

**WARD CHAPEL / CAIN - GRANT A.M.E.
CHURCH, KANSAS CITY, MO**

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BIBLE LESSON

YEAR FOUR: KINGDOMTIDE (ORDINARY TIME)

LESSON #2: MATTHEW 13:10-17 (NEW LIVING TRANSLATION)

¹⁰ His disciples came and asked him, "Why do you use parables when you talk to the people?"
¹¹ He replied, "You are permitted to understand the secrets of the Kingdom of Heaven, but others are not. ¹² To those who listen to my teaching, more understanding will be given, and they will have an abundance of knowledge. But for those who are not listening, even what little understanding they have will be taken away from them. ¹³ That is why I use these parables, For they look, but they don't really see. They hear, but they don't really listen or understand. ¹⁴ This fulfills the prophecy of Isaiah that says, 'When you hear what I say, you will not understand. When you see what I do, you will not comprehend. ¹⁵ For the hearts of these people are hardened, and their ears cannot hear, and they have closed their eyes—so their eyes cannot see, and their ears cannot hear, and their hearts cannot understand, and they cannot turn to me and let me heal them.'¹⁶ "But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear. ¹⁷ I tell you the truth, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, but they didn't see it. And they longed to hear what you hear, but they didn't hear it.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE TEXT?

"We do not know for sure who wrote the Gospel according to Matthew, but its author was a devout believer in Jesus as Messiah and Son of God... Matthew was a Jewish Christian writing for other Jewish Christians who have moved from being traditional Jews to being Jews who thought Jesus was the Messiah to being a separate 'Christian' Community."ⁱ

In our focus text, Jesus' disciples asked why He spoke in parables. Jesus' answer has caused some scholars to suggest that Jesus was advocating concealing His message from certain people. But in fact the Disciples, who had the benefit of private tutoring sessions with Jesus, were more receptive to His parables and knowing "the secrets of the Kingdom of Heaven" (v. 11), while others (the crowds) were not. "Jesus declared that he spoke in parables to the crowds because though they heard (etc.), they didn't understand what they heard... Through parables, Jesus was trying to reach them for God. If God had not revealed himself to the people in Jesus, they would have no chance to know him. But the choice of whether to be open to God's truth or reject it was theirs."

Jesus concludes this section by pronouncing blessings upon His disciples because of what their eyes and ears were receptive to: His truth. "They were seeing and hearing the things generations of righteous people and prophets had unavailingly longed to see and hear (v. 17)."ⁱⁱ

CASTING THE VISION: BISHOP CLEMENT W. FUGH

The Butterfly is the result of *metamorphosis* - the process of changing into something completely different. The fourth year of this Quadrennial, we've been changing into "A Holy Nation."



- There are 33 "in-between" Sundays called "ordinary time" where the Church experiences the on-going divine providence of God among us. We ought to use this time to usher in the consummation of the ages. We are to take on our responsibility of preparing the world for the Second Coming of Christ.
- The Kingdom of God is seen in Four Acts: a. Creation; b. Anti-God forces in rebellion; c. Community formed with Kingdom Mysteries revealed; & d. "The Mean-Time" (**where we are now**).

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDERⁱⁱⁱ

1. What do parables accomplish that simple and direct speech lacks?
2. How does Jesus' challenge in verse 9 help explain verses 11-12?
3. How does faith open you up to more and more spiritual insight?
4. How does the quotation from Isaiah (vv. 14-15) explain the difficulty of understanding parables?
5. In verses 16-17, Jesus gives a new Beatitude. What have these disciples seen and heard that the prophets longed to see and hear? Are we included in this blessing?

"THINK THROUGH"

“There is a sober warning in these verses against hardening our hearts. How can we ensure that our hearts remain tender and responsive to God's Word? How can we pray for those who appear to have closed their minds to the Good News?”^{iv}

ⁱ Excerpted from the *New Proclamation Commentary on the Gospels*. Andrew Gregory, Editor (Fortress Press, c. 2006) p. 9 & 11

ⁱⁱ Excerpted from the *Layman's Bible Book Commentary, Vol. 15: Matthew* by Clair M. Crissey (c. 1981, Broadman Press), p. 73-74

ⁱⁱⁱ Questions gleaned from *The Serendipity Bible for Groups* (c. 1998 Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI), p. 1345

^{iv} Excerpted from *Journey Through Matthew: 62 Devotional Insights by Mike Raiter* (c. 2016 by Michael David Raiter), p. 63