

## The Mind of Christ - Lesson 104

April 30, 2021

Welcome to another edition of The Mind of Christ. We are making our way through everything Jesus said and did and we are following A. T. Robertson's book, "The Harmony of the Gospels" in the chronological order that he set forth in that. If you are following along with that, we are in **Section 63** today. This is about Christ's mother and brothers seeking to take Him home. It is found in all three of the synoptic gospels, Mark, Matthew, and Luke, and we will read that in all three of these accounts. This is a relatively short section, so today after I finish this section; we're going to be going into a very long section which I'll introduce today. It's the introduction to the first parables that Jesus told.

So, we'll be beginning that section today. There's just not good way to group all of this together and stay in the chronological sequence so I hope you will make a commitment to see this all the way through if you want to get all the teaching on the parables. There are three references to this first story that we will look at today and we'll read from **Matthew 12:46-50; Mark 3:31-35 and Luke 8:19-21**.

### Matthew 12:46-50

<sup>46</sup> While He was still speaking to the crowds, behold, His mother and brothers were standing outside, and seeking to speak to Him. <sup>47</sup> And someone said to Him, "Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside seeking to speak to You." <sup>48</sup> But Jesus answered the one who was telling Him and said, "Who is My mother and who are My brothers?" <sup>49</sup> And stretching out His hand toward His disciples, He said, "Behold My mother and My brothers! <sup>50</sup> For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother." That's the first account.

### Then we go over to Mark 3:31-35

<sup>31</sup> Then His mother and His brothers arrived, and standing outside they sent word to Him and called Him. <sup>32</sup> A crowd was sitting around Him, and they said to Him, "Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are outside looking for You." <sup>33</sup> And answering them, He said, "Who are My mother and My brothers?" <sup>34</sup> And looking about at those who were sitting around Him, He said, "Behold My mother and My brothers! <sup>35</sup> "For whoever does the will of God, he is My brother and sister and mother."

### Then the last account is in Luke 8:19-21

<sup>19</sup> Now His mother and brothers came to Him, and they were unable to get to Him because of the crowd. <sup>20</sup> And it was reported to Him, "Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, wishing to see You." <sup>21</sup> But He answered and said to them, "My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it."

So we have three accounts here. There are some minor differences in the account. Matthew and Mark appear to be identical; Luke is shorter but with an extra detail that is added; that is that His family couldn't get in because of the press of the crowd because He was surrounded by the crowd. That's what Luke adds to the story.

Mark says, as they stood outside, they did two things. Number 1, they sent word to Him; and Number 2, they called Him. Does this mean they called out His name trying to be heard above the crowd? Previously, in **Mark 3:20-21** Jesus' own people wanted to take custody of Him because they thought that He was '*out of His senses*'. On this occasion, someone was able to get a message to Jesus that His family wanted to talk to Him.

Jesus was inside some structure, we don't know what. I can't find where He was when this occurrence was, what city He was in; I assume He's still in Galilee. They had an obvious concern for Him. The talk about Him probably indicated that He was in some danger perhaps, because there were rumblings of people who were upset with Him. He had just had a very confrontational meeting with some important Jewish leaders and His condemnation could not be stronger. So, perhaps they were concerned about His safety at this time.

Matthew and Mark both said, "**Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside seeking to speak to You.**" Were they surprised to see them show up? Were they a novelty in that setting? In other words, they didn't quite fit into the setting in which Jesus was in. Jesus was not accepted in His hometown (**Luke 4:24, Mark 6:4**). Later we learn that His brothers did not even believe in Him. Did anyone think His family might have some heavenly origins as well? I mean, if He is from above, maybe they are too.

The word "behold" calls particular attention to the Lord's family. Jesus will use this to demonstrate to the crowd the importance of His 'new' family. Jesus' sisters were not mentioned though we know He had sisters according to **Mark 6:3** and secondly, He includes "sisters" in the message point in which follows. So He adds the idea of sisters in that conclusion that He draws in this passage.

What could have been the topic of that His family wanted to address? By the way, His father Joseph is not mentioned indicating that he had already died by now. Mary would have been in her mid 40s, probably, at this time. Surely the family was concerned; Jesus' life was already in danger. He is making some bold pronouncements and stirring up a lot of people's attention.

Matthew says that the one who brought the message got Jesus' response, but Mark and Luke say the words of reply were spoken to them; the crowd. So the indication here is that He is going to be addressing the crowd and not His family.

