

Session 12 Seven Parables of the Kingdom (Mt. 13)

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. In this session, we will look at seven parables about the kingdom of God that Jesus taught by the Sea of Galilee, autumn AD 28 (Mt. 13:1-52; Mk. 4:1-34; Lk. 8:4-18).

In Matthew 13 Jesus gave seven parables of the kingdom. Now that is a significant designation, “parables of the kingdom,” because in total He gave forty or fifty parables depending on how you define them—different people identify and define a parable differently—but about forty or fifty. Here He gave what He called the parables of the kingdom so that His people would have the right expectation about how the kingdom operates in their generation. This is an area where the enemy really attacked Israel with confusion. On this issue Israel ended up confused and offended at the Lord because they had very wrong ideas about what God’s ideas were about how the kingdom would unfold.

After 2,000 years of church history this is still an issue that causes trouble for believers. They have wrong ideas about what God said He would do in their generation, because we are all wanting big and glorious and powerful. Now that dimension is part of God’s plan. What He says in these parables is that there is another dimension which He emphasizes even more. That is the small the work that is invisible, that is not perceived by others.

He went on to tell the nation of Israel here basically, “You have to understand how I am going to lead in the kingdom between now and the second coming.” He did not say it just that way, but I think even today in the Body of Christ we need to be clear about what He said He is going to do so that we are not aiming at something other than that. If we do, then we end up offended, or confused or perplexed about His leadership.

I taught on this subject—Matthew 13, the parables of the kingdom—many years ago, about thirty years ago. I was just reviewing my notes from a long time ago. I have really been touched by this chapter. In this last week, it really plumb-lined my heart just to say, “Yeah, yeah, I remember that.” Some things I actually let slip away in terms of having a biblical kingdom perspective, a realistic perspective.

The idea is not to be really positive or really negative, but to be accurate and biblical in our perspective. So, Jesus taught what is called the seven parables of the kingdom. It is found in three different chapters. Matthew 13 is the primary place. Mark 4 and Luke 8 supplement, but Matthew 13 is the primary passage you want to really anchor into.

- B. The religious leaders in Israel had publicly declared their animosity toward Jesus. Because of their rejection of Him, Jesus began to teach in parables that concealed new truths about the kingdom from those whose hearts were hardened against God.

Now the context is that the religious leaders of Israel had just publicly in the last few months declared their animosity to Him. They had been troubled by Him for a while, but now they are making it public that, “We are against Him.” There is no question. It is public, it is official, and it is throughout the whole land. Because of this new determination to reject the Messiah, Jesus began to teach in parables.

*I have this several times in the notes, but it is worth repeating several times. Jesus taught in parables for two reasons. He taught in parables to **reveal** the truth, and He taught in parables to **conceal** the truth. He taught in parables to make the truth easy for the people who had a heart of obedience, who were receptive. He taught in parables to make the truth confusing to the people that said no. Specifically, the parables of the kingdom are*

important because, if you do not have the right perspective of where things are going, you are going to be completely out of sync with what the Spirit is doing and how He is doing it in any given generation.

So, the new norm for Jesus when He talked to the leaders about what was really happening, He gave them parables they could not understand because their hearts were hardened against them. I have a few reasons for that in the notes which we will probably will not develop. I will leave that to you to read on your own.

Now having a right perspective is key to having right motivation. The enemy wants to destroy your motivation. He gets you into wrong expectation because, with the wrong expectation, if it does not happen, your heart gets offended at the Lord, or you get discouraged, or you get into despair, or you just want to quit. The enemy knows one of the best ways to get you to quit is to get you aiming at something that is not real. Proverbs 13:12 says, "Hope deferred makes the heart sick." The enemy wants your heart to be sick. He wants you not to understand what is happening right in front of you so that you get angry with the Lord or you get into despair or you get into offense.

- C. Matthew 13 contains seven parables about the kingdom—the first four were spoken to the crowds and the last three only to the disciples. Jesus spoke in parables both to *reveal and conceal* truth. That is, to make truth easier to understand for those who are receptive to Him and to hide truth from those who hardened their hearts against Him.

II. THE DANIEL 2 BACKDROP TO MATTHEW 13

- A. Daniel interpreted King Nebuchadnezzar's prophetic dream about a statue that represented four Gentile kingdoms that would arise—Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome (Daniel 2).

³¹"You, O king, were watching; and behold, a great image [Gentile kingdoms] ...³⁴ You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image... ³⁵Then [they] ...were crushed ...so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth... ⁴⁴the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed and...it shall break in pieces...all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever." (Dan. 2:31-44)

The key to understanding the message of these seven parables is that you have to go back to Daniel 2. If you do not go back to Daniel 2, you are not going to understand the confusion and the offense that Jesus was answering when He gave these parables, because even the obedient, the receptive, those really hungry for Him, had really wrong ideas. He was saying, in essence, "I am really going to pastor you right now. I am going to adjust your expectations so that you are not discouraged, in despair, or offended at me, so we can work together throughout your lifetime in any given generation."

So you have to go back to Daniel 2. It is a long chapter. I will just give a snapshot. Here the prophet Daniel interprets King Nebuchadnezzar's prophetic dream. The Babylonian king, the pagan king, has a dream of a statue or an image. I will not go through the dream in any kind of detail, though it is quite a fascinating chapter because it is a prophecy of what is going to happen in the earth in the future, many, many years from Nebuchadnezzar's time, which was about 500 years BC approximately. Nebuchadnezzar saw the statue, and he saw four Gentile kingdoms that would oppose Israel, that would be hostile towards Israel. God gave Daniel the same dream that God gave Nebuchadnezzar, so Daniel could tell the king both his dream and the interpretation as well. Nebuchadnezzar the king said, "Okay, tell me my dream. What was it?"

1. The “stone cut without hands” spoke of the kingdom of God being manifested on earth. The stone struck and completely destroyed the stature (the oppressive Gentile kingdoms), and then the little stone became a great mountain that filled the whole earth (Dan. 2:34-35).

Here in Daniel 2:31, Daniel says, “You were watching, and, behold, you saw a great statue, a great image. That is, you saw the next four Gentile empires, world empires.” Right in the middle of this dream, verse 34, a stone that was cut out without hands—very mysterious—this stone appeared that had no human origin. That stone we find out later is a symbolic of the kingdom of God, of Jesus’ kingdom. It is a stone that comes as a little stone, and it hits the big statue.

