
The proud walk across the field and see only dirt. The distracted see nothing at all.
But the one whose eyes are opened recognizes value where others see emptiness.
And once the treasure is truly seen, everything changes.
For no earthly possession compares to what God has prepared for those who love Him.
No temporary wealth compares to eternal riches in glory.

No kingdom of man compares to the kingdom of heaven. And the greatest tragedy is not that the treasure is hidden. The tragedy is that so many walk past the field every day... never realizing what lies beneath their feet.

The Pearl of Great Price

Again, Jesus spoke of the kingdom of heaven. Not with armies. Not with thrones. Not with outward splendor. But with a single pearl.

"*Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls.*" (45)

The listeners understood the value of pearls. In the ancient world, pearls were treasures of immense worth. Rare. Costly. Sought after by kings and wealthy merchants. Men crossed dangerous seas searching for them. Divers plunged into dark waters, risking their lives for even the possibility of discovering one of great beauty.
And Jesus described a merchant devoted to the search. This was not a casual observer.
Not a man wandering aimlessly through marketplaces.
He was seeking. Searching.
Looking intently for pearls of great value. Day after day he examined pearls. Some beautiful.
Some valuable. Some very impressive. Yet none fully satisfied the longing of the search.
Until one day... everything changed.

Jesus said:

"*Who, when he had found one pearl of great price...*"

One pearl. Not many. Not a string. Just One.
Yet this pearl surpassed them all. Its beauty eclipsed every lesser treasure. Its worth exceeded all comparison.
The moment the merchant saw it, he immediately understood:
Nothing else he possessed could equal what now lay before him.
And then came the astonishing response.

"*He went and sold all that he had, and bought it.*"

All. Not part. Not half. Everything.
Every possession. Every lesser treasure. Every earthly security.
All exchanged for one pearl.
And like the hidden treasure, Jesus again revealed the incomparable worth of the kingdom of heaven.
For when a soul truly sees the value of what God offers, the things once prized begin to lose their hold.

The world spends its strength pursuing temporary riches. Power. Fame. Pleasure. Possessions.
The lust for more never wanes.
Yet all of it fades. All of it passes away.
But the kingdom of heaven contains a treasure beyond measure.
A beauty untouched by corruption. A glory untouched by time.
And unlike earthly treasures that perish, this treasure is eternal.
Perhaps the merchant had searched his entire life for something worthy of complete devotion.
Many do.
Some search through wealth. Others through religion. Others through knowledge, ambition, or pleasure.
Always searching. Always pursuing. Yet never fully satisfied.
Until the soul encounters something infinitely greater.
For once the kingdom is truly seen... once Christ Himself is truly seen... everything changes.
The heart recognizes a value beyond earthly comparison.
And surrender no longer feels like loss. It becomes joy.
For what is abandoned can never compare to what is gained.
And perhaps the listeners stood silently that day, wondering:
Have we recognized the pearl?
Or are we still chasing lesser treasures while the greatest treasure stands before us unnoticed?
For many looked directly at Christ... yet failed to perceive His true worth.
The King stood before them speaking words of life. And still many walked away.
Because the value of the kingdom is only understood by those whose eyes have truly been opened.
Some believe the pearl of great price is the Church. Yet Jesus reiterates that all the parables He spoke that day pertain to the "kingdom of heaven," Israel's earthly kingdom, the coming Millennial Kingdom.

The Dragnet

As the day drew to a close, Jesus spoke one final parable concerning the kingdom of heaven. The fishermen standing among the crowd would have immediately understood the imagery.

They had lived it. Worked it. Seen it countless times upon the waters of Galilee. But this was no ordinary fish story.

Jesus said:

"*Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind.*"

A great dragnet. Cast broadly across the waters. Not selecting one fish here and another there. Not choosing only the desirable.
The net swept through the sea, gathering everything within its reach. Good fish. Bad fish. Large and small. Valuable and worthless.
All drawn together into the same net. The fishermen listening that day could picture it perfectly.
The ropes stretching across the water. The net sinking beneath the surface. Then slowly being drawn toward shore.
What disappeared beneath the waves eventually emerged into the light. Nothing remains hidden forever.

And therein lay the mystery. For the sea often represents the restless nations of the world. And throughout the centuries, the message of the kingdom would go forth among men.
Its influence touching every tribe, nation, people, and tongue. The net would gather broadly.
Many would associate themselves with the kingdom. Many would come into the sphere of its influence.
Many would claim allegiance to God. Yet not all within the net truly belonged to Him.
For mixture has been a recurring theme.
Wheat and tares.
Good fish and bad fish.
The outward sphere containing both genuine and counterfeit. Then Jesus moved the scene forward to the end. The net had completed its work. The harvest had arrived. The fishermen sat upon the shore.
And now came the separation.

Jesus said:

"*Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.*"

The gathering was not the end. The separation was. The fish were not judged while swimming in the sea. They were judged when brought to shore. And so it shall be at the end of the age. For the King sees what men cannot. He knows the genuine from the counterfeit. The faithful from the false.
The righteous from the wicked.
And then Jesus removed all uncertainty concerning the meaning.

"*So shall it be at the end of the world.*"

The end of the age. The climax of history. The moment toward which all prophecy moves.
Not gradual improvement. Not mankind ushering in the kingdom through human effort. But divine intervention. A final separation of good and evil.

Jesus continued:

"*The angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just*."

Just as in the parable of the wheat and tares. Just as at the harvest. Just as throughout the prophetic Scriptures. The angels become the agents of separation. Not human governments. Not religious institutions. Not earthly courts. The angels of God execute the judgment of the King.

Then came words both solemn and sobering:

"*And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth*."