If Jesus was packed in the house with them, then surely they heard His reply and He would have wanted them to have heard that since He was talking about them. So, perhaps even though He was in this structure and He was surrounded by this group of people, perhaps He was speaking loud enough that His family could actually hear what He's saying just as they called out to Him when they arrived.

In Matthew and Mark, Jesus poses questions but they are not recorded as the same. Mathew has Him asking, "Who *is* my mother and who *are* my brothers?" Mark has Him asking one question, "Who *are* my mother and my brothers?", a difference really without a distinction. Jesus asked these questions to expand the thinking of the crowd, and perhaps of his earthly family as well.

Jesus is introducing another domain to them. There is a domain of a human family as well as a Christian family. Matthew says He stretches out his hands to His disciples; Mark says He is looking about those sitting around Him. Luke doesn't give any gestures that Jesus was perhaps making; only what Jesus said. The three answers are slightly different. Matthew and Mark both have Him saying, "Behold my mother and my brothers". Luke does not. Matthew says, "Whoever does the will of my Father who is in heaven, he is my brother and sister and mother." Mark says "For whoever does His will, or the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother." Luke says "my mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it." Matthew says "Father"; Mark and Luke say "God". Matthew adds in 'in heaven' and Matthew and Mark talk about the 'doing' of the word while Luke mentions 'hearing' and 'doing' the word. So there are some distinctions in the three accounts as to exactly what Jesus said in conclusion to this. ***These are confirmations that the gospel writers are not quoting Jesus verbatim.*** The *sense* of all is the same and all these words are in character.

The new family of Jesus is made up of disciples, brothers, sisters, and mothers. Notice He did not include fathers; there is only One is Father in the family; and those who 'hear' His word and those who 'do' His word which is the will of the Father, the will of God, are the ones He is addressing here. Conforming to God's will is *paramount* to Jesus. In **Matthew 7:21**, Jesus ties 'doing the will of the father' to 'entering the Kingdom of heaven'. ***If God's rule over our lives is to mean anything, it will be because we are subject to His rule and we prove it by being obedient.***

**Matthew 18:14** says, "It is not the will of your Father who is in heaven for one of these little ones to perish". In **Matthew 21:31** Jesus asked, "Who did the will of His father"? It was the son who at first said he would not do the father's will, and then he actually went and did it; not the one who said that he would do the will of the father and then didn't. ***The proof is in the doing; not in the saying.*** Jesus' struggle in the Garden proves this; ***"not my will but thine be done"***... not just "thine be approved of" or "understood" but it had to be **done**.

Notice in Scripture the number of times Jesus says, "I will" or that "God will". There are many times in Scripture where Jesus says, "I will" or He says, "God will" as to some action God has towards us. His is a doing of His will towards us. ***He doesn't just talk, or promise or teach; He acts on our behalf. Doing is within a context*** of the family and is extremely important. Friction is caused when people within the family do not follow through in their roles as husbands, wives, or children, etc. Fulfilling our roles is essential to a healthy home. Following through on commitments is an essential feature of the Kingdom of God both on His side and on our side. Remember, at least Jesus' brothers did not believe in Him at this particular point. See **John 7:3-5**.

Jesus was closer to those who sat at His feet and chose the better part, than those who had a blood connection to Him. Those not 'with Him' scattered. A house divided could not stand. Jesus was quick to see who were loyal to Him by what they did and not just by what they said. This is a new definition of family; not biology, but doing.

Now we're going to turn to the next section. **This is Section 64.** This is the first great group of Parables and this is a very long section and we won't be able to finish it this time or next time I'm sure, because it is quite long. It is found in all three of the Gospels; in **Mark 4, Matthew 13** and **Luke 8** though Matthew and Mark certainly are the longest sections here.

What I would like to do is to read from Matthew; I want to read a section of this ... it will be the first parable and then it will be an explanation; so it's going to be a little bit long reading and I am not going to read Mark, and I'm not going to read Luke. I'll bring them in as we go through the section here but I want you to get an idea of what we're talking about here so I'll read **Matthew 13:1-23**. It's also in **Mark 4:3-25** and **Luke 8:5-18**.