Nebuchadnezzar nods. Daniel says that when it struck the statue, the image, verse 35, all of these Gentile kingdoms were crushed. As a matter of fact, there was no trace of them. They were so totally annihilated that there was no trace of them anywhere. It goes on to say that the wind came and blew them away just like chaff, blew away every residue of those empires. The stone that struck the statue, the little stone, became a great mountain. It filled the whole earth. Now again it is talking about the kingdom of God under Jesus’ leadership, though Daniel or Nebuchadnezzar did not really have that kind of detail.

Verse 44, here is the bottom line. The God of heaven is going to set up a kingdom. That is the little stone. It is going to destroy all the other kingdoms, and it is going to fill the earth. This kingdom will never be destroyed. It will break into pieces all the evil kingdoms and institutions and shatter them. There will not be any evil to contend with. This little stone that becomes a mountain that fills the earth, that kingdom will go on forever and forever and forever. Really the main part of this is a prophecy of Jesus at the second coming. Israel did not have any idea that Jesus was coming first as a humble servant to die, and then 2,000 plus years later He comes as a conquering King. They only have one idea: He is coming to crush all the resisting powers, to remove sin.

2. Daniel 2:34-35 pictured a single cataclysmic event which ushered in God’s kingdom with power—as a stone that struck and shattered the oppressive governments. Thus, Israel was looking for Messiah who would totally remove all the opposing evil kingdoms on the earth.

This cataclysmic intervention in history is what we understand as the second coming. I mean, what do we believe? What does the Scripture say? Jesus is going to come in the sky with fire and angels. The Antichrist empire is going to be destroyed in a moment, driven off the earth. Satan thrown into prison for 1,000 years. I mean it is exciting! I mean we look forward to it! Well, this is what Israel was looking forward to at the first coming.

In the seven parables of the kingdom He is telling those who love Him, those who are receptive, that it is going to be very different from that. If you do not know that, you are going to be very susceptible to offense at God, to discouragement, to despair. You are going to not understand what God is doing if you do not grasp this.

So, Daniel 2 pictured a cataclysmic single event; it is the second coming of Christ. It was that event. All of Israel was looking for a Messiah who would come to the earth, and He would destroy all the Gentile empires. Rome was the fourth empire, and Rome was right there in power during Jesus’ generation. They thought, “Oh my goodness, this is fantastic! The King, the Anointed One, is going to destroy Rome, and the devil is going to be cast off the planet. Everyone is going to be healed and happy. The kingdom is going to explode, the power of the Holy Spirit! Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah!”

- B. John the Baptist spoke on this Daniel 2 theme of the kingdom of God coming to earth (Mt. 3:2-12). The Roman Empire was the fourth kingdom described in Daniel 2, so people assumed that John was proclaiming the time that God would overthrow Rome and establish His kingdom through Israel as He poured out His Spirit and judged the wicked like chaff burned by fire (Mt. 3:11-12). The destruction of Rome, the universal baptism of the Spirit, and the growth of the kingdom to fill the earth did not occur during Jesus' ministry as Daniel and John the Baptist indicated.

¹“In those days John the Baptist came preaching...²saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!”... ¹¹He who is coming after me...will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹²His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” (Mt. 3:1-12)

Well, to add to some of the confusion that was in the mindset of the mainstream of the day, they did not understand God's Word in detail. They had just only broad strokes, and they had wrong ideas. John the Baptist spoke about this kingdom. They are all thinking Daniel 2. John means Daniel 2, but John understands more. He knows the Messiah is a Lamb that is going to die to take away the sins. He gets that, but nobody else gets it. So, John the Baptist comes, and he says in Matthew 3, “Repent, the kingdom is at hand.” Now when he said that the kingdom is at hand, all of Israel is thinking of the Daniel 2 kingdom, but what we understand about the second coming. That was the image they had in their mind when John said, “The kingdom is here, moments away.”

They thought, “Oh my goodness! I mean it is going to be cataclysmic. Rome is going to be destroyed! Satan is going to be completely driven off the planet! Everything wrong is going to be made right! The hour is here!”

Verse 11, John said that the Messiah is going to baptize people with the Spirit. There is going to be this universal anointing of the Holy Spirit. See, that is in Joel 2. The prophets talked about this. Israel is getting more excited. Then the end of verse 12, “He is going to burn up all the chaff.” In the Daniel 2 dream that meant all the Gentile kingdoms are going to be blown away like chaff; they are all going to be destroyed and removed. Rome was the fourth and the final empire in that prophetic dream.

Israel was thinking, “This is so exciting! The time is now. Jesus is here, the Messiah. He is going to overthrow Rome. There is going to be a universal outpouring of the Holy Spirit. There is going to be overwhelming power. The kingdom is going to fill the earth through Israel.”

The problem is, this did not happen in Jesus' ministry. They are saying, “How can you be the Messiah, but not do Daniel 2.” In other words, “How could you be the Messiah, but not do the second-coming, millennial-kingdom stuff?”

In Matthew 13 Jesus is saying, “I am going to tell the people that really love Me how it is really going to be until I return. If they know this,”—He is really functioning as a pastor here, realigning their expectations so they will be faithful in the time between now and the second coming—“they would see the value of what was happening in their life.” They would not dismiss what God had entrusted to them as small and irrelevant. They would see it as God's purpose, as important to do with all of their heart. That God was watching, though it would be small. That it was His leadership that was ordaining this. Now Jesus does not tell us why things are going to be different or why He has this phase one of the kingdom and phase two is at the second coming and the thousand-year millennial kingdom. He does not tell us why. What He is really telling them in Matthew 13 is that this is something thought through from ages past. This is not a concession as if “the devil kind of rose up in power and now I have to adapt my plans.” He is explaining that it was always the plan from ages past to do it this way.

He does not tell us why He planned it that way, but He wants us to know it was planned, which means we can trust His leadership. It is thought through. It is good. It wins, no matter what His leadership says in these seven parables that give a very different picture of the kingdom that Israel was imagining. It is the picture of the kingdom that we are still walking in, and in valuing it we trust His leadership. We are not going to buy the devil's lies and cast off everything that is not big and exciting and dynamic. We are going to see the value of Jesus and the Father determining that the kingdom of God would operate in the ways that these seven parables talk about.

