

Open Line Bible Study Lesson Thirteen March 6th, 2018

Scripture Texts: Matthew 13:1-23, Mark 4:1-10, Luke 8:4-15

Tonight's subject "The Question" to "The Prophecy & the Word"

Let's explore that statement. We may not see the truth at all that is presented and is plainly described in the scripture. We are simply blind to it due to immaturity, lack of commitment or that our LORD has chosen to not disclose yet some deeper truth to us for HIS reasons. These causes may or may not be the result of sin. Every person's situation is different. Whatever may be the reasons, it is so that some truths currently surpass our understanding. There is also the problem of poor or incorrect misinterpretation of what is stated in scripture. Too many when they read Isaiah 6 cannot avoid reading into the verses that our Heavenly Father has determined to NOT allow persons to see the truth of HIS Kingdom when presented just b/c GOD decided so! At first glance in Isaiah 6, this certainly appears to be the case. The last 500 years or so of Church history has been influenced by the continued theological debate as to whether GOD has pre-destined persons to salvation or not or whether all can be saved. We are not going to be able to decide or debate that question here in much detail BUT we must avoid always believing or relying on our very first interpretation of any scripture verse. Our mind is not that renewed that we should have the unseen vanity to think our every interpretation of any verse is always correct, thorough and exhaustive of GOD's purpose and meaning.

When JESUS brings up prophet Isaiah's vision of what he saw in Heavenly counsels we must consider the following. First, JESUS isn't referring to this to defend facts or doctrines that pivotal historical church figures believed that became known as Calvinism or Wesleyan Arminianism. The conversation isn't to defend or criticize those issues. Second, JESUS was looking into the past remembering a conversation, HE no doubt was part of, that revolved around the knowledge the GOD-head possessed at how much damage was done to the conscience of man from the deadliness of sin. Third, JESUS was saying sin is so destructive to the human race that it will not be enough to tell them the truth alone. They can hear the truth over and over and that alone will not enable them to believe and receive it. Fourth, JESUS knows until the time is appropriate and other pre-requisites are fulfilled then persons will not be able to listen. JESUS is attempting to persuade the disciples to further understand why his audience isn't thoroughly ready to listen and heed HIS every word. The problem isn't the teacher nor is always exclusively the listener. Sometimes there are other issues unseen to the casual observer. Now the more we understand and know the LORD's heart combining these truths together the more effective our intercession will become. The more we know the less probability there is our own limitations will manipulate our prayers. Again, this is deeper than most will give time to consider.

Two closing thoughts tonight: Look back at the original question asked tonight. We've attempted to answer it but let's review the answers now. They cannot hear JESUS b/c they do not know the secrets to the Kingdom of GOD. Those secrets have not been made known to them. The use of parables and its effect on the unrepentant heart keeps such persons from truly hearing the truth when it is shared. Sin hardens every heart into being calloused except grace softens the heart to receive the truth.

Callouses continue to keep or hinder even committed disciples from seeing everything the FATHER longs for them to eventually see. The scripture is profound in meaning and its application is limited to our maturity and GOD's sovereign purpose. Please notice the statement made at the end of the 2nd paragraph on page 2. Last week, I asked a question seldom considered. Initially, it will sound strange. Do we speak parables or do we speak in parables? We will explain this process HOLY SPIRIT still works today but has often gone unnoticed.

Consider the following. This must be followed through and understood in spirit and mind and heart! Jesus clearly states in response to the disciples question in paraphrase, "you have the ability to get it and others were not given the ability to get it". Most of us who are enabled to get it still don't get it altogether! What's going on? Look at verse 10. The disciples ask "why do you speak in parables?" What did they mean besides what we assume this means? We normally read into that question to JESUS that it was asked b/c the audience didn't understand what JESUS was saying to them. That is probably true and in some cases the story line makes that clear it's the primary issue. However it is not the only message to be seen in the disciple's question. The disciples were not exclusively saying, "Hey JESUS, the audience didn't understand!" They are saying many things. First, they don't understand you. That one is clear. Second, why do you tell unusual, unknown stories we've never heard? In today's church culture we lose the significance of the statement from the gospels when the people proclaimed, "We have never heard anyone talk/teach like this before!" It should be obvious what is implied by this statement but we miss it. People had never heard anyone teach like JESUS did with creativity, authority, compassion, certainty and mystery rolled into one. JESUS was different and so were his stories! Third, why tell stories that force us to have to consider what is being said? Your stories involve mystery and hidden messages that leave some baffled as to whatever you meant or what your intention is in talking the way you do. Fourth, why don't you just speak in plain straightforward language that everyone will know what you clearly meant? Fifth, why don't you answer the questions we've asked first and then get to all those strange stories later we are baffled by? Sixth, their question was to denote the audience was offended at times by the strange stories and JESUS' priority in telling them. Seventh, (this was often asked JESUS) "why don't you teach like the scribes and Pharisees do?" Or in other words, "why are you not just like them in their teaching method and spirit?" Eight, apparently as JESUS stated in v. 17 some persons wanted to know the truth but they still were not allowed to do so.

This fact troubles us and should. Not b/c our GOD is at fault but b/c we haven't examined the meaning of this principle. While hunger is a pre-requisite for advancing into Kingdom truth it is not the only requirement. We must consider the LORD's plans, ways, principles and that trust and faith on our part are always needed. If GOD answered every question and granted every request we would be doomed to trust the answers and gifts rather than the giver. It's a truth we know but is difficult to always walk in. Nine, their question assumes they will apply the truth if JESUS would only further explain the truth in clearer language. THAT IS NOT TRUE. We have proof of that in this story. BECAUSE JESUS explains the story more clearly and they still do not GET IT! Is that convicting or what? Ten, their question reveals their very limited knowledge and experience as to actually knowing the living GOD. They want an explanation that satisfies everyone's perspective about understanding GOD! They are human beings! They fail to see that GOD cannot be adequately explained away alone. GOD must be experienced!

You must be born again and then eventually your mind be born again in what the scriptures call having your mind renewed! Now, I don't know about you but I thought for years I understood what the implications were of the disciple's question. How blind have I been?

The last implication of their question we examine goes back to that peculiar question I first asked. Do we speak parables or do we speak in parables? What does this mean? When we hear the word parable we are prone to think of some specific story JESUS tells involving mystery & the need for our having an interpretation & enlightenment to apply its meaning. We might think if JESUS didn't tell parables there would be no problems. We assume people didn't understand JESUS b/c JESUS told unusual stories we call parables that have to be interpreted or you get left in the dark. While some persons didn't receive JESUS due to His story telling approach that alone is not the primary basis for their rejection of Him. They couldn't deal with the light of GOD in JESUS. That was the first issue. Here's a question. How often do preachers/teachers/evangelists tell modern day parables? With the exception of illustrations this is seldom done. You rarely hear new parable's (give example). Instead we hear the parable's from scripture, other Bible stories and other old/new stories that people still don't always get the point no matter how plain spoken we might be. Ultimately, we are blind to truth not stories. Truth can be hidden in parables or everyday simple stories. So how do we speak parables or speak in parables? JESUS spoke parables most persons couldn't understand. Then sometimes he told the truth in straightforward ways and the truth was still not received. In this case JESUS was speaking in parables. His answers had the same effect as did HIS parable stories. Most anyone teaching the Scriptures today are speaking in parables or parable effect. They are straightforward in their approach but their teaching is not heeded by those with a calloused heart. This is the parable effect. That is, it produces the same result as if we were teaching parables. Calloused hearts reject parables and stories. Speaking effectively and clearly is not all needed. Holy Spirit removes the callous as we pray, teach and love people. Nothing less works.