

Gospel According to Matthew li

by Stephen Kaung

The kingdom of the heavens is a spiritual reality that is a condition of the spirit, a relationship between us and the Father, and a heavenly kingdom that is not limited by time or space.

Duration: 1:16:39

Scripture: Matthew 5:3-10, Matthew 13:1, Matthew 13:10

Topics: "Matthew"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the parable of the woman who mixed leaven into three measures of meal. He explains that traditionally, this parable is interpreted as a representation of the growth of Christianity. However, the preacher argues that a closer reading reveals that God actually has the opposite intention. The three measures of meal symbolize the meal offering to God, and the leaven represents something evil. The preacher then goes on to discuss other parables, such as the parable of the net and the parable of the wheat and the tares, emphasizing the importance of understanding the parable of the sower as the foundation for understanding all the other parables.

Transcript

We do desire to sit at thy feet as Mary of old. May thy spirit sweep over our soul. As we gaze upon thee, Lord, we pray that thou will open our heart, that we may understand.

We pray that as we wait upon thee and know thy mind, we may be like Mary of old. Anoint thee with a pure heart. O Lord, we pray that we may be one with thee, not only in life, but even in purpose.

We commit this time into thy hand, trusting thy Holy Spirit to perfect his work in us. In the name of our Lord Jesus. Amen.

We read the first 12 verses of Matthew chapter 5 last night, but we haven't touched upon it. Probably we'll re-read it and add something more to it. So will you please turn to Matthew chapter 5. Matthew chapter 5. We'll read the first 12 verses.

But seeing the crowds, he that is our Lord Jesus went up into the mountain, and having set down his disciples came to him. And having opened his mouth, he kept them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens. Blessed they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Blessed the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled. Blessed the merciful, for they shall find mercy.

Blessed the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed they who are persecuted on account of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens.

Blessed are ye when they may reproach and persecute you, and say every wicked thing against you, lying. For mine sake, rejoice and exult, for your reward is great in the heavens. For thus have they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Matthew chapter 13. We begin with verse 1. And that same day Jesus went out from the house and sat down by the sea. And great crowds were gathered together to him, so that going on board ship himself he sat down.

And the whole crowd stood on the shore, and he spoke to them many things in parable, saying, Behold, the sower went out to sow. Verse 10. And the disciples came up and said to him, Why speakest thou to them in parables? And he answering said to them, Because to you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens.

But to them it is not given. He mentioned last night that the gospel according to Matthew is the gospel of the king. Because the Christ whom Matthew knew in his own experience is the king.

When the Lord called him, Follow me, he left all and followed the Lord. Our Lord Jesus came to this earth for one purpose, according to Matthew. And that purpose is to establish his kingdom on earth.

That's the reason why you'll find in the very beginning of his ministry, he said, Repent, for the kingdom of the heavens has drawn nigh. The king has come. And he is calling to himself a people.

And that people will be his kingdom. In Matthew chapter 12 he says, From the time of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of the heavens is to be taken by violence, and a violent seize on it. The kingdom of the heavens is here on earth.

But those who are in that kingdom must be the violent ones. Not in the sense, but in the sense of being desperate. In the sense of gambling everything upon Christ.

In the sense of committing everything to Christ. And in that way we are the kingdom of the heavens on earth. For the sake of understanding the meaning of the kingdom of the heavens, we mentioned last night that sometimes the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the heavens are synonymous.

But at other times you'll find the kingdom of the heavens is more specific. In other words, the kingdom of God extends from eternity to eternity. Thou hast established thy throne in the heavens, and thy kingdom rules over all.

This is the kingdom of God. But the kingdom of the heavens is a specific term used by Matthew. And it refers in a very special way to that which is related to Christ.

Because Christ is the one who came down from heaven, and yet he is still in heaven. So whoever is under the authority of Christ, who is from heaven and still in heaven, he is in the kingdom of the heavens. So in that sense you'll find the kingdom of the heavens is a specific section in the kingdom of God.

