

Open Line Bible Study Lesson Sixteen May 8, 2018

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

Tonight's subject "The Meaning" to "The Purpose"

Beginning in v. 18, Jesus begins to describe the meaning of the parable sower. The parable is described in great detail with little room left for confusion about what is meant in this story. What is interesting for us to consider is the following. When v. 16 is promised to be our gift in our walk with the LORD, we are left with many questions as to how this story line ends. First, why does Jesus explain the parable in such great detail? If we consider this, we might conclude the detailed explanation is given due to the promise that has been made in v. 16. While there is some merit to this presumption consider the following. If the detailed explanation is given strictly b/c of the v. 16 promise then wouldn't it be that every other parable would also be clearly explained too?

Now it is possible that Jesus did explain every parable to the disciples in such great detail but if He did the disciples for unknown reasons to us were not inspired to report this in the gospels we have in the Scripture. We don't know what the disciples saw that they didn't record in their story lines. So, we cannot reach a conclusion about this. That said, I believe the detailed explanation of the parable sower is not strictly given us due to the v. 16 promise. Most persons seldom consider this issue. What I believe the detailed explanation of the parable sower is primarily about is the following. First, as stated it is not about the v. 16 promise exclusively. Second, it is not that Jesus promises to allow us to understand every parable or secret of the Kingdom without process, examination, hunger and right season and timing. Consider what Jesus does here in this explanation. He skips the common requirements for revelation knowledge and wisdom to be obtained. Third, the detailed explanation is given due to the fact that Jesus knows the disciples just absolutely cannot afford to misunderstand this parable and thus begin their journey on unstable ground, wrong interpretation or false hoods. Fourth, Jesus knows about our walk with Him that if we interpret any major event in a very misdirected way or an incorrect way or any manner that the Devil is able to insert some lie or deception into our perception/interpretation then this alters our course permanently until Jesus confronts and deals with that lie. Fifth, another way to explain the fourth point is this. Jesus knows the foundation must be correct or everything else is in trouble when built on an improper faulty foundation. Sixth, this interpretation shows the grace and mercy of GOD to His Church. It is like the numbers provided in a Sudoku puzzle.

Enough numbers are given to you that through deduction, reason and examination you can figure out the rest of the puzzle. Jesus has done this here in the detailed explanation. This parable clearly explained gives you the necessary start to interpret and follow the rest of the story correctly. Remember Mk 4:13. You must start right to possibly stay right. Seventh, Jesus is saying to the Disciples that the rest of this will not be easily obtained.

V. 16 was given for this reason. While Jesus explains the sower parable other truths must be sought after. Remember, your eyes and ears are blessed so you can receive the truth if you search it out. There is no way to absolutely prove the following but based upon knowing human logic and its common traits the disciples probably often asked Jesus for detailed explanations of other things he taught. But what they probably did was to ask Jesus for answers to the point they weren't using the gifts of wisdom and interpretation Jesus had given them. They wanted easy answers without personal cost. Jesus will only cooperate with this so long before He tells us "you must figure this out by searching and using the gifts I have given you". The point for us is that we are given the basics and when they are exercised we mature into the useful purpose GOD has for us. The disciples didn't know this originally and neither does today's church.

At this very moment in our progress we will not go into deep detail of the parable. We'll do that when we cover the first point referred to in our last meeting April 24th in the first paragraph of that study. That Point #1, is to discover the 4 hearts and their condition referred to in the parable. For now let's look at v. 23 at the promise of the return we reap the LORD describes. We do this to further consider why Jesus so details this parable to us. We notice the promised phenomenal return is a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown! This means so much more than we ever have imagined. It is discussed now to make one thing clear. How often are we aware of any such incredible return on our ministry or labor or dividends from our faith values and investment into the Kingdom? Most of us at 1st glance would think or acknowledge we rarely see such return. We must consider this in deeper detail. The LORD has some encouragement for us. If you are thinking about a lack of return or at least not the tremendous return referred to in v. 23 then consider the following. First, we must broaden our knowledge of what the FATHER sees as a return. Second, we must acknowledge when there is a lack of return this may well prove how we have not understood the parable and have not applied its deeper meanings into our walk with Christ and His ministry to us and others. Third, today's Church must deal with the questions about increase. Is increase guaranteed in some capacity if we are faithful? How do we understand increase? Fourth, are we selling ourselves and the LORD out in some unknown way if we are not seeing some form of obvious return? Fifth, is the promise of greater return something that the LORD requires to come to fruition for obedience to be authentic? Sixth, do those numbers referred to actually mean anything else besides quantity? Seventh, should we be concerned if we don't see obvious increase in our return? Eighth, have you ever asked the LORD or yourself, "Is this the best we can do?" Nine, is the LORD ever behind the scene of loss in our life? Does GOD ever favor loss in our life? Ten, how does v. 23 relate to the parable of the talents? It should be obvious that we must find the purpose of Christ in our life related to these questions. We can take nothing for granted. Never presume anything about what the return benefit means. Let's give this more thought.

How does our LORD define the concept of return? Jesus is not exclusively examining what is obvious to and/or important to persons alone. What is Jesus looking at to evaluate return? We must first remember the return is to HIM, not us! Whatever the result is the result should glorify GOD and be given back to HIM first. Jesus isn't just looking at our return. He is looking at HIS return! This changes our perspective about return! When Jesus considers His return what is He examining?

We may presume we know what return is and only consider obvious outward numerical increase as His return. This certainly is part of what Jesus will often examine. But it isn't all He considers. Jesus will examine our life and ministry with the following criteria for certain. These are not exclusive but HE examines the following as the bare essentials. Jesus will examine the return of persons influenced, persons returned to Him, persons returned to fellowship with the local Church, persons returned to unity and fellowship with other persons, any persons who are in any way impacted positively by our ministry to them. Jesus will examine the character development this creates within our hearts.

After all ministries are said and done have we been transformed more into the image, likeness and character of Jesus? Do we love more, hear more, pray more, give more, forgive more, rejoice more, have more patience, hope more, show more grace, exemplify more peace, serve more, care more and other like qualities? Jesus will examine as to whether He was truly glorified or not in our ministries? Was the ministry business as usual just to do something or was the ministry birthed out of passion for GOD and compassion for persons? This question evaluates whether the LORD was glorified or not. Almost any emphasis on "look what we did" is not a work that glorifies GOD. So Jesus will examine without, within and to HIM what is done as to evaluate the return. We must remember that when there is greater enlightenment, HIS presence is greater, the devil's presence is exposed and decreased and persons are somehow benefited by the gospel then these are returns the LORD is looking for. Has your definition now been broadened? Mine has!

Please do not define return as exclusively being about more quantity the physical/carnal eye can see. As well, please do not define return as exclusively being about anything but more quantity than the physical/carnal eye can see. Again, Jesus is looking at return in every capacity.