

**THE GOSPEL OF
MATTHEW**

Chapter 12:33 – 13:23

Thursday Morning Bible Study
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church
Wauwatosa, WI

1

A Tree is Known by its Fruit – 12:33-37

- 33 – Using the metaphor of a tree, Jesus confronts the Pharisees directly. A tree is known by its fruit.
- The Pharisees are identified by the “fruit” that they produce.
- Their words will demonstrate who they are.

2

The Sign of Jonah – 12:38-42

- 38 – “Some” of the Pharisees approach Jesus. Not all were opposed to him. Some were searching.
- They wanted some verification that Jesus really isn’t from Satan.
- They want a sign, a request that, of itself, shows lack of faith.
- 39 – The Jewish leaders are showing themselves to be unfaithful to God by their lack of repentance and faith in Jesus. They are like the people at the time of the flood.

3

The Sign of Jonah – 12:38-42

- 41 – The sign of Jonah is simply that just as Jonah was in the belly of the sea monster for three days and three nights, so Jesus will be in the belly of the earth for three days and three nights.
- Jesus is, in effect saying: “You want a sign?” OK. How about a resurrection!
- “Three days” – The Jewish way of counting days was inclusive, and the day began at sundown.

4

The Sign of Jonah – 12:38-42

- 42 – The sin of the Pharisees is so great that the Ninevites will condemn them at the day of judgment, for they repented at Jonah’s preaching.
- Another comparison: The queen of Sheba who listened to Solomon’s wisdom. She too will be raised with all the dead and accuse them of their unbelief, for Jesus is far greater than either Jonah or the Queen.

5

Their House is “Empty” – 12:43-45

- 43 – What happens when people reject Jesus: A man can have a demon removed, but if he is not occupied by the Spirit of God, he is “empty.”
- The house is in order – all the rules are being followed, but there is no spirit in him.
- For those who reject Jesus, their final spiritual condition will be worse that before.

6

Family is Redefined – 12:46-50

- 46-47 – To show the importance of a relationship with Jesus, Matthew recounts how Jesus' mother and brothers wanted to speak to him. They may have wanted to "quiet him down" but Jesus would not have it.
- 48-50 – All those who believe in him are his family. They are identified as "those who do the will of my father."

7

Teaching in Parables – 13:1-3

- 1 – "That same day" – Jesus doesn't get a break.
- 2 – He goes down to the Sea of Galilee, gets into a boat and begins to teach the people.
- 3 – This next section begins the 3rd Discourse – a longer sermon. This one is called the "Parable Discourse". Parables were the usual way for Rabbis to teach, forcing their hearers to dig deeper than just the story.

8

Teaching in Parables – 13:10-16

- Parables were a good way to teach truth, but they are more than just illustrations. They make hearers think and apply the teaching. Those who seek to learn the truth will learn. Those who refuse to learn will remain blind.
- Why did Jesus teach in parables? Five reasons:
 - 1 - To give His enemies no ground. His enemies were always looking for something to use against him. By speaking in parables, He makes that hard for them. One can hardly be arrested for telling a story!

9

Teaching in Parables – 13:10-16

2 – To Enlighten the True Seeker – Through parables He could enlighten those whose hearts were sincere and were receptive.

3 – To Make People Think – Jesus used parables to make people think about where their souls were going.

4 – To divide into two – Jesus quotes Isaiah 6:8-10. Jesus was bringing pressure to bear upon his listeners, to either open their spiritual eyes and ears and be enlightened, or to shut their eyes and ears tighter and be condemned.

10

Teaching in Parables – 13:10-16

5 – To Fulfil Prophecy – Ps 78i:1-4. The prophet of old had foreseen that the Christ would teach in parables.

Matt. 13:34-35 - "Jesus spoke to the multitudes in parables, and he was not speaking to them without a parable, so that what was spoken by through the prophet might be fulfilled."

11

The Parable of the Sower – 13:3-9

3 – This parable is a good example of why Jesus uses parables. The people all hear the same thing, but the response is different, based on their receptiveness to Jesus' word.

4 – In order to get the seed to all corners of a small field by casting it, some will naturally fall on unusable ground.



12

The Parable of the Sower – 13:3-9

- 5 – Some fall on rocky ground, but had no depth of soil.
- 7 – Some fell among the thorns at the endge of the field. They would grow, but be choked out.
- 8 – Some would fall on the good soil where they would grow and produce grain.
- 9 – “If you have ears . . . “ Don’t just hear the words, but act on what you have heard.

13

The Parable of the Sower Explained – 13:18-23

- 18-19 – Jesus explains the parable. Mark (4:3-20) and Luke (8:5-15) say that the disciples asked about the meaning.
- “The evil one” “ponos” – He who distresses or torments the soul.
 - Mark calls him “Satan” – the adversary or accuser.
 - Luke calls him “diabolos” – the devil. The word means to shoot darts. In Eph. 6:16, Paul speaks of the fiery “darts” of the wicked one.
 - Those along the path not only do not understand, but refuse to be open to the Word at all.

14

The Parable of the Sower Explained – 13:18-23

- 21 – The 2nd group are those who receive the Word with joy. But they fall away because they lack depth. They keepi their encounter with God at the emotional level.
- 22 – 3rd group – the seed that falls among the thorns. We live in a sin-filled world that entices us to turn away from God. Our lives are not as fruitful as they could be because we have allowed the cares of this world to choke out the fruitfulness of serving the Lord. Ultimately, this can choke out faith altogether.

15

The Parable of the Sower Explained – 13:18-23

- **23 – That which bears fruit. To “hear”, to “understand” and to “bear fruit” are the three evidences of a true believer.**
- **Remember, as soil, none of us are fit for the kingdom. But God, in his spirit makes us ready to receive, and then gives us the understanding we need.**
- **In this parable we are both the soil and the sower. As we share the word, it is met with a variety of responses.**