In the book of Matthew we find there are three potholes, or peaks, or heights, that will give us an understanding of what the kingdom of the heavens is. And these are found in Matthew chapter 5 to 7, that's the first pothole, the reality of the kingdom of the heavens. And the second place is in Matthew chapter 13, the mystery of the kingdom of the heavens.

And the third place is found in Matthew chapters 24 and 25, the public appearing in the future of the kingdom of the heavens. And by knowing these three points, it will help us to understand what the kingdom of the heavens is. Now this morning probably we have to take in a little bit more, because we didn't mention anything about the first point last night.

So this morning we have to take two points instead of one, and leave the last one, God willing, to tonight. What is the kingdom of the heavens? What is its reality? Who are in that kingdom? Where is it? How do we know that this is the kingdom of the heavens? These answers may be found in Matthew chapter 5, chapter 6 and chapter 7. Now sometimes people take these three chapters, so-called Sermon on the Mount. Sometimes people think that the Sermon on the Mount sets the tone of Christian ethics, as Moses gave the law to the nation of Israel.

So the Lord Jesus gave his law to the whole world. But if we read very carefully, we find that the Sermon on the Mount is not Christ giving some ethics, moral ethics to the world. Why? Because when there were great crowds coming to the Lord, instead of meeting them, the Lord seemed to withdraw from the crowds.

He climbed the mountain. And after he climbed the mountain, he sat down. And the Bible says his disciples came to him.

And he opened his mouth and said, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens. So you see, our Lord Jesus is not addressing the crowd. He addresses himself to his disciples.

Those who have already left everything and followed him. And he was telling them what the kingdom of the heavens is like. It really is.

The crowds standing around. Over here, what the law says. But it is to the disciples that he is really speaking to.

So brothers and sisters, the Sermon on the Mount is not something that our Lord gives to this world. As if the Lord is setting up a higher moral standard for the world. No.

The so-called Sermon on the Mount is our Lord Jesus revealing the reality of the kingdom of the heavens to those who are already in it. The Lord is telling them what the kingdom of the heavens really is. You know, there is a great difference between moral and spiritual.

Setting up a moral standard for people to keep, to do and to follow. Who can do that? Not one in a nation of Israel can keep the law of Moses. How can anyone in this world keep the Sermon on the Mount? The more you try to keep the Sermon on the Mount, the more you will be in the valley.

It is impossible. The Lord does not give these words to the world to keep. It is too hard for them.

And even we as Christians. Suppose we try to keep the Sermon on the Mount with our own strength. Suppose we take these words as moral standards and try to do them.

Can you do them? Are you able to do it? We find they are very hard words. Very hard words. Impossible.

But here you'll find our Lord Jesus is speaking to his disciples these words. Not as setting up a moral standard. But as revealing the spiritual reality of the Kingdom of the Heavens.

If it is just moral, it may be dead. But if it is spiritual, it is life. In other words, unless you have the life of Christ in you, and more, unless you live under the authority of Christ the King, so that the life that is in you may be released through you.

No one is able to follow the Sermon on the Mount. It is a spiritual matter, not a moral matter. It is not something that is set up before you and then you try to do it.

That's moral. But it is a spiritual reality which can only be realized by the life of Christ in you. Brothers and sisters, we have the life of Christ enough.

Thank God for that. But if we have the life of Christ in us and yet we do not commit ourselves to the Lord, to his authority, that life is not able to benefit itself. In other words, unless we are his disciples, unless we have put ourselves under him and let him rule over us, that will bring out the life of Christ within us.

And when that life overflows, that is the Sermon on the Mount. It is not a work. It is the fruit of life.

Being spiritual does not mean that it is not moral. Or it is less moral. On the contrary, to be spiritual is over, more than just being moral.

Therefore our righteousness must exceed the righteousness of the Pharisees and the scribes. The righteousness of the Pharisees and the scribes is a moral matter. But unless our righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the Pharisees and the scribes, we cannot enter into the kingdom of the heavens.

It is purely a spiritual matter. So first of all, we have to understand this. The kingdom of the heavens is a spiritual reality.

And this spiritual reality is found among those who have the life of Christ and who live under the authority of Christ. And being a spiritual reality, it is not limited by time or space. You know, whenever you touch spiritual reality, you are beyond time and space.