III. JESUS' PURPOSE FOR SPEAKING IN PARABLES (MT. 13:10-17)

- A. Jesus' explained why He taught with parables (13:10-17)—both to reveal *and* to conceal truth. By hiding truth from those who hardened their heart against Him, Jesus showed them grace in saving them from the added guilt of rejecting more truth and emboldening them to act against Him.

¹⁰And the disciples...said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?" ¹¹He answered..., "Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. ¹²For whoever has, to him more will be given...but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. ¹³Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. (Mt. 13:10-13)

Why did Jesus talk in parables? He tells us right here in the chapter. Verse 10, the disciples said, "Why? Why suddenly are You speaking in so many parables?" I mean He told a few parables up before that. They said, "Why is everything a parable now? Like, what are You doing?"

Jesus said, "Well, here is what I am really doing." Verse 11, He says, "It has been given"—it has been ordained by God—"for you to know the mysteries of the kingdom." That is the phrase I want you to take hold of, "the mystery of the kingdom," because the forty or fifty parables are not the mystery of the kingdom; these seven are specifically in a very specific way. The other ones are not so much about how the kingdom operates. It is in this way that these seven are unique.

Verse 12 gives us a very important principle that you could miss if you went by it fast. Jesus said, "Let Me tell you this. Whoever has"—whatever man or woman has a little bit of understanding and a little bit of receptivity, instead of being hardened, instead of resistance, if they have a little understanding because of a little bit of receptivity—"God is going to give them more." He is going to help them to be more zealous. He is going to give them more understanding. He is going to tweak and fashion and form their expectations so they are aiming at the right target, so they are not aiming at the wrong target and then get into despair and offense and just quit.

He says, "But to the people who do not have a receptive heart and do not really know what I am about to do, even the understanding they have is going to diminish. Even the little they have is going to go down. I am doing a brand-new thing and they will be clueless about it." Now He was talking about the hardened heart of the Pharisees. He goes on, "Therefore I am speaking in parables because seeing physically with their eyes"—the Pharisees saw His miracles but they do not see He is the King—"seeing physically they do not see spiritually." Hearing His great messages, they do not hear really from the heart and gain understanding about what God is doing in their generation.

- B. **Mysteries of the kingdom:** These parables revealed the mysteries of how the kingdom is manifested in this age. A “mystery” in the Scripture speaks of truths that were not revealed in the Old Testament, and only revealed in the New Testament. Paul defined a mystery as that “which has been hidden but now is revealed” to God’s people (Col. 1:26). It is not a truth difficult to understand, but a truth that can be understood only by divine revelation in the New Testament.

²⁶ **...the mystery which has been hidden from ages...but now has been revealed to His saints.”**
(Col. 1:26)

- C. **Seeing they do not see:** Many who “saw and heard physically” did not “see and hear spiritually.” The understanding that a person “has” or “does not have” is related to their receptivity. Jesus emphasized that truth is not neutral; it hardens or softens those who are exposed to it.

Here is a very important point Jesus is emphasizing: truth is not neutral. When you hear truth, like tonight you will hear truth, you will hear truth many times this week and next week and the week after, when you go home, when you come back, and you will hear truth from many different angles, truth will either harden you or it will soften you, but truth is not neutral.

If you hear it—let me just say it in a strange way—then you will make a slight movement towards Him or you will take a slight movement of becoming more familiar yet unresponsive and hardened by it. Jesus is saying that truth is not neutral. If you hear it, and you do not respond, it actually becomes more difficult to respond later because a little bit of hardness sets in.

- D. Jesus proclaimed that the kingdom had come, yet it came in an unexpected and hidden form that did not overwhelm the present order of life. It grows only as people respond in faith and obedience. Israel expected a cataclysmic event like what will happen when Jesus returns. However, Jesus’ message was that, though small, the kingdom promised in Daniel 2 is here in its early stage.

Jesus is telling them the kingdom has come. It came, Jesus said. John was right, the kingdom is here. The Daniel 2 kingdom is here, but it is unexpected, it has come in an unexpected way. It has come in a hidden way. You were expecting only one stage, but there are two stages. You were expecting to be overwhelmed with power. You were expecting this present order to be shaken dramatically in a way everybody can see. He explains that that is coming, but that is His second coming. He is coming now, but it is going to be subtle, unperceivable to perceptible to many, many people. They will not get it when it is right in front of them, but it will be here. He did not tell us back then that it would go on that way 2,000 plus years.

Here is the issue that Jesus emphasizes: the kingdom will only grow as people have faith and obedience to the small and little things that are before them. If they lose that, they will drift into dullness and unresponsiveness, if they do not see the value of the small and the little that is right in front of them that He is doing in their life and around them. That is the great offense of the kingdom of God. God values the small and the hidden that is right before us. We think, “Well, come on! When it gets big and exciting, I am in.”

He would say, “No, My leadership says differently. I am not going to tell you why I am doing it that way, but it is not a concession. It is not a plan of desperation. I have planned it this way from eternity past.” He would say, “The kingdom is coming, small now, but it is the kingdom promised by Daniel 2. It is here. It is here right now. It is here in Me, in My person,” Jesus would say.

- E. Jesus conveyed four aspects of “the mystery,” or four new truths, in the seven parables (Mt 13). He taught that *in this age* obedience to the kingdom will be voluntary and not enforced; second, that the kingdom will start very small, yet it will eventually fill the whole earth; third, its great value will be hidden to many; and finally, that God will separate the wicked from the righteous by His judgments at the end of the age. The mystery is that *the kingdom would be revealed in stages*.

It is just a kind of really easy to get it, just one, two, three, though this is a little simplistic. There are four aspects that were new to Israel. These were new ideas to them. Now the Pharisees did not even catch what He was saying. They just said He is crazy. They became more and more hardened. The judgement on them was they were unable to engage with His leadership because they were offended. They just got more and more offended because they did not receive the understanding.

The receptive said, “Oh, we have to readjust the way we are thinking because we want to be participating with You. We want to be doing what You are doing. We want to be involved with what You are involved with.” So this understanding shifted their expectations.

Number one, He taught that the kingdom-of-God obedience would be voluntary and not enforced. You see, in Daniel 2, at the second coming, when Jesus comes, the nations have to obey. Every knee will bow. There will be a tremendous mandate. It will not be “just kind of do what you want to do.” There will be an obedience in the nations. They will have a whole other standard of responsibility in that hour.

