

The Battle for Truth- 'UNDERSTANDING'

Focus Scriptures: Matthew 13: 1-9; Matthew 4: 12-18

Supporting scriptures: Luke 24: 44- 47; Proverbs 2:2-5; Acts 16:14; Acts 17:11; John 15: 1-2; 2 Timothy 3: 12

Jesus would teach using the principles of parables this was known to the Jewish community in teaching but here as he spoke to the large crowd he spoke a parable that left everyone wondering what he meant by this story.

There are people in the community who study the Talmud and wisdom literature would understand that a parable is one could sit down and study to understand. But here this parable made everyone lost

V10: Why do you use parables? - if your message is so important to preach about the kingdom of God why use parables... your making your message a mystery and Jesus replied in verse 11- you are permitted to understand the secrets of the kingdom of heaven but others are not

How Wonderful of a blessing that we are allowed to understand the mysteries of the kingdom. Things that the prophets would search for but now Jesus is opening the door to his disciples to understand.

Pay attention to the word UNDERSTAND

'understand' from the greek background calls for action - it means to place something with... aka those seeds that fell on the good ground represents those who hear and understand. This signifies the response of the individual to the message of the kingdom of God. The 'good ground' responds positively. (Matthew and Simon, James and John response was to leave their nets - Matthew 4: 20-22) they responded showing immediately Joy but also left everything to attach themselves to the message of Jesus.

Matthew 13 Verse 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.

This is a promise. If we listen to his teaching we will understand

Two types of people highlighted in this verse:

1. Listening to the parables of Jesus with some level of understanding.
- this person has some level of understanding and continues to listen and Jesus says that this person will have an abundance of knowledge - keep listening
2. Those who don't listen/stop listening

- Even what they understand will be taken away from them

Where did this individual get his first portion of understanding? He has understanding he is about to lose: (verse 13)

The disciples are sitting in a privileged position blessed to see and hear what the prophets longed to hear. We too are blessed to see things that the prophets did not see or hear.

Parable of the Sower and the seeds:

Note briefly: this is not the progression but the end result of the word deposited in the soil.

The message of the kingdom remains constant it is the condition of the soil that determines how the seed is able to proceed fruit

1. Footpath seeds: hear but don't understand
 1. The wicked one snatches away the understanding that was in the heart of this person.
 2. The message is treated with disregard and the end result is death
2. The seed on ROCK: Hear, receive with joy, no roots so they fall away when challenges/persecution arise for believing God's word
 1. These people hear the message and receive it with joy but these people don't last long
 2. There is a test coming that will prove if we have responded appropriately to the word of God.
 3. Are we kingdom minded? Do we understand the King's agenda?
 4. This person spends no time searching out the scriptures like the Bereans in Acts
 5. Offended in the hour of persecution: a collision with how it is received and how we responded to it. *Matthew 11:6; Acts 14: 19- 22 (there is no cheap salvation)
3. The good Soil
 1. This soil paid regard to the message
 2. 2 Timothy 3: 12 | Matthew 5: 11
 - 3.

THE MESSAGE OF THE KINGDOM

Luke 24: 47 - repentance and forgiveness of sins must be preached in the name of Jesus

If we are committed to the kingdom of God our lives must produce fruit How we handle truth will tell us where we will stand in the hour of persecution. What attention and diligence we take toward the word of God will tell us where we will stand. If truth is suppressed then it will have no effect but truth lived out will bear fruit.

Matthew 13: 20

We are standing in a time of sifting - when it will be proven what our response is to the Word of God. It's a moment in history like we have never seen before - the battle for truth.

Many of us have responded to the word and we are filled with exuberance, but should we ask ourselves how deep are our roots in the word of God. Before we look at producing fruit let's examine ourselves. We look good we have joy but could it be that the only reason that we are so joyful is that the time of testing has not yet come our way?

How do I gain understanding?

Proverbs 2:2 - seek it takes focus

Luke 24: 44 - the disciples represent those who hear and understand.

Jesus open their minds -

Acts 16: 14

Acts 17:11 - Bereans searched the scriptures

Salvation requires us to spend time in the word of God. There is no salvation with God's word being foreign to the individual. You have to have an understanding of what you received.

Jesus is the true vine and his father the husbandman -any branch without fruit is severed and cast in the fire - *John 15:1-2*

What have we learned from this year's events?

Some may have recognized how attached we are to Jesse and to others we recognize that the message of joy and good news now seems quite foreign to us and we are offended at the message.

This is the last Sunday of this year and I hope we understand that the desire for a brighter hope in this world is vanity because this world will become even more difficult. There will be a battle for truth for every individual. Time for us to examine ourselves - do I respond to the message only on emotions or is it a mental response that I have thought about it carefully ...” Count the cost” (*Luke 14:28-33*) foxes have holes and birds have their nests (*Luke 9: 58*) is the kingdom worth it. You can't have two masters. You must have a single mind you can't serve God and money your priority must be Jesus first. (*Matthew 6:24*) Keep the focus on the family of God are those who are listening to God's words. Jesus must be first priority for the hour of testing is already here. Only to be fully revealed but it is already here. Any man that will come after me must drop his agenda like the nets from James and John and come - fixing your mind on Jesus because the hour is coming to test you if you are offended by Christ's message.

Pray that in the hour of testing we will not be ashamed of the word of God.