In other words, it is everlasting. Therefore, the Sermon on the Mount does not have a time limit or a space limit. Wherever there is the reality of the King over his people, there is the kingdom of the heavens on earth.

Has the kingdom of the heavens arrived? In spiritual reality, it is already here. Though in its public manifestation we have to wait until Christ returns. So, Matthew 5, 6 and 7 shows us what is the nature of the kingdom of the heavens.

What is the characteristic of that kingdom? Christ said, My kingdom is not of this world. Now, what is that kingdom? What is it like? When the heavens rule over us, then what will be our condition? Without going into too much detail, because personally I feel Matthew 5, 6 and 7 are so clear. When you come to spiritual reality, it is simple.

You know, we make things complicated. And because we make things complicated, we get confused. But when you get to spiritual reality, actually it is very simple.

When you read Matthew 5, 6 and 7, you do not need much exposition. It is clear. It is open.

But, we will just mention very briefly three points. In Matthew chapter 5, you will find the Lord said, The kingdom of the heavens is spiritual. In other words, the nature of the kingdom of the heavens is intensely spiritual.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens. How very different it is from human concept. From human concept, Blessed are the rich in material, for theirs is the kingdom of this world.

The more you have in this world, the more you have the kingdom. But with the kingdom of the heavens, it is different. Blessed are the poor in spirit.

Of course you know, this is the character of our Lord Jesus. Our Lord Jesus being equal with God, He emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave, and being in the likeness of a man. He further humbled Himself, being obedient to the Father, even unto death, and that the death of the cross.

This is the poor in spirit. It doesn't mean that the poor in spirit is because he has nothing. No.

Usually you'll find the poor in spirit is one who has a lot. But because he has a lot, he is willing to empty everything, and take the position of the poor, as if he has nothing. And in that kind of a spirit, you'll find the kingdom of the heavens.

Brothers and sisters, the poor in spirit is the spirit of Christ. He has everything, and yet, he is willing to empty all, and become nothing. He said, I can do nothing by myself.

What I do is because my Father is doing it. I cannot say anything by myself. If I say anything, it's because I have heard my Father has said it.

In other words, you'll find in the life of our Lord Jesus, there is a poorness in spirit. Not really poverty, but it's humility. It's emptying.

He who is living under the authority of Christ is bound to be one who has learned a lot. And yet, there is no pride, there is no arrogance. Instead, there is the poorness in spirit.

The kingdom of the heavens is a spirit matter. It is a condition of our spirit, a humility, an emptiness before God. And theirs is the kingdom of the heavens.

When you read every item in the Beatitudes, you will find these are all the characteristics of Christ. Blessed are the meek, for they, they shall be comforted. Our Lord Jesus is called the man of sorrows, acquainted with grief.

Blessed are the merciful. He said, God does not want sacrifice. He wants mercy.

Every item there, you'll find it is a description of the spirit of Christ. Who composed the kingdom of the heavens? Who becomes his kingdom? The kingdom of Christ is honored. Those who have his spirit.

Those who are not by the spirit of Christ. Brothers and sisters, the kingdom of the heavens is intensely spiritual. It is a condition of the spirit.

And if we have the spirit of Christ, then he has his kingdom with us. Only after we have the spirit of Christ, then shall we be light and salt to this world. How can you be salt to this world if you do not have the spirit of Christ? It is not what you do.

It is not what you say. But it is the spirit behind your saying and your doing that really is a testimony to this world. And here you find our Lord Jesus saying he does not come to make void the law.

But he comes to fill it full. It is not a matter of letter. Thou shall not kill.

Thou shall not commit adultery. Thou shall not do this or do that. It is more than letter.

It is the spirit. We may keep the letter of the law, but that will only give us the righteousness of the Pharisees and the scribes. But the law says no.

It is the spirit that quickens. I tell you, it is the spirit. So you'll find the kingdom of the heavens is a spiritual.

How easy it is for us to think of the kingdom of heaven in terms of physical, in terms of the material, in terms of outward things. But the kingdom of the heaven in its reality is we must think of people. We must.