What He is also saying is that obedience will not overwhelm you, meaning you will not just wake up one day overwhelmed with consuming desire to obey and no temptations. Obedience will be step by step, and by faith. You will not always see it or feel it, but you are going to choose to obey.

They might have been thinking, “Ugh, we do not want to do that. We have already done that; that is kind of boring.”

Jesus would have said, “No, that is number one. It is not going to be the Daniel 2 second coming in fire and overwhelming power. It is going to be voluntary, and the obedience is going to be by faith, expressed in small things, day by day.” It is important that Jesus communicated, “That is how My Father and I have chosen to lead the kingdom until the second coming.”

Number two, it is going to start very small. As a matter of fact, it started with a group of twelve disciples in an upper room of 120 people. He encouraged them to hang in there because over time it is going to fill the whole earth. There will be a cataclysmic moment, but not for a while. It is going to grow slowly, little by little.

Number three, the kingdom has great value, but the value will not be obvious to most people. It will be obvious and clear to the people hungry to see it. You might ask, “Well, Lord, why don’t You make it more compelling?”

He would say, “I have reasons why I am doing it this way.”

That would be a whole other message at another time, to give some of my ideas as to why He has chosen to lead the 2,000 years between His first and second coming in this manner. I believe it is brilliant. It is His wisdom. It is not a mistake, it is not a concession, and it is not a last-minute desperation. The kingdom will be very valuable, but it will not be obvious to most people. It will seem boring and not that worth it. It goes slowly, but for the people who see it, it will touch them deeply on the inside.

Then number four—this is what Israel cared about the most—the wicked will be removed, i.e. Rome. Rome was oppressing them. They will be removed completely like Daniel 2 says, but not until the end of the age. There will be false religions. There will be evil institutions. Jesus would say, “I will let them go on for 2,000 years. I have a reason why I am allowing them to go on. Do not worry. In My timing, they will be gone forever and forever

and never appear again. Billions of years you will experience forever and forever without any of this present, without any of this hassling you or tempting you, but for now I am not going to take it away."

It is the question: why does God allow these evil men to get in power, evil institutions to get influence, money, and impact, and false religions to grow so big? "I told you back when I came the first time," the Lord could say, "that I was going to allow that. I have a purpose for it. Trust me, the Daniel 2 cataclysmic world filled with glory, the devil in prison, no sin on the earth, is coming, and it will be here in a minute. It is really important that you do it My way between now and then."

Now as humans we like big and exciting. I mean I do, you do. I do not want small, by faith, little by little, and try to see the value and really search it out. He would say, "I want you to do that. It has to do with love and the way we interact. It has something to do with My superior beauty being magnified in the midst of the devil giving his best temptations to the planet and My superiority triumphing over all of it. It has to do with you choosing, and that, when you had real choices for evil, you chose Me when it was small and even hard to see. You chose Me, and I will remember it forever and forever. I am giving this time of life as a theatre to choose love that I will remember forever and forever. I will remember your few years on the earth in the way that you chose Me."

- F. The earthly reign of Messiah on the throne of David was clearly revealed by the Old Testament prophets, so it was not a mystery. But in Matthew 13, Jesus introduced the spiritual reign of the kingdom which would increase progressively in the period between His first and second coming. His judgments would be manifested first against Satan's kingdom, not Rome or human institutions.

The earthly reign of Jesus on the throne of David, the millennial kingdom, is clearly revealed in the Old Testament, so it was not a mystery. A mystery is something that has not been revealed yet. The new information Jesus was introducing was a spiritual reign. We can feel like, "Okay, we like the spiritual, but we want the physical, earthly, demonstrative, overwhelming power. That is what we are into."

He might say, "Yeah, I am going to do a little of that here and there. I am going to do a whole lot of it when I return, but a little bit here and there, yes, through history. I am going to defeat the devil in your life. I will defeat Rome later; the outward political evil institutions I will remove them. For now, I am going to really focus on you getting victory over sin and Satan in your life."

- G. Jesus first emphasized spiritual victory empowering His people to enjoy relationship with Him and walk in love, humility, and purity.

There is a spiritual emphasis. There is a physical dimension even now, but it is not the primary dimension. He is emphasizing spiritual victory, not just dominion over the nations outwardly. Again a little bit that happens. There have been great breakthroughs in history here and there. When He returns, it is going to be ultimate victory. His primary issue now is spiritual victory, that He would have people who enjoy Him, who choose Him in the presence of real choices in difficulty. They walk with Him, they choose love, they choose humility, they choose purity when everything in the culture is opposite of those things. They do it because they love Him.

- H. God will release the greatest revival in the Church in the midst of the greatest escalating darkness.

²Behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and deep darkness the people; but the LORD will arise over you, and His glory will be seen upon you. (Isa. 60:2)

IV. THE SETTING AND SUMMARY OF THE SEVEN PARABLES OF THE KINGDOM

- A. The setting in which Jesus taught the parables of the kingdom (Mt. 13:1-3; Mk 4:1-2; Lk. 8:4): A great crowd by the Sea of Galilee forced Jesus to speak from a boat (Mk 3:9; Lk 5:3).
¹“On the same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the sea. ²And great multitudes were gathered together to Him, so that He got into a boat and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore. ³Then He spoke many things to them in parables... (Mt. 13:1-3)
- B. Parables one (the four soils) and two (wheat and tares) teach that kingdom obedience is not forced. The parable of the sower speaks of very different responses to the message of the kingdom.
- C. Parables three (mustard seed) and four (leaven) teach that the kingdom starts small and grows large. The leavening process highlights the internal and invisible dynamic of its global growth.
- D. Parables five (treasure) and six (pearl) teach that the kingdom’s value is not seen by most people.
- E. Parable seven (dragnet) teaches that the removal of the wicked will occur at the end of the age. The parable of the tares (parable two) also teaches this.

V. THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER AND THE FOUR TYPES OF SOIL (MT. 13:3-9, 18-23)

- A. The parable of the sower and the seed was spoken to the crowd (Mt.13:3-9; Mk 4:3-9; Lk 8:5-8). It described how the crowds responded to His teaching by illustrating the four types of responses people make to the preaching of God’s reign. These four types of soil were familiar to farmers in who scattered seeds as they walk through their fields. Jesus interpreted this parable in Mt. 13:18-23.
³“...Behold, a sower went out to sow...⁴some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them. ⁵Some fell on stony places...and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth. ⁶But...because they had no root they withered away. ⁷And some fell among thorns, and the thorns...choked them. ⁸But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.” (Mt. 13:1-8)
1. **Wayside:** Some seeds fell on the path where birds ate them before they germinated (13:4).
 2. **Stony places:** Seed that falls on stony ground may grow quickly in the shallow topsoil, but because it does not have deep roots to obtain the necessary moisture, it dies (13:5-6)
 3. **Thorns:** Seed that falls among the thorns will eventually be choked by the thorn bushes that squeeze out the young plant, robbing it of necessary light and nourishment, so it dies (13:7).
 4. **Good ground:** Some seed fell on good ground and produced a crop.

Now the first parable, and we will be ever so brief on each one of them. He starts off saying that there are four types of soil. There are four types of heart responses when the Word of God goes forward. He is illustrating the four responses, the four different categories, that people have when they hear the proclamation of Jesus’ leadership and the reign of God.

Verse 3, He says, "Here, let Me tell you a story. A farmer went out to sow to plant seed." The sower is the farmer. Verse 4—most of you are very familiar with this parable—"Some of the seed fell by the wayside."

Verse 5, "some of the seed fell on stony ground," on the pathway that was really hard. The surface was hard, and it had a lot of rock. It was the pathway where people walked. He said that in that kind of people the Word of God sprang up in them for a moment, but they had no root system. Though they were engaged with God for a short period of time, they developed no root system. So when pressures came, they said, "You know what? I am not really into the Jesus thing anymore."

That is, Israel was saying, "Wait! I thought You were coming with overwhelming power? We do not want to do this. We want 'glory to God, shun-dye-mahun-dye, power of God in the earth, here it is.' We do not want this."

He would say, "Yeah, well, it is going to be this way. I have My reasons."

Verse 7, the third type of response where the seed of the Word, the preaching of the reign of God, the leadership of Jesus will fall among thorns, not on a pathway with rocks on it, but among thorns. The thorn bushes will choke it out the seed.

Then there will be those that will respond. Among those that respond, some will respond thirty-fold. That is, they will go pretty much with all their heart, but they will hold back some. The Lord counted it as going with all of your heart. It is a thirty-fold response.

Others will say, "No, no, He is worthy! I want to give it all." Some will give sixty and others under the same message in the same environment in the same hour of history they will give hundred-fold responsiveness of their heart. They will bear fruit. The fruit He is talking about here is not outward impact. It is the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience. It is the Sermon on the Mount growing in their heart and in their character and life. They will have a hundred-fold responsiveness to God's leadership.

Now when we hear this, we say, "I want to be that one, the hundred-fold one."

Jesus would say, "I honor the thirty. I understand there is a lot going on down there. I honor the sixty greatly, and I honor the hundred." The desire in His heart is that we would not be content with thirty or sixty; we would want one hundred.

- B. In each case, the seed is the same, but the difference is in the receptivity of the soil or the heart response of each person who heard the message of the kingdom. The mystery is that the kingdom is here, but it currently does not have the irresistible power Daniel 2 described where it destroys wicked governments.

VI. THE INTERPRETATION OF THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER (MT. 13:18-23)

- A. Jesus explained the parable of the sower and seed (Mt. 13:18-23; Mk 4:13-20; Lk 8:11-15). The seed is the Word of God which fell on four types of soil, speaking of the responses to the Word.

¹⁹*When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one ...snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside.*

²⁰*But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; ²¹yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles. ²²Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful. ²³But he who received seed on*

the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.” (Mt. 13:19-23)

1. ***Wayside:*** Some seeds fell on the hard path where birds ate them quickly (13:4).
2. ***Stony places:*** Seed that fell on stony ground (13:5-6) immediately sprouted with an initial joyful response. This convert fell away, showing his response was not deep or genuine.
3. ***Thorns:*** Seed that fell among the thorns ultimately were choked out (13:7) by cares or anxiety of this world and the seduction of riches.
4. ***Good ground:*** The seed that fell on good ground produced an extraordinary crop. A tenfold yield was considered good. Genuine believers seek to obey the Word and thus become spiritually **fruitful**, though the measure of fruitfulness varies. Jesus commended all who received the message *regardless* of their measure of productivity.

Now the interpretation is pretty, pretty clear, because we have read this parable many times. I am sure that you have. He said, “Let Me tell you what that parable means.” This is the one parable I am spending more time on than the other ones. I will take three or four minutes on this one. He said, verse 19, “When somebody hears the Word, but the birds come and steal it”—You know like in the parable He said that the guy throws the seed, but the bird comes and picks the seed up before it ever germinates, before the roots even begin—He said, “Let Me tell you what that really is. There is a spiritual force behind this. There is a real devil, and he is really involved. It does not have any roots at all. It is stolen right away. For a minute, they think, ‘Huh.’ Within the hour it is gone, and they are on to something else.” He said, “The devil stole it. There is a spiritual force behind that. It is not just neutral.”

Verse 20, He explains the second type of response, the stony. He said that in the stony places were two pressures. Verse 21, there were tribulations and there were persecutions. These two pressures came against them, and they did not have a root system, meaning they did not really have any history of giving themselves to God, as in “You are worthy. I trust Your leadership. The trouble is trouble, but You are bigger than the trouble.” They do not have any dialogue with God in that way. There is no root system. When the tribulation came, which is pressures as life got hard, or if people came against them, they had no root in themselves. So, after a period of time they say, “You know what? It is not worth it. I am not pressing in.” He said that they fell away because they had no root system. They had two types of pressure: the tribulations and the persecutions.

The third type of heart response is the Word of God, the seed, fell among thorns. This was not about pressure coming. This was about temptation, anxieties, cares. One translation says anxieties; that is being overly concerned about their place and who likes them and who does not and how it is going and how things are, just consumed and preoccupied with cares, or they are seduced by money. Jesus said that those who are over preoccupied with cares and that seduction with money, whether they ever get it or not—many people that are covetous do not have money. People think that the rich people are covetous. Poor people are just as covetous as the rich; they just do not have the opportunity, but they have the heart engagement—Jesus said that they are unfruitful as they are captured by those temptations and cares. They want stuff, and they want money, and they are preoccupied with themselves. They cannot get into a steady dialogue with God, so their life is unfruitful, though they did say yes to Him for a season.