### **Matthew 13:1-23**

“That day Jesus went out of the house and was sitting by the sea. <sup>2</sup> And a great multitude gathered to Him, so He got into a boat and sat down, and the whole crowd was standing on the beach. And He spoke many things to them in parables, saying, “Behold, the sower went out to sow; <sup>4</sup> and as he sowed, some seeds fell beside the road, and the birds came and ate them up. <sup>5</sup> And others fell on the rocky places, where they did not have much soil; and immediately they sprang up, because they had no depth of soil. <sup>6</sup> But when the sun had risen, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. <sup>7</sup> Others fell among the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked them out. <sup>8</sup> And others fell on the good soil and yielded a crop, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty. <sup>9</sup> He who has ears, let him hear.”

Now as Jesus begins to get into the explanation it seems like He is going to explain this later to His Apostles. The explanation doesn't seem to be given to the crowd but only to the Apostles. So I want to read a little bit of this because it's very involved to try to understand why Jesus is speaking in parables, what are the dynamics of speaking in parables, and what obviously is the meaning of the Parable in His own words? So beginning in **Matthew 13:10**

<sup>10</sup> And the disciples came and said to Him, “Why do You speak to them in parables?”

<sup>11</sup> Jesus answered them, “To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted. <sup>12</sup> For whoever has, to him shall more be given, and he will have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him. <sup>13</sup> Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. <sup>14</sup> And in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says,

‘You will keep on hearing, but will not understand; and you will keep on seeing, but will not perceive; <sup>15</sup> For the heart of this people has become dull, and with their ears they scarcely hear, and they have closed their eyes, otherwise they would see with their eyes, hear with their ears, and understand with their heart and return, and I would heal them.’

<sup>16</sup> But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear. <sup>17</sup> For truly I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.

Then He going on to explain the meaning of the first parable that He told and I want to read that, and then we'll jump into some of the explanations.

<sup>18</sup> “Hear then the parable of the sower. <sup>19</sup> When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the one on whom seed was sown beside the road. <sup>20</sup> The one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; <sup>21</sup> yet he has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away. <sup>22</sup> And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. <sup>23</sup> And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty.”

We won't even get to all of that today but I felt like I needed to bring you into a context of this.

Matthew and Mark both explained the setting of this discussion as being by the sea. This is the Sea of Galilee. A great crowd had gathered on the beach and He entered a boat and both say that He sat down while the crowd stood on the beach. Now, Matthew adds that He left the house and I assume it's the one where His family 'came to get Him' maybe, in the previous story. I assume that He was in Capernaum, His home base in northern Galilee, by the sea. In my visit there, this was in March 2012, it is clear the sea had receded several yards but during His day the city was built right on the sea.

The boat was His podium or pulpit. It's interesting that He sat and the crowd stood and listened. We usually reverse that. Usually the speaker is standing up and the crowd is sitting. Luke adds that the people came from various cities journeying there to Him. Matthew's account of the parable is the most complete and then Mark and then Luke.

So, what is a parable? The word parable “parabole” (παραβολη) is transliterated; a ***placing of one thing by the side of another***. It is a comparison of one thing with another. It's a likeness; it's a similitude, ***an earthly story with a heavenly meaning***. The idea is easy to understand. ***You begin with something people 'know about' and use it as a bridge to new understandings.*** ***However, not all will get it. Some will just not be able to cross the bridge.***

Jesus acknowledges this as we will see. This was a favorite mechanism of instruction for **Jesus, the Master Teacher**. But it had to be frustrating to be the Greatest Teacher that the world has ever known and to be so misunderstood by even folks like His family and fellow Jews who ***should have*** understood what He was saying. Techniques of teaching are good but they are only as good as the heart that receives those techniques or those teachings.

The word for **teaching** in **Mark 4:2** is “didache”. It means instruction or doctrine depending on the form of the word. It refers to the act of teaching, the manner of teaching, or the thing taught. Here, it is the act of teaching. The process has not changed.

So, we have *the parable of the sower*. As I was thinking of tackling this parable my difficulty is that it is just too familiar. I have read and taught it too many times; could I possibly not know it by now? But what does this parable teach me about the mind of Christ?

First, Jesus is able to take incredibly obvious and simple things and see spiritual truths within them. The spiritual truths are the realities and substance. The story merely illustrates by directing the attention of the crowd to the sower. He uses the word “behold”; a common way of calling attention like the speaker saying, ‘look’ or ‘listen’. Redirecting someone is key to conversion, switching one from a worldly view to a spiritual view. The story is the bridge. It is meant to cause someone to say, “Oh, now I see; now I get it”. It is a key to conviction. What do I look like to God? What does my world look like to God? The story helps me understand what *He* understands. More than ever, we need reconnections. Those who call people back to the path ... we need to make these connections for people. You start with what people know.