And then in chapter 6 of Matthew you'll find the main thought there is the kingdom of the heaven is heavenly. It's happening. It is not an earthly matter.

It is not something for people. And he will hear. Do not disfigure yourself so that people may praise you.

But brothers and sisters, you'll find the kingdom of the heaven is a heavenly kingdom. It is on earth. And yet it is not of earth.

It is a heavenly... It is a relationship between us and the Father who is in heaven. For this reason, we are not to lay our treasure on earth for ourselves. Because on this earth you'll find there will be moth and rust and there will be thieves digging the hole to steal.

But lay your treasure in heaven where there is no rust and no moth and there is no thief. Where your treasure is, there is your heart. Brothers and sisters, here you'll find the kingdom of the heaven is heavenly in its nature.

Set our mind in the things above. Because there is where Christ sits and we are hit with Christ. You fear it's the kingdom of the heaven and His righteousness and all these things shall be added to it.

We do not need to worry about it. It's the kingdom of God and all these things. We are sorry due to mechanical difficulty we have missed part of the message.

You'll find the Lord addressed Himself to the crowd, but in parables. And He gave the explanation to the disciples in secret. Brothers and sisters, to the world, what is the kingdom of the heaven? In the eyes of the world, the kingdom of the heaven today is Christianity, is Christendom.

Wherever the gospel is preached, wherever missionaries go, hospitals, orphanages, schools, established, all these, in the eyes of the world, is the kingdom of the heaven. They do not know war, nor battle. That's all they know.

That's the reason why when I, before I came to this country, I heard that United States of America is a Christian country. And that's the way the world will look at this country. A Christian country.

You go to a mission school and they consider mission school as Christianity, as Christendom. Brothers and sisters, we should know better, yes. We've got explanation.

But to the world, this is what the kingdom of the heaven is. Christianity, Christendom, is the kingdom of the heaven in our world. But what a confusion.

Remember, the parables refer to the mysteries of the kingdom of the heaven. They do not refer to the church. If you try to explain these parables as concerning the church, then you get into real trouble.

Real trouble. Because these are parables concerning the mysteries of the kingdom of the heaven. Not the church.

Now let us see very briefly these parables. First, the kingdom of the heaven is like a sower going out to sow the seeds. And some seeds fall on the wayside.

And the birds come and smash them away. Some seeds fall upon stony ground. There is a thin layer of earth.

And it begins to come forth. But it has no roots. And when the sun comes out, it starts withering.

And some fall in stony ground. It begins to take root. And it grows forth.

But it is choked by the thorns and cannot bear fruit. But thank God, some grains fall into good ground. And they bear fruit patiently.

Hundredfold, sixtyfold. Now this parable is the basic parable of all the other parables. Because the Lord said, now if you do not understand this parable, then you won't be able to understand all the rest.

So it is very important that we understand what this parable means. And the Lord Himself explains it to us. Who is the sower? No doubt, the Lord Himself.

Repent, for the kingdom of the heavens has drawn nigh. The kingdom of the heavens is in your midst. The Lord is the one who is the sower.

He goes out to sow the seed. Now what is the seed? The seed is the word of the kingdom. Now remember this.

The seed is the word of the kingdom. It is very specific. Very definite.

It is not just a general word. It is the word of the kingdom. As you find in Matthew chapter 24, it says, the gospel of the kingdom must be preached to the end of the nation.

Not only the gospel, but the gospel of the kingdom. The word of the kingdom. Brothers and sisters, we do not hear such word very much these days.

We hear the word of God. We hear the gospel of Jesus Christ. But, it is incomplete.

We do not hear the word of the kingdom. We do not hear that Christ is the king. We do not hear the call of obedience, of surrender, of authority of Christ.

If the word is not sown, how can you get the fruit? Here you find our Lord Jesus is sowing the seed, which is the word of the kingdom. He is calling us to follow him. He is calling us to yield our lives to him.

But the word, some fall upon the wayside. Here you find four different kinds of heart. The first kind of heart is a heart hardened by much care.