Verse 23, He explains that the fourth type of ground did bear fruit. Again, there are different measures of responsiveness. Jesus honors the thirtyfold, the sixty, and the hundred. He would say, “I honor all of

responsiveness that stays for the long-term.” He does not only honor the hundredfold; He honors the sixty and the thirty. What He is emphasizing is that they stayed long-term. That is the point. It was not for a few months or a few years. They stayed with it, even though they had various levels of fruitfulness.

- B. Two groups made a profession of faith that later proved superficial. They began well, but failed to continue to follow the Lord. Whether they are saved or lost is not the point emphasized in this parable. What matters most is not a person’s profession of faith, but their perseverance in faith.
- C. Summary:
 - 1. The first type heard the Word of God but the devil stole it.
 - 2. The second heard the Word of God but only had a shallow response to it
 - 3. The third type heard the Word of God but thorns of worldliness choked the life of that seed.
 - 4. The fourth type heard the Word of God and had varying degrees of fruitfulness.
- D. The next six parables that follow elaborate on this first parable by showing us other pictures of other aspects of the arrival and growth of the kingdom of God.
 - 1. The parable of the wheat and tares explains hypocrites and heretics in the Body.
 - 2. The third and fourth parables (mustard seed and leaven) shows how the kingdom advances.
 - 3. The fifth and sixth (treasure and pearl) show the great value and worthiness of the kingdom.
 - 4. The seventh (dragnet) reinforces the truth of the parable of the wheat and tares, showing the importance of that truth so that we are neither deceived nor offended.

VII. THE PARABLE OF THE WHEAT AND THE TARES (MT. 13:24-30)

- A. Many wondered why victory is not seen more clearly if the kingdom had arrived already? If Jesus is Messiah, why do so few receive His leadership? In the first parable, the sower used the same seed. Here we see two different kinds of seed being sown by two men—a farmer and his enemy.

²⁴“...The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; ²⁵but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares [weeds] among the wheat...²⁶ When the grain...produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. ²⁷So the servants of the owner...said to him, ‘Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?’ ²⁸He said to them, ‘An enemy has done this.’ The servants said to him, ‘Do you want us then to go and gather them up?’ ²⁹But he said, ‘No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. ³⁰Let both grow together until the harvest, and...I will say to the reapers, “First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn.”’” (Mt. 13:24-30)

Let’s go to the second parable. Now the second parable seems similar to the first, but it really is not. In the first parable we looked at, the seed is the same in four groups of people. The seed is good, and the ground is what is different, the heart response. In this parable, there is the Lord with good seed, but there is the devil with bad seed. The devil is raising up his own people in society. They are called the tares or the weeds. They are sons of the enemy.

They are not backslidden believers, but they are actually energized in a very specific way. Their ideas, their delusions, are energized by darkness in a very direct way. They do not know that. They just think they have new

ideas that are better than Christianity. They are under a spirit of delusion, and they are energized by these strong ideas that are contrary. This is the seeds of the tares.

Let's read the parable. Again, I am assuming most of you are familiar with the parable so I can be very brief with it. Verse 24, He starts, "There is a man"—and this man is Jesus, the farmer. He is the same Man of the first parable—"and he sows the good seed." Jesus just talked about how there are four types of responses to the good seed. He says, "There is another dimension to My kingdom I want you to know about. There is a real devil."

The devil does not just steal the good Word out of the heart. The devil plants evil ideas in people's hearts. He does not just steal the good seed; he plants the bad seed. He energizes people with really wrong ideas that stand against the leadership of Jesus. They think their ideas are superior to Jesus' ideas, that they have ideas, perspectives, that are bigger and better than Jesus' way. He says the enemy is the one that plants those seeds. He is talking about people that the enemy captures in a way of thinking that is delusional. They do not think it is delusional; they think it is grand and glorious and superior.

Verse 29, the servants of the farmer went to him who was the master of the house and said, "Hey, should we pull up these bad seeds of the weeds or the tares?" You could use those words interchangeably.

Jesus says, "No, no. Actually, I do not want you to pull them up. I do not want those people banished out of society. Though the devil has energized them, God is actually going to use their delusion and their zeal. He is going to use it to perfect the saints and increase His own kingdom."

If you go banish all the evil institutions out of society, all of the false religions, all that is bad—because that is what Israel wanted to do—you are going to end up uprooting the good people, the wheat. You are going to make mistakes. You are going to accidentally overdo it or miss the will of God. He says, "No, let the devil's seeds be. Do not banish them out of society. Do not put them in jail." We are not talking about people who do crimes. We are talking about people with delusional ideas that are contrary to Jesus' values and Jesus' leadership.

Again, there are a lot of the false world religions, evil institutions, powerful personalities that are influencing people contrary to the ways of God, Jesus would say of them, "No, no. Actually, what the devil means for good I am actually going to use. I am going to overrule it. I am going to cause My kingdom to be stronger in the resistance of that negative presence in society."

- B. This parable addresses the delay of judgment—this was one of the most difficult aspects of Jesus' teaching. God's people are not to separate the wheat from the tares because this will be delayed until the end of the age harvest. Thus, Jesus did not destroy the wicked Roman oppressors.
- C. Jesus gave the interpretation of this parable (13:36-43) teaching that judgment will be delayed until the end of the age

³⁷"...he who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. ³⁸The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one. ³⁹The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels... ⁴¹The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, ⁴²and will cast them into the furnace of fire. ⁴³Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father! (Mt. 13:37-43)

1. The good seed represents believers in Jesus, while the tares are sons of Satan (Jn. 8:44). The devil is the enemy; the harvest is the end of the age (Joel 3:13). The harvesters are angels (Mt. 24:30-31; 25:31). The field is the world, indicating a global mission beyond Israel.
2. God will permit the righteous and wicked to coexist in this age, but He will separate the wicked and judge them, while gathering the righteous to be rewarded in His presence forever.
3. The problem is in the tares being closely intermingled with the wheat—the wheat could get pulled up with the tares. In this present age, there is a mixture of good and bad people. This can confuse people, especially when the wicked prosper and the righteous suffer.

He goes on—I am not going to read all of this—but He interprets that parable. He says, “I am going to let the false religions go on. I am not going to banish them. I am not going to throw them in jail. They have demonically energized, delusional ideas of ‘superior’ ideas to Mine.” Jesus could say, “If you go after them and make them criminals, you are going to end up disrupting My kingdom. By the way, besides that, I can overpower it and use even what the devil means for evil; I could use it for good.”