The second thing I observe in general about this is that Jesus is observant. He is able to see the lesson around Him. He makes the connections. He must before He can share them with others. He pays attention to what is going on around Him. He is asking, ‘what does this teach me about the truth’ as He observes the normal every-day activities of life? He is able to pull life together into a coherent whole. He sees truth as integrated. Everything fits together and He is the center that pulls and holds everything together. Truth is attached to Him and it is sown like seed everywhere.

As I look out my window this morning as I see the trees, I see the bird feeder, I see the grass, I see a road, I see plants, I see birds and see drops of moisture, I realize that there are lessons everywhere and each one Jesus has touched on, in one way or another. The grass is here and gone and burned up but the Word endures forever. The birds neither sow nor reap but the earth takes care of them. We are to be like well-watered trees and on and on it goes. He’s already seen; He’s already seen these things and He’s made lessons out of them. Surely, the sower’s intention was to throw the seeds onto good ground. He didn’t intentionally throw them on the path or among the thorns or in the rocks. These areas were near good ground. These accidentally fell there and were not able to produce a crop.

The sower going out was intentional. He woke up, he got ready, he strapped on his bag, he filled it with seed, and he walked to his field. He reached his hand into his bag and felt the seed run through his fingers. He scooped up a handful, he pulled his hand out of the bag, and with a sweeping motion he let them fly in a 180 degree angle or a semi-circle. You could hear the seeds as they fell. Near the field there had to be a path to walk to keep the person out of the crop. Worn down by years, they served as boundaries as well. Another word for sowing is broadcasting the seed, instead of planting it in neat rows and in holes specifically designed for the seeds just the right depth evenly spaced apart with the same plants all together; that’s not what this sower was doing.

Is there anything significant about Jesus using the sowing method in this parable? *Is there something He is trying to tell us about how to evangelize?* Perhaps He is telling us to be indiscriminate about who we tell, although Jesus did limit the disciples range to the

household of Israel at first; but He then begins to open things up to ‘whosoever will’. The Gospel is not for any race or class or sex or nation; it’s for all.

Another thought comes to mind besides the range that is 180 degrees. There is also distance out, an arching effect in sowing the seeds can only be sown so far. So, how should we look at the sower? Individually as Christians, the range of our lives in influence or as a local church; the range of our influence from the center of our meeting place or some other way, how do we view our broadcasting strategy? Do we have one at all? Should we be more deliberate and thoughtful? Let’s take the story and the explanation together. (This is where I’m going to be going ‘back and forth’ and I’m not going to be able to complete the thought here today, but we’ll cover this on succeeding sessions).

Matthew says the seed fell by the road. The account in Mark and Luke say the same, so this idea is used 98 times in the New Testament. First, the text does not say the seed fell on the path or the road. It says “*beside* it”. The sower was keeping it in the area of the field, his property. The road was a boundary. The New American Standard Bible uses the word ‘highway’ or ‘journey’ or ‘paths’ or ‘roads’ or ‘streets’ or ‘ways’. The insight here is that for years, I thought of this as being a beaten down place where the seed fell. My experience is that on the very edges of the field where the tractor turns around or in the case where the plow comes out of the ground, there is a hard untilled ground left. It might be considered where people walk within the field so as to not trample the plants, but it is by the road. Matthew gives a detailed explanation in **Matthew 13:19**. He prefaces his remarks with, “**Hear the parable of the sower**”. *Haven’t they heard it? Yes, but now they’re really going to hear it*, hopefully to “understand” it.

Luke says that these seeds beside the path were trampled on by men or under foot. Men would not have any concern for stray seed in this particular area. They didn’t expect them there or expect some kind of crop to come up there. This was a ‘turnaround’ area, already hard because it is uncultivated or trampled. Luke adds this. All three mention the birds who come and eat the seed; an easy treat ... no digging, no searching, but if the birds represent Satan and the seeds represent the word, then we have Satan eating the word of God. Whoa.

This is where we have to be cautious of how we interpret parables. Making everything mean something feeds our imagination but it can take us off into subjective conclusions regarding truth. The point is not Satan consuming God’s word hungering for it, but Satan removing it so that it cannot get into man’s heart and produce a crop. The intent was for the seed to grow a crop; not to feed birds.