The wayside is the place where everybody will step on it. And under heavy tumbling, it becomes very hard, like cement, like stone. So the seed cannot fall into it, but upon it.

And because it is just upon it, the bird can easily snatch it away. Brothers and sisters, lots of people are so involved in this world. Their whole heart is occupied by things of this world.

They have no desire. They have no thought. They have no time for spiritual things.

When they hear the word of the kingdom, it does nothing. It just falls upon them. So the bird, which represents satanic power, the evil spirit, they just come and sow as if they have never heard.

It does not leave anything behind. Then there will be others. Like stony ground.

They have heard the word of the kingdom. They are emotionally stirred. But there is a rock underneath them.

Maybe a sin unconfessed. Maybe a controversy with the Lord that they refused to have it cleared. Maybe a disobedience in the past.

But anyway you find that deep down there, there is a rock there. They are only emotionally stirred. They seem to be very happy to follow the Lord.

But when there is persecution, if you follow the Lord, there will be persecution. And if there is persecution, immediately they say that's not worth it. And they go back.

Then there are others. Like stony ground. Yes, they receive the word.

They let the word take root in them. But they allow the thorns to choke the wheat. So it cannot.

Oh how awful. We receive the word of the kingdom. We know that we should surrender our lives to the Lord.

And yet at the same time, the tears of the blood we cannot bear. But thank God there will be some hearts who have been killed, plowed, turned over, ready. And when the word of the kingdom comes to their hearts, they receive it.

And the Bible says patiently. Not as quick as those on stony ground. But patiently they bear fruit.

A hundredfold. But some does not reach a hundredfold. Only sixtyfold.

And some only fifty. When the gospel of the kingdom is preached, then you find these are the results of the preaching. Some just fall away.

Others may receive it without fruit. And thank God, there will be some patiently in the Lord. This is the first parable.

And then this is continued by the second parable. It is the parable of the tear and the wheat, or the dowel of the wheat. A man goes out to the field to sow the seed.

And after he has sown the good seed, then when men were asleep. Now remember, the men later on there is polling number. It is not singular.

The man who goes out to sow the seed is singular number. But when men slept, poll number. Poll number.

And when these men were sleeping, the enemy slipped in and he stole the bad seed. But these men did not know. These servants did not know.

So both of these seeds began to grow. You know, the dowel or the tear resembles the wheat very much. In the early stage you cannot see the difference.

Therefore these servants did not know the difference. But as it began to bear stalks, blade, began to blade, then the servants suddenly discovered the tears there. You know, the tear when it grows it is black in color.

The wheat is white in color. But when the wheat is ripe, the stalk will fall down towards the earth. Thus the tear will stand straight.

Then you see the difference. You know? So when the servants saw the difference, they went to the master and said, now didn't you sow the good seed? Where came these tears? Well, the master knew. He said, the enemy did that.

The enemy did that. So they said, now do you want us to go out and weed out all these tears? Because the roots have intertwined. If you pull out the wheat, pull out the tears, you pull out the tears.

Let them grow! Remember, the parables refer to the mystery of the kingdom of the heavens. They do not refer to the church. If you try to explain these parables as concerning the church, then you get into real trouble.

Together. Until the harvest time. You know, when the wheat is ready for harvest, the root is almost uprooted.

It's no longer deeply rooted. You just pull it together. So that's the time when you can divide the tears.

When the harvest time comes, then bundle up the tears for burning. And then bring the wheat into the drainage. Brothers and sisters, you find there is a progression in these parables.

Who is the man that sowed the good seeds? Of course it is the Lord. And those who are sinned by the Lord we may sin. Now, what is the seed to you? What is the seed to you? It is no longer the word of the kingdom.

The seed here is the son of the kingdom. Do you see the difference here? The son of the kingdom. In the first parable the Father forms the seed.

The seed is the word of the kingdom. The word of the kingdom must be preached first. But after the word of the kingdom is preached, those who have received that word, like the good ground, they become the sons of the kingdom.

Because they have received the word. They are the sons of the kingdom. Whoever has received the word of the kingdom, they in turn become the sons of the kingdom.

