



MATTHEW
THE PARABOLIC DISCOURSE
Matthew 13

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CONTEXT

Michael J. Wilkins (NIV Application Commentary: Matthew) uses the following imagery to summarize the nature of the Five Major Discourses in Matthew's Gospel:

- Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) - Kingdom-Life Disciples
- Mission Mandate (Matthew 10) - Mission-Driven Disciples
- Parabolic Discourse (Matthew 13) - Clandestine-Kingdom Disciples
- Community Prescription (Matthew 18) - Community-Based Disciples
- Olivet Discourse - (Matthew 24-25) - Expectant-Sojourner Disciples

Clandestine-Kingdom Disciples: The disciples of Jesus must live in a world that is not yet fully manifested with God's power and yet we must learn to live as citizens of the New Kingdom.

PARABLES

For the first time in Matthew's Gospel, he uses the word "parable" to describe the tool Jesus employed in His teaching. The word means, "casting alongside." Parables were unique stories that were relatable and came from the real world. He used them to teach spiritual truths. A relatable story was "cast alongside" a spiritual truth to enable the hearer to understand more clearly.

Interpreting Parables

1. We must seek to understand the original context and setting of the use of the parable by Jesus. Who was the original audience?
2. What is the “central truth” of the parable?
3. How does this truth connect to our broader understanding of the Kingdom of God (Heaven).
4. How does the truth of the parable apply to the life of the individual believer?
5. What connection do we make to the broader church?

Kingdom Lessons from the Parables of Matthew 13

There are at least two audiences in these parables: the crowds and the disciples. Here is a summary of the lessons taught in Matthew 13:

1. The message of the Kingdom of Heaven is powerful and transformative.
2. The message of the Kingdom of Heaven will be received variously.
3. The Kingdom of Heaven has an eschatological dimension – judgment is inevitable.
4. The power of the Kingdom of Heaven may not be immediately recognized, but it is surprisingly powerful and will be revealed!
5. The value of the Kingdom of Heaven is immeasurable!