Then He goes on in verse 43 that the net result of all of this is that the righteous will shine in the glory of God forever. Yes, they will have more obstacles, there will be more resistance, and there will be more opposition against them. As they choose Him, He will see it. When they stand before Him on the last day, He will release His glory in them at various levels. They will shine forever and forever like the sun and the stars. Though it will be difficult, it will actually work together for good. So, no, do not outlaw all the evil institutions, all the false religions. Allow what the devil sows, and let it emerge. Meaning, do not put them to death, do not execute them. You might think that is a little extreme. Throughout church history the church leaders have actually killed these people and banished them, trying to do God’s will in zeal. It is totally contrary to what He taught in this parable.

Now Israel is listening to this thinking, “What? You are going to let Rome continue to oppress us for now? You mean You are going to not address this?”

Jesus could have said, “Me and My Father, we are operating on a plan. It is called a mystery. We have had this plan from ages past, and it is working. You are going to see the end result of it when it is all done. So, no, do it My way. It is not a last-minute plan. We know what we are doing. It is going to bring the glory of God at the highest level in this environment.”

- D. Jesus was not commanding that we avoid confronting sin in the church (Mt. 18:15-20; 1 Cor. 5).
- E. This parable describes an order of events at His return (24:37-41; Lk 17:26-37). Jesus will come with angels to execute the final judgment of the righteous and the wicked (Mt.16:27; 25:31-33).
- F. The righteous will be rewarded by shining like the sun (Dan 12:3).

VIII. THE PARABLES OF THE MUSTARD SEED AND LEAVEN (MT. 13:31-33)

- A. Jesus compared the kingdom to a mustard seed and to a lump of yeast—the kingdom will grow from an **insignificant beginning** to great size (mustard seed) with vast influence (leaven). The manifestation of God’s reign started with Jesus’ small group of uneducated disciples.

He goes on to the next parables. The mustard seed and the woman with the leaven in the loaf or in her meal. Jesus gives these two parables, and He says, “The kingdom of God is like a mustard seed.”

Israel is going like, “Oh wow! Really?” The mustard seed was the smallest seed that was common to Israel. “It is going to start off like a mustard seed, what? No, we want fireworks. We want big and powerful and overwhelming and everything made new in one moment.”

Jesus says, “No, no, it is going to start off with a seed.” The mustard seed, though it is so small—it is famous for how small it is—it grows to be like a twelve-foot bush. Jesus called it a tree. “It goes from really small to really big and My kingdom will be that way.” They are wondering how long is it going to take it to get big. Jesus could have said, “Well, I am not going to tell you right now. You need to know that it is going to be small at first. Stay with it. It is going to seem to have an insignificant beginning, but ultimately, when I return, it will fill the earth.”

- B. The parable of the mustard seed (Mt. 13:31-32; Mk. 4:30-32; Lk. 13:18-19) highlights the unforeseen character of kingdom as starting much smaller than most thought and then growing gradually instead of coming in one cataclysmic event. The work of the kingdom can be dismissed.

³¹“...**The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field,**
³²**which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches.**” (Mt. 13:31-32)

Let's read it. “The kingdom of God is like a mustard seed, which a man sowed it in the field.” Again, it is the same man sowing in the field. It is the farmer. Jesus is that Man, and He is inspiring people under His leadership to sow that seed in the field. Though it is the least of all the seeds—it is small; it is very, very small—it will grow really big. That is the point. It will grow so big that the birds of the air will come and make their nests. It will get so big before it is over even before He returns, as the Christian institutions have exploded around the earth in the last 2,000 years.

I mean, could you imagine that coming from this little band of twelve men with Jesus, with no Bible school, no anything, no education, no degrees, all this. He is the most famous Man in 2,000 years. There is nobody like Him. It is a revolution of love that He did it all voluntarily. He called people to love Him. There is no one like Him, and there is no religion like it. He did it being invisible up in heaven where we cannot even see Him. It is exploding and growing, little by little, century by century, for 2,000 years.

- C. The parable of the leaven or yeast hidden in meal [bread dough] (Mt. 13:33; Lk 13:20-21) communicates a similar message as that of the mustard seed, emphasizing the initial smallness and unimpressiveness of the kingdom compared to what it eventually becomes. Jesus compared the growing of kingdom to the invisible and imperceptible impact of **leaven** in a lump of dough. We can be confident that regardless of any perspectives, the kingdom has a glorious future.

³³“...**The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened.**” (Mt. 13:33)

In the next parable, He is saying the same thing but this time He says, instead of a little mustard seed that gets real big, it is like a little bit of yeast or a little bit of leaven. You put it in the bread dough, the smallest amount, it takes time, and nobody can see it working. It is invisible. It is hidden. It is small. It is unimpressive. It is invisible. It is imperceptible. This little bit of leaven, this little bit of yeast, will fill and touch all the dough. It will affect the entire loaf that is being baked there. The whole lump of dough will be influenced by it.

What Jesus is really saying is, "Do not write off the smallness and the littleness of what I am doing. It is going to end up Daniel 2, but it will not have Daniel 2 grandeur for a while. It is My leadership. I want you engaging with Me at this level."

IX. THE PARABLES OF THE TREASURE AND PEARL (MT. 13:44-46)

- A. These parables highlight the value of the kingdom and the fact that its value is hidden to many. The kingdom is so valuable that it is worth sacrificing anything for our participation in it. The problem is that its value is hidden. It is not obvious to everybody now, but it will be shortly

⁴⁴ "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. ⁴⁵"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, ⁴⁶who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it. (Mt. 13:44-46)

Then the next two parables: the parables of the hidden treasure and the great pearl. Verse 44, He said, "The kingdom of God is like a hidden treasure in a field which a man found and hid. For joy he sells everything and buys the field." Then He makes the same point with the next parable. He is saying the very same thing, little bit of nuance to it that is different, but mostly the same thing. He goes on, as it were, "Let Me say it again. The kingdom of God is like a merchant looking to buy and sell beautiful pearls. When he found one pearl that was so beautiful, so glorious, he sold everything to buy that pearl."

So what He is saying is this: the treasure is hidden, and most people walk by the field and cannot see anything in the field but just a field. Many people, even though they say yes to Jesus in a casual way, they do not see anything worthy of giving everything to. They would say, "Yeah, He is amazing, I guess, but you know I got a lot going on."