This is the principle of incarnation, you know. The word became flesh. In the case of our Lord Jesus, the word God came into flesh.

But the principle can be applied to all of us. When we receive the word of the kingdom, you know, then the word becomes flesh. We become the sons.

In other words, words should not remain as words. But words should become life. And when words become life, then we become the sons of the kingdom.

What is the field? The field here is not the heart. As in the first parable, the field here is the world. The world is the field.

So you find there is a progression here. Progression. The Lord Jesus is fooling the sons of the kingdom in this world.

Now brothers and sisters, if you see that, you can see the strategy of God. Why is it you are in Richmond? Why is it Brother Ketch is in Washington D.C.? Is it by chance? No. The Lord sold you there.

This is the world. And the Lord, according to his wisdom, according to his divine counsel, he just sold us in the place where we should be. There is a purpose there.

You do not stay in Richmond just because you like the climate here. No. The Lord has sold you in a certain place for a specific purpose.

It is just like in a battle. The general will point here and there his army in strategic points. Or he will try to seize a beachhead or a footpole in the enemy's land.

Why? Because with these strategic points, he can control the whole place. And he can win the war. Now that is the strategy of God.

Brothers and sisters, God has signed us in this world. Here and there. Why? Because we are being put in strategic points.

And by having his people here and there, their testimony will be such that it will be the overthrow of the power. That's the way that the kingdom of God shall finally come. The kingdom of this world shall become the kingdom of our God and his Christ.

The strategy is played today. God has played it here and there. And that's where we shall stand for the kingdom of God.

Let the authority of Christ be known. And the power of darkness shall be overthrown. What a strategy God has.

But, unfortunately, God's servants are not watchful. That man does not sleep. That fellow does not sleep.

He knows very well what the enemy has done. But the servants, these servants, they sleep. Brothers and sisters, in church history you'll find God Christ has planted his people here and there.

First in Jerusalem, then in Antioch, and then in Rome. And you'll find he plans the sons of the kingdom here and there so that he may finally bring this world under his feet. But, in church history you'll find God's servants have not been watchful.

They allow the enemy to slit me and sew the pears. The pears are the sons of the devil. In this world, wherever Christianity is, wherever Christendom is, you'll find there is a mischief.

It should be a pure testimony to God. But, because men are not watchful, you'll find the enemy has put sons of the devil in Christianity. In Christendom.

And in the beginning you cannot see the difference. The loop begins to be intertwined. When it begins to show up, it's too late.

You cannot try to pull. If you do, you'll pull out the wheat. You know, at one time, Calvin, the reformer, the protestant reformer, Calvin and other reformers, they tried to establish the kingdom of heaven on earth in Geneva.

They tried to pull out all the pears. They condemned those people in Geneva, who do not keep the law of God, condemned them to death. They really literally put them to death.

They want to build a kingdom of God on earth and make it pure. But you cannot do that. In Christianity today, there are so many people in Christianity.

In Christendom, they are not believers at all. Nominally, they belong to Christianity, but actually, they belong to the devil. There is no way to separate, separate them.

No way! And this is not something that man can do. Because when the harvest time comes, it is the work of the angels. God has not entrusted man to do this work.

The angels. We are approaching the harvest time, and I can almost see the angels are gathering the pears together for burning. For the Can I say? You cannot apply this parable to the church.

Because so far as the church is concerned, there can be no pear. Why? The church is an unleavened bread. Therefore, in 1 Corinthians 5, purge out the leaven.

In the church, you cannot allow the leaven to be in the bread. No. So you find it is Christianity.

It is not the church. In the church, there has to be discipline. But in Christianity, it is impossible.

But this is the appearance of the kingdom of the heaven. Now this is Christianity. Oh, how often, you know, in China, when we try to preach the gospel, they will point out to us, look what Christianity has done to China.

These Christian nations, the opium war, China wants to get rid of opium, but England fought China because of opium. Christian nation. What a confusion.

What a confusion. But this is what Christianity is. The kingdom of the heaven.

A mystery. In outward appearance. Then it is followed by two parables.