Luke is the only one who says “the birds of the air are them”. Air “ouranos” (οὐρανός) can be translated heaven, sky or air. In Hebrew writings, used to describe the expanse of the sky above it is regarded as solid and fixed; it’s called the “firmament” and there are three levels for the heavens in the Jewish mind; where the birds fly, then the section where the planets, the sun moon and stars are, and then there is the part, the third level of heaven which is where God lives. I was thinking of a connection with **Ephesians 2:2** where Satan is called the ruler of the kingdom of the air, but a different word is used in this particular place. Luke must have just been *more expressive* than the other writers. Even the trampling underfoot could have knocked off the outer covering of the seed and left the tender part exposed to the birds.

Jesus explains when He says, “Hear then the parable of the sower” in **Matthew 13:18**. In Mark He says, “Do you not understand this parable?” and “how will you understand all the parables?”

Before we explore any more of the parable of the sower, let’s look at Jesus’ comment about understanding parables in general. This explanation must have been given later when the disciples were alone with Him. Look at **Mark 4:10**, “As soon as He was alone, His followers, along with the twelve, began asking Him about the parables.” Jesus makes a distinction between what is given to His disciples and what is given to the crowds. Jesus calls these “mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven” and “mystery of the Kingdom of God”. That is **Matthew 13:11** compared to **Mark 4:11**. The crowd is called ‘those outside’. The outsiders get ‘parables’; the insiders, or disciples, get ‘revelation’. This private instruction of these disciples is deep. Let’s try to tear this apart to see what Jesus is saying.

First, Jesus is thinking of two groups; “you”, the disciples, the followers along with the twelve. Remember this group includes Judas. And then He talks about “them”, the great multitudes; those who are outside. Could we say that the followers or disciples were those enrolled in Jesus’ school and the others were simply auditing the course but didn’t want any responsibility? The first group had made a statement of commitment and loyalty to Jesus, a statement of faith; while the crowds were merely curious and uncommitted. Could it be that the ground Jesus was aiming at was the good soil of His disciples, and, in the process, it fell on others as well?

The mysteries of the Kingdom ... “mysterion” or (μυστηριον) from (μυω) ‘to shut the mouth’, it’s a secret, it’s used for people initiated into a particular religion (that’s why these are sometimes called ‘mystery religions’. The initiate learns a secret before he can gain entrance. The secret is above human insight or understanding. It is used to speak of facts and doctrines and insights not previously revealed, and it’s the same here in our context. This word is also found in places like **1 Corinthians 14:2**, “For the one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to people, but to God; for no one understands, but in his spirit he speaks *mysteries*.” In **Ephesians 5:32**, the correlation between Christ’s church and the husband and wife is a “profound *mystery*”. In **2 Thessalonians 2:7** the “*mystery* of lawlessness” is at work; it is hidden, it’s not understood. In **Revelation 1:20** the “*mystery* of 7 stars” equaling the 7 angels and the 7 lamp stands equaling the 7 churches, or the *mystery* that is called Babylon in **Revelation 17:5, 7**. Paul particularly uses this term or this theme to discuss the *mystery* of the Gospel, what God’s plan is and how we fit into it. In **Romans 16:25 -27** this doxology sums up Paul’s view. We are established according to the Gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the “*mystery*” which was kept hidden for long ages past, now manifested by the scriptures of the prophets. They were commanded by the eternal God, and through Paul and others, this was made known to the Gentiles leading them to the “obedience of faith”. The *mystery* is not meant to remain a *mystery*. It is not for a few but to all who will *hear* and *believe* and *obey*.

In **1 Corinthians 2:7** in the context there, Paul explains the work of the Spirit of God in making known the “*mystery*”, the deep things of God. Paul calls it a hidden wisdom that those who crucified Jesus did not understand. But God predestined this plan before the ages or the current time.

**1 Corinthians 2:10** says that God revealed these things to us *through His Spirit* who knows God's thoughts and puts them into words combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words. Paul says that the natural man doesn't understand. Are these the 'outsiders' he is talking about; the natural man that he refers to in **1 Corinthians 2**?

**Ephesians 3** is a treatise on the "mystery" and it's very profound. Paul was a steward of grace and God made the "mystery" known to him by revelation. He wrote to give us insight into this "mystery". It wasn't made known to the sons of men in the same way it was to Paul. This "mystery" is that Jews and Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of Christ's body, and fellow partakers of the promise. *Paul compares the "mystery" with the unsearchable and unfathomable riches of Christ*. This ministry of the "mystery" has an administration or a stewardship; an "oikonomia" (οικονομία), an economy as in someone who manages a household. This was kept hidden so it could now be revealed in the work of the church to the powers of the unseen world. (**Ephesians 3:10**).