Jesus said that most people will not see the value of His kingdom and His leadership. Most will not, but some will. They will have to search it out because it will not be obvious. When they see it, though it is hidden, with joy it will only make sense to give everything to Him in His kingdom that they could participate in it with all of their heart, no matter what the persecutions, no matter what the tribulations, the life pressures, no matter what the cares are, no matter what the riches are. They say, "This is worth everything. You are infinitely superior."

Jesus could say, "Most will not conclude that. I am going to lead My kingdom for the next 2,000 years allowing some to emerge with that insight. When they see, it they will be very different than all the others. They will sell everything for Me, though many will not grasp why, but they will because they connect with who I am. Yes, there will be the Daniel 2 kingdom and overwhelming power when I return, and then everybody will see My glory. I will have My people through history who will see My value when others cannot see it because they have searched it out. They were not content to live without seeing it."

- B. The treasure and pearl can speak of the kingdom or of Jesus, the King of the kingdom.

So, both the great pearl and the hidden treasure speak of the kingdom or of Jesus' leadership and the kingdom He is leading. Commentators take it one way or the other. Though the kingdom of God in this age is valuable, it is not obvious to most people that it is valuable, even to people who casually respond to the Word. They do not get how valuable, how absolutely unique and glorious the kingdom is and the great King is.

X. THE PARABLE OF THE DRAGNET (MT. 13:47-50)

- A. The kingdom is like a dragnet that gathered both that which was good and bad.

47“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet that was cast into the sea and gathered some of every kind, 48which, when it was full, they drew to shore; and...gathered the good into vessels, but threw the bad away. 49So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will...separate the wicked from among the just, 50 and cast them into the furnace of fire...” (Mt. 13:47-50)

Finally, the parable of the dragnet. Verse 47, Jesus said again, “The kingdom is like a big dragnet that was cast into the sea.” Now the way a dragnet works is that one boat would take the net and the other boat would be a couple hundred yards away, like a couple of football fields away. I mean this big net was really long. Then they would drop the net and the net would have weights at the bottom, so it might go down ten, twenty, thirty feet. These boats would just carry it along. All the fish in between they would drag and bring to the shore.

He said that that is how the kingdom was going to be. He is going to gather every kind of fish, the good fish that they can sell in the market and the bad fish that nobody wants. They say, “Yeah, you cannot sell that.” They are going to throw that back into the sea.

He says in verse 49, “So it will be at the end of the age.” There will be the time where the good are gathered through history, and God will cast the bad away. He will not let evil remain in society. He will not allow evil institutions to continue indefinitely. He will not allow false religions to grow and prosper indefinitely. He says He is going to allow the kingdom to net many people with many different motives. With all kinds of motives from really good to really bad, they will associate with the kingdom.

- B. This teaches us that many who profess to be a Christian and who associate with the kingdom are not all genuine believers. Both good and evil will continue until the end when both are evaluated according to their true character. The Lord will remove the wicked in His timing.

There are many religious institutions that proclaim some kind of allegiance or association to Christianity, but at the core, at the heart, are not Christian. Jesus said not to worry about it, as the net is going to bring in all kinds. Not bring them to salvation. They are going to want to associate with and want to proclaim some kind of involvement with Christianity. He is saying to us, “Now you will know that a lot of it is not real. I have got a purpose in it. Do not worry; it is short term. I will intervene. Rome will be taken care of; the evil institutions will be exposed. I will judge them and remove them from the planet forever, and My people will be gathered. This is how the kingdom is going to be.”

Now we know from history for the next couple thousand years this is how it was going to be. Israel was thinking like, “This is not exactly what we were signing up for. We were signing up for something far more dynamic, far easier, far more obvious than what You are calling us to.”

Jesus might say, “These are the mysteries that Israel does not know of concerning My Father’s kingdom. His leadership is good. He is going to use all these opposing resisting issues in society. He is going to cause the saints to be perfected in love, to grow in humility, to choose purity over and over again. My Father’s will will be done, and it will be worth it.”

Amen and amen. Let’s stand before the Lord.

So here we are, Lord. Lord, we want to take our wrong ideas and disillusionment about how things ought to be easier and bigger and better and faster, more dynamic, and, Lord, we still want those things, but we trust Your leadership. That is what this is about. Lord, we adjust to what You want. We love humility. We love what You love. We say yes in our life to Your leadership.

I want to invite anybody that would like prayer to come forward. Maybe some of you have had some of the wrong mindset. I don’t mean that you had the Daniel 2 image like the Jewish people had of everything glorious

in one moment. Still we have had parts of this wrong mindset. We have hesitated, we drew back, and we did not want to go all the way. This is an hour to be a hundredfold. This is an hour to see the value of the treasure that others cannot see and to see the beauty of the pearl that others cannot see obviously. So, if you would like prayer on anything related to this, I invite you to come forward. Say, "Yeah, I want to realignment." I found my heart getting plumb-lined in a new way just studying through this just this last week. Anyway, I want to invite you to come on up if you would like prayer.

Lord, here we are. Lord, here we are in Your presence. Lord, we want to say yes to the hundredfold response. Lord, I am not content with thirty and sixty. You are the beautiful pearl. You are the hidden treasure worth everything. Lord, we value the small. We want the big, but we value the small. We value the invisible, the spiritual victories. Lord, we value the small and the hidden obedience that nobody else sees or notice.

Lord, we ask for the manifest presence of Your Spirit tonight in a greater measure. Lord, even now we ask. We agree with Your leadership, Lord. Lord, we ask You for the fire of Your Spirit. Come and touch hearts right now, we ask, all over this room. O, the pleasure of loving You, Jesus! We love Your leadership, Jesus. Beautiful God, we love Your leadership, Jesus.

For My eyes are on you, says the Lord. I see every choice you make for Me. Will you open every door in your heart to Me? For you are children of the kingdom. Do you know who you are?

Lord, I ask You for the inspiration of Your Spirit right now all across this room. Lord, visit us. We are hungry for more. Lord, visit us tonight, Lord, even now in this very room. Tonight, when we go to bed, I ask You for the stirring of Your Spirit that we would see Your beauty, the pearl of great value. Thank You, Lord. Lord, release Your glory even more. Lord, let Your glory come as we wait on You. Lord, I ask You, let Your glory come as we wait on You more and more.s