The same warning appears again. The same certainty. The same finality. For God's judgment is not symbolic. It is real. The separation is real. The destiny of the righteous and the wicked is not the same. Just as the bundled tares, the bad fish are cast into hell's fire. But the wheat and the good fish enter the kingdom.
And Jesus spoke these things not to terrify, but to warn. Not to condemn, but to call men to repentance while there is still time.

The dragnet would not remain in the sea forever. The day of separation would come. The shore of eternity awaited. Then Jesus turned to His disciples and asked:

"*Have ye understood all these things*?"

What a question.

Not merely, have you heard? Not merely, have you listened? But, have you understood?
For understanding is what separates hearing from believing.
And they answered:

"Yea, Lord."

Then Jesus concluded with one final lesson.

"*Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder...*"

A steward. A keeper of treasures. One entrusted with truth.

"*...which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.*"

The prophets had spoken of the kingdom long ago. Those were the old treasures. But now Christ had revealed mysteries hidden from previous generations.
Those were the new treasures. And the faithful disciple would understand both.
The old and the new. The prophecies and the mysteries. The promises and their future fulfillment.
For the kingdom of heaven is not understood by examining only one part of God's Word.
It is revealed when all the treasures of Scripture are brought together.
And as Matthew 13 closes, the message is clear.
The King has come.
The kingdom was offered.
The nation rejected Him.
Mysteries were revealed.
The age of mixture continues.
The Sower continues to sow.
Wheat and tares grow together.
The mustard seed awaits.
The leaven of righteousness rests.
The treasure is still hidden from Israel's eyes.
Israel's pearl has yet to be found.
The net still gathers.
But the story does not end there.
The harvest is coming.
The judgment shore is approaching.
The King will return.
The separation will occur.
The golden wheat will shine with God's glory.
The mustard tree will blossom.
The hidden treasure will be found.
The pearl of great price will arise.
And the kingdom of heaven, long promised by the prophets, will finally appear in all its glory.
For those who have ears to hear... let them hear.

Conclusion

What Do These Seven Parables Mean for Believers Today?

As we conclude our study of Matthew 13, an important question remains.
Since these parables primarily concern Israel, the Kingdom of Heaven, and the future establishment of Christ's earthly reign, what relevance do they have for us today as members of the Church, the Body of Christ?
The answer is found in rightly dividing the Word of Truth.
While these parables do not directly reveal the mystery of the Body of Christ, they nevertheless contain spiritual principles that remain profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness.
We must first recognize what these parables are not. They are not instructions concerning the Rapture.
They are not revelations concerning the Body of Christ.
They are not explanations of the heavenly position of believers seated with Christ in heavenly places.
Those truths would later be revealed through our Apostle Paul.
Instead, Matthew 13 unveils the course of Israel's Kingdom Program during the King's rejection and absence, and His return.
Yet the principles contained within these parables remain remarkably relevant.
The Parable of the Sower reminds us that the Word of God still encounters different responses today.
Some hear and reject.
Some receive with temporary enthusiasm.
Some allow the cares of this world to choke spiritual growth.
While others receive the Word and bear fruit.
As believers under grace, we are called to be good ground—allowing God's Word to dwell richly within us and produce spiritual fruit through the power of the Holy Spirit.
The Wheat and the Tares remind us that truth and error coexist in the present age.
Counterfeit Christianity exists alongside genuine faith.
False teachers operate beside faithful ministers.
We are therefore called to exercise discernment, testing all things by the Scriptures rather than outward appearances.
The Mustard Seed reminds us that God often begins His work through seemingly insignificant means.
A handful of apostles. A persecuted remnant. A converted Pharisee named Saul.
From small beginnings, God accomplishes great purposes.
Though we await a heavenly calling rather than an earthly kingdom, we still serve a God who delights in using what appears weak in the world's eyes.
The Leaven reminds us to remain vigilant against doctrinal corruption. False teaching rarely arrives openly. It spreads quietly. Subtly. Gradually.
Paul repeatedly warned the Church concerning leaven-like influences that could corrupt the simplicity that is in Christ.
Sound doctrine remains essential for every generation of believers.
The Hidden Treasure and the Pearl of Great Price remind us of the incomparable value of God's truth.
For the merchant, all other possessions became secondary once the pearl was found.
Likewise, the believer who truly understands God's grace recognizes that no earthly treasure compares to knowing Christ.

Nothing this world offers can equal the riches we possess in Him. Amen!
The Dragnet reminds us that a day of accountability is coming.
While the Church will not stand in the judgments described in Matthew 13, every believer will nevertheless appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ.
Our salvation is secure through faith in Christ alone, yet our service and stewardship will still be evaluated by the Lord. Some will gain rewards, others will suffer loss.
And perhaps that leads us to the greatest lesson of all.
The people in Matthew 13 waited for an earthly kingdom.
We wait for a heavenly calling.
They anticipated the return of the King to establish His throne upon the earth.
We await the shout, the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God.
They looked for the Kingdom of Heaven.
We look for our blessed hope, Jesus' glorious appearing.
Israel's hope is earthly.
Our hope is heavenly.
Israel awaits the coming kingdom.
The Church awaits the coming Savior.
Yet both hopes ultimately center upon the same glorious Person—the Lord Jesus Christ.
The King rejected in Matthew 13 will one day return.
He will gather His Church unto Himself.
He will resume His dealings with Israel.
He will establish His earthly kingdom.
He will sit upon David's throne.
And He will reign forever and ever.
Until that day, we continue as ambassadors of His grace.
We proclaim reconciliation.
We preach Christ crucified.
We hold fast to sound doctrine.
And we look upward, waiting for that blessed moment when the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven.
For our next prophetic event is not the Kingdom. It is the Rapture.
And after the Church is gathered home, God's Kingdom Program with Israel will once again move toward its glorious fulfillment.
Even so, come, Lord Jesus.