The unity of Jews and Gentiles by bringing each under the headship or rule of Jesus, the Christ, the anointed one, the king and thus conquering the world one heart at a time. Paul says *the true knowledge of God's "mystery" is Christ Himself. In Him are hidden the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*. Our access to the understanding of the *mysteries* comes when we bow before Christ and enthrone Him in our hearts as Lord. Paul asked the **Colossians 4:3-4** to pray that the door would be open for the word to be able to be presented as he presents the *mysteries* of Christ. This is why he was imprisoned. But note: *he then talks of making it clear to outsiders* having good conduct and clear speech and appropriate responses. Our goal is to make them "insiders" so that they can understand the "mysteries" of the Kingdom.

In **1 Timothy 3:9** regarding deacons, they are told to hold onto the *mysteries* of the faith with a clear conscience. *Once a person begins to understand these "mysteries" we must hold onto them*. Hebrews seems to stress this idea. Here is where we have to be very careful not to take a bad turn. The *mystery* religions of the first or second centuries or secret societies had developed their own unique initiations, rituals and teachings for their members. Jesus is not hiding some 'truth'. All truth is laid out in Scripture for all to see. It is not that we can't understand it without commitment, but the academic knowledge that we gain will be useless until we combine it with faith in the teacher. When one fully commits to be Jesus' disciple, he positions himself to understand what the teacher is saying. *We learn of Him by being yoked with Him*, by following Him, by experience, by proceeding by faith and not by sight.

There is a word that talks about the "mysteries" being given; that the "mysteries" have been given. Notice in **Matthew 13:11** it says, "Jesus answered them, 'To you it has been granted to know the *mysteries* of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted.'" The word "granted" here is *dedotai* (δεδοται), it's a common word today. It actually comes from the word "didomi" (διδωμι). It means to give or to bestow or to present; to cast or throw something, to supply or suggest or distribute. Satan offered to "give" the kingdoms of the world to Jesus if He would fall down and worship him. (That's the word *Didomi*). In **John 3:16** God so loved the world that He gave His Son, but notice in **Matthew 7:6** it says, "Do not give what is holy to the dogs and do not throw your pearls before swine lest they be trampled underfoot and tear you to pieces".

Does this relate to **Matthew 13**? Why give the secrets of the Kingdom to those who do not appreciate them and people who, because of their lack of faith will merely turn and hurt you? *We must be careful with this application.* But the next verse, **Matthew 7:7-8** says, *if we ask, seek and knock, we will have it given, we will find it; we will have it open to us.* It is not that Jesus is stingy or had only picked certain ‘ones’ to know the secrets of the Kingdom. They are *available* but only to those who are seeking, asking and knocking. The Ethiopian was reading “Isaiah”. Cornelius was praying to God. Paul would often start with the Jews but when they would not listen, he would turn to the Gentiles.

Those on the outside are where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. Who “receives” ... the one who already “has”. The one who squanders what they have will lose it, and it will be given to another. Much of this is about Jew and Gentile. The “insiders” are now the “outsiders”. The olive tree branches are now removed and the wild olive branches are grafted in. The central issue is whether Jesus is accepted as Lord. The kingpin is *“who do you say Jesus is”*. Faith in Jesus opens the door to understanding or light. *‘Stepping into the light’ means ‘stepping into His presence’*.

What really separated Jesus’ disciples and the crowd ... commitment, decision, surrender? They were followers. They were enrolled as disciples. What did Jesus disciples think when He told them this? Did they feel special? *Did they feel superior or did they feel more obligated?* It is easy for such to go to our heads and to be told we are going to be given some insight by God that most will never understand and most will never get. We see some of this later. When they came to Jesus, for instance, and said, “Jesus, they are not of us”. The disciples understood that they were the “insiders” and those were the “outsiders”.

