

# Open Line Bible Study    Lesson Twelve    February 20, 2018

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

**Tonight's Subject: The Challenge, (What did those hear that did not hear)**

Now we get to the main question.

**HOW DID THESE PERSONS NOT HEAR THE WONDROUS TRUTHS JESUS SHARED WITH THEM?**

We've established it wasn't two messages from JESUS in two different places or two messages from JESUS in the same place. We've considered many of the blind spots that JESUS had to work through to make His point. His problem & challenge is getting through to the heart of His audience. Beyond their defenses, excuses, blindness & resistance what is happening here?

In M 13:11 as JESUS begins to answer their question, HE DROPS A BOMB ON THE DISCIPLES! As if they were already not certain themselves about the complete reasons and ultimate motivation for their question when JESUS begins to answer them HE discloses another round of truth for them to consider rather than confronting all the inconsistencies HE sees in them. JESUS wasn't wrong for saying what and when HE said anything HE taught. That said, the disciples are already choking on the sower parable, they are already battling the spirit of offense coming through the general audience, at this time they have no idea what the spirit of offense even is, not mentioned before they haven't even concluded that JESUS is the Messiah for certain, they wonder about his identity and authenticity in this stage of their relationship and now JESUS states, "The Knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them". JESUS is probably thinking, "Listen, you cannot worry about what everyone else thinks about you, me or faith values. You must understand what is going on right now!"

Right now, the LORD is telling them several things. First, there are secrets to the Kingdom of Heaven. This means that they have been undisclosed. You not only didn't use them, you didn't even know about them or that they even existed. You've been unaware of them. They may have affected your life but you would not have been completely aware of their workings and presence. Second, the secrets to the Kingdom of Heaven can be understood by the grace and direction of GOD! Therefore know this disciple! JESUS is declaring I AM GIVING YOU THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE SECRETS OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN! These secrets have knowledge. They do exist and they can be applied, cooperated with, understood and lived in. You can know them! No longer are you unfamiliar with the kingdom of Heaven. Third, I AM GIVING THEM TO YOU!!!! They are a gift from me to you now! YOU HAVE THEM!

Fourth, they have already been given to you! Don't ask for them instead receive what I have done. I have already given them to you. This fourth truth is something that has left so many disciples stuck. They do not realize what gifts they already have from the FATHER and thus often ask for gifts they already have. This is one devil trick used well against the LORD's people. At the time of the question the disciples do not know this truth but they have been given insight into the Kingdom and they don't even know it yet. In that setting they were not yet using the gift of the knowledge of the secrets of the Kingdom of GOD that JESUS gave them. Fifth, there are still those in your midst who do not have these gifts. Everyone is not benefitting from the gifts as you could b/c everyone does not have access to them as you do. Can you start seeing that the reason they don't like, receive or understand what I am saying is b/c they do not have the gifts I gave you to understand Kingdom truth?

Verse 12 informs us the Kingdom is like a river, never staid but is always moving in one direction from one place to another. In this river of life it is the purpose of GOD to give abundantly to those who learn to live and walk in the Kingdom. It is always increasing for those who look to it for direction. But for those who will not and cannot walk in the Kingdom they are subject to further and further loss. Unfortunate for them, the adversary can steal that which they have no idea is theirs or that they fail to use. So in the Kingdom one group is always moving onward in the purpose of GOD and the other side is being constantly robbed of what they have. This sounds much like the local church in North America. What JESUS is introducing to the disciples is the benefit of the kingdom. Receive it, live in it and prosper in my provision or live outside the Kingdom and suffer the results of the domain where Satan still falsely reigns. The concept of Kingdom principles has been introduced to the disciples and part of the language of the Kingdom are parables. The parables invite one group closer and close the door on others who are satisfied with where they are in life, faith values and true knowledge of who and how the LORD works.

Parables are used by JESUS due to the state and nature of every person's heart. After Jesus has made reference to the Kingdom to the disciples, He then relates the need for parables to what the scripture has already stated about the condition of the human heart. Look at M 10:13, "Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand". JESUS is referencing what Moses, Jeremiah, Isaiah and Ezekiel all stated. Look at Deut 29:4, Jer 5:21 and Ezek 12:2. What do they say about our subject matter? The problem that JESUS is encountering is not new. It is as old as sin is. It is what sin does to the heart of persons. It blinds them and desensitizes them to truth. It also blinds the disciples from seeing what is wrong with those who come to them asking questions about JESUS teaching. Sin is bad news to the heart! Jesus further answers the question describing what Isaiah had to say that is repeated in M 13:14&15. As we look at those verses does it remind you of what can be seen in too many local churches today in America? People have heard and heard and heard and seen and seen and seen the faith described, sometimes walked out and worked out and given out BUT THEY JUST DON'T GET IT THEMSELVES! They appear stuck and unable to learn or retain most of whatever they hear and see in the Christian faith. Is this the same spiritual epidemic? I believe it is. BUT THAT LEADS TO ANOTHER DETAILED CONVERSATION MOST HAVEN'T SEEN THE NEED FOR. We'll get to that next week.

Look at the beginning of M 13:15, "For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes." Several things here to consider: Callouses are good for the hands and are really bad for the heart. What callouses do in the physical body that provide some level of protection against rough irritants that attack the skin is good. However, Jesus uses the analogy of a callous to describe the condition and resistance of the human heart receiving the truth when it is shared. Therefore this callous, this shell, this wall, this stronghold must be removed to enhance the possibility the listener actually hears the truth being spoken rather than the distortion of truth the enemy works in the mind when the heart is calloused. Instead of having a soft heart or a heart that can be made soft the heart is hardened. Consider M 13:14, "In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, "You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving." For me, this is a hard and difficult word to understand both personally and in application of where the church is today. We must pray HOLY SPIRIT remove from us our own calluses that have blinded us from seeing into the deeper places of Heaven and truths that surpass our minds or are very badly misinterpreted.

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 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph on page 2. We go there next week. Stay tuned into HIS Spirit! Prayer.....