**Matthew 13:12** doesn’t seem right and must be kept in context. *“For whoever has, to him more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him.”* This doesn’t seem right but it must be kept in context. This is not the only place Jesus says this. In **Matthew 25:28-29**, here is where Jesus takes on the haves and the have-nots, spiritually speaking. Those who are un-invested will lose even what they have. Those invested in Jesus will gain much more. The un-invested have principle; they have a life to give, and if given, it will be given; if lost in Jesus it will be found. *We have to be all in* to win. The timid, the cowards, the apathetic, the curious, the sideliners, the fans; *this is a core principle of Jesus’ economy of the way the mystery works.*

The Jews who were given so much wasted it, and it was taken from them! They get parables now but only the disciples get the secrets. They get “stories”; we get “understanding” ... we get the explanations. They get the shell but we get the peanut. The one given the mysteries of the kingdom will be given more revelation. Without our using what we have, there is no reason to give us more.

The goal is to possess an abundance. The word here is “perisseuo” (περισσευω). It means to super-abound, to be in excess. We saw this in **Matthew 5:37** and verse **47**. In **Matthew 5:37** it means not to be beyond ‘yes’ or ‘no’. In verse **47** it says ‘we are not abundant until we go beyond the norm as in greeting others who are not our brothers. It is the word used in **John 10:10** about having an abundant life.

*Jesus desires us to have abundance of life and understanding and relationship.* He designed the Christian life to launch us into a new dimension. *Jesus wants us to know love that surpasses knowledge. He wants us to follow One who can do exceedingly more than we could ask or imagine. He wants us to know the peace that surpasses understanding. He wants us to experience the fullness of God.* To get more from God you have to appreciate what you already have. It works this way in almost all things in life including ‘you get out what you put in’. Somehow what you put in becomes even more. *God compounds interest.*

What actually happens when God takes away what one has? *The man who buried his talent of silver had it taken away from him and given to the man with the ten talents.* So what is taken away? What does the person have; opportunities, some minimal understanding of God and His will, some spiritual blessing granted because of birth or circumstances? Consider contextually what a typical person in the crowd might have. These are Jews; some are Jewish leaders. In chapter 12 Jesus talked about One greater than Solomon being here. They had the opportunity to sit at the feet of Jesus, the Son of God, the Master Teacher, the Savior, the One with all the secrets of the Kingdom and they are letting it pass! The opportunity is then given to others!

This is a strong theme in **Romans 9-11** and in **Acts** when Paul would turn to the Gentiles. Jesus told his disciples when they went out to the Jewish village to find a *worthy house* in which to stay while they taught, but if one did not *receive them*, they were to ‘dust off their shoes’ and move on. It sounds like *Hezekiah 1:1*... you snooze, you lose. *Don't go looking for Hezekiah 1:1*; it's not found in the Bible! If you do not use it, appreciate it, or come to understand it, *you lose it!* *In Revelation 2 and 3 Jesus threatens to remove the church's candlestick for their unrepentant sin.* The one who holds onto his life loses it.

In **Matthew 21:43** Jesus tells the Jews the Kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruit. See **Matthew 25:29**. In **Luke 8:18** Jesus says to take care how you listen. “For to whoever has, to him more shall be given, and whoever does not have, even what he *thinks* he has shall be taken away from him. What we think we have may not really be our possession.”

**Luke 10:42** says since Mary chose the good part, that is ‘*to sit at the feet of Jesus*’ it will not be taken away from her. Then in **Luke 11:52** lawyers who have taken away the key of knowledge not allowing people to enter; there is the taking away here of something. In **Luke 19:26-7** and **2 Corinthians 3:16** Luke says the same thing in the parable of the ten minas but the next verse is telling. It says, “But these enemies of mine who did not want me to reign over them; bring them here, slay them in my presence.”

Reading N. T. Wright “When God Became King”, Wright’s point is that we have taken the message of the gospels and separated them in such a way as to distort the message of God which is that *the cross was the means by which Jesus became King.*

In our section here, Jesus is giving the secrets of the kingdom to those disciples who truly have accepted Him as King; but to others, He only gives parable stories left to their own interpretation.

The economy of the Kingdom is different. The one who *has will be given more*. The one who works one hour will get the same as the one who works 12 hours. Both of these are subject only to the desire of the king. *He can do what He wants with what is His*.

In **2 Corinthians 3:16** another thing in a different way is the veil which needs to be taken away when one turns to the Lord. *This is a positive*. We need Jesus to take away our sins, to take away the veil that prevents us from seeing and knowing and being transformed by Jesus. For this to happen, we must turn to the Lord. If we do not recognize Him as King even what we have will be taken away. *This is Kingdom perspective*.

In **Matthew 13:13** Jesus' purpose in speaking to the crowds in parables is because they will 'hear' but not '*hear*', '*see*' but not '*see*' or '*understand*' since to know the secrets of the Kingdom has only been granted to the 'insiders', the disciples. There is an entire library and university awaiting disciples. They have full access to the Spirit, to the Father. **Ephesians 2:18**. It is only through Jesus, the way, the truth and the life to have access to the Father. **John 14:6**. It is Jesus who is the door to sheep pen who provides new birth and entrance; but what will we do with Jesus? Is He Lord?

Jesus wants something more basic than for us to know kingdom secrets. He wants us to know and commit to Him. The person who is unwilling to accept Jesus as king will never *see* or *hear* or *understand*. **John 14:9**, "Have I been with you for so long, Philip, and you still don't know me?"

'They search the Scriptures because they think that they have life in them, but they testify of Me,' Jesus says, 'yet they will not come to Me to have life' in **John 5:39 and following**. What's the real problem? They do not have the love of God in themselves (verse 42). *The key to knowing anyone is to fall in love with them so that you have this burning desire to know them*.

Mary introduced Jesus to the world. In **John 5:44** Jesus is a prophet like Moses, and it is said in **Deuteronomy 18:18**, 'You must listen to Him.' John the Baptist declared, 'Behold the lamb of God' in **John 1:29**. Abraham, himself, saw Jesus' day in **John 8:56**. Even the Father, Himself, at the baptism of Jesus, introduced Jesus to the world. Even the children in the streets, if they had been told to hush, even the rock would have cried out. The Scriptures, His works, all of these things testified to whom Jesus is; but seeing, they did not see; and hearing, they did not hear or understand. This is Jesus' emphasis; make disciples and teach them to obey all that I have commanded you (Matthew 28:20). So, if we do not see obedience, then maybe what we are teaching is not being understood. And maybe it is not being understood because people are not true disciples of Jesus. They are sitting in the classroom but they are not enrolled; they are at the wedding banquet without a garment which is understanding the key concept here; do you really understand Me?

Our deepest relationships are when we "know" people. "Get me". As I wrote this, a song came on that reminded me of a person who shared the meaning of it for them as a part of their healing. Because I know their story, "I get it". Do we know Jesus? Do we "get it"? Do we really 'see'? Do we really 'hear'? Do we really 'understand'?

The word “understand” is suniemi (συνιημι). It means to put together, to comprehend thoroughly. It is when everything comes together. When Jesus told His parents that He was at His Father’s business, they did not understand the statement (**Luke 2:41-52**).

In **Luke 18:34** Jesus was talking about what was going to happen in Jerusalem, “**But the disciples understood none of these things, and the meaning of this statement was hidden from them, and they did not comprehend the things that were said**”. It didn’t come together for them.

They were His Apostles on the road to Emmaus in **Luke 24:45**, “***Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures***”. Just like now, when I read **Luke 24:49**, Jesus’ statement that the ‘sending forth the promise on the disciples, the promise of **Genesis 12** was to bless the pouring out of Scripture ... God’s blessing. ***I don’t think I ever directly connected the pouring out of the Spirit with the promise of blessing***. Did He open my mind to understand what I have read so often? Did He just give me an example of how it works?

In **Matthew 16:12**, after talking to His disciples about the leaven of the Pharisees in verse 9 He says, “Do you not yet understand?” In verse 11, “How is it that you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread?” “**Then they understood that He did not say to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.**”

In **Matthew 17:13**, after a talk about Elijah, ***as they came down from the mountain of transfiguration, they understood He had spoken to them about John the Baptist***. A telling verse is **Acts 7:25**. In Stephen’s speech after Moses killed the Egyptians, “**and he supposed that his brethren understood that God was granting them deliverance through him**” but **they did not understand!** He truly was the one, but He got ahead of God’s timing. So the rejection later caused him to be reluctant to accept the role of deliverer.

Now, we’re going to stop right there, but I’ve been talking about this idea of understanding the parables and what it means to truly understand. That is what we’re seeking in this study of “The Mind of Christ”. It is to understand the mind of Christ, to “get Him”, to “know Him”.

So, we’ll pick up at this place on our next session. If you want to find any more of our teachings, you can go to <https://www.centernalsarasota.org/> where you’ll find links to at least the things we have been doing for the past year or so.

Thank you for being with us today.

God bless and take care.

Have a good day.