The parable of the mustard seed. Now you know the mustard seed is the smallest of all seeds. And yet when it grows, it becomes a big tree and all the birds of the air come and roost upon it.

You know, the traditional interpretation is Christianity believes very small. Oh, but thank God. It has become such a big institution in this world.

Look what growth Christianity has. And we are boasting about it. But if you read very carefully, you find it is just the opposite that God has in mind.

Mustard seed. In Matthew chapter 17, the Lord said, if your faith is like a mustard seed, you can remove a mountain to the sea. So mustard seed does represent faith.

Living faith. But a mustard seed, which represents living faith, if it grows normally, it will remain a vegetable. An herb.

Mustard is an herb. A vegetable. A plant.

It is not a tree. You know, in Genesis chapter 1, when God created everything, everything is created according to its order, its kind. The tree after its kind.

The vegetable after its kind. God is a God of order. But here you will find faith when it grows up.

It should be at most just a vegetable. In other words, the living faith. And if it grows in this world, it will still remain a very small insignificant thing in the eyes of the world.

God never intends his church to be a big something big in this world. No. That is the reason why in Luke chapter 12, the Lord said, Fear not, little flock.

In comparison with the world, those who are the Lord are a little flock. But do not be afraid. Why? Because it is the good pleasure of your heavenly Father to give you the kingdom.

When the Lord was on earth, these were days of his humiliation. How can those who follow the Lord today be glorified before the Lord is honored with this world? It is contradictory. These are days of humiliation to us.

We are not supposed to be caught, courted, favored by this world. We are to remain small, insignificant. So far as this world is concerned, we remain like a vegetable, but living.

But dear brothers and sisters, instead of remaining in its kind and order, it grows abnormally out of divine order into a big tree. And what happens to that big tree? The birds of the heaven come and roost upon it. Now you cannot explain these birds differently from the birds of the first parable.

If the birds in the first parable refer to Satan and his evil spirit, then these birds refer to the same thing. As Christianity becomes a big organization, then you'll find Satan and his evil power began to come and rest. That is the kingdom of the heaven in appearance.

But this is outward, and what is inward? The fourth parable. A woman could leaven into three measure of meal until the whole meal is leavened. The traditional teaching will be, how Christianity has grown.

You know? But, if you read carefully, you will find it is just the opposite that God has in mind. Three measure of meal is the portion of meal offering. You remember when God appeared to Abraham?

Abraham took three measure of meal to make cake for the Lord.

Meal here represents, three measure of meal represents the oblation, the meal offering, something for God. This is what the church really is. We are the unleavened bread.

We must worship God with sincerity, with honesty. But here you'll find a woman came and hide the leaven in the meal. Leaven in the scripture always speaks of something evil.

You know, in all the offerings, in the meal offering to God, leaven is forbidden. Leaven and honey are forbidden. Only on the day of Pentecost, when they offer first fruit, then there are two leaven cake.

That's the only place where leaven is allowed to be offered. Why? Because the offering at the first fruit, that is at Pentecost, is the offering of the church. And you'll find, no matter how pure we are, there is always some leaven there.

So that's why leaven is offered. But aside from that one instance, no oblation can have any leaven, because they are type of Christ. There is no leaven whatsoever.

Leaven in the scripture speaks of two things. It either refers to evil doctrine, or it refers to evil conduct. In Matthew chapter I think it's chapter 16, or I forgot the chapter number.

Anyway, you'll find the Lord tells his disciples, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. Now what is the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees? The leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees, the Lord said, is the doctrine, the teaching of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The teaching of the Pharisees is formalism.

Formal. Everything is just formal. Awkward things.

Ritualism. And the doctrine of the Sadducees is agnosticism. They doubt everything.

They don't believe in anything. And the leaven of the Herodians is worthiness. Worthiness.

So you find that throughout the centuries as Christianity is supposed to be an offering to God. We are supposed to be an offering to God. And here you find it.

Leaven has come into it. And leavened the whole thing. Evil doctrine has come into Christianity and puffed it up.

Make it more palatable to man. But no longer fits to the offer to God. You know if you bake a bread or a cake, you put leaven in it because it's softer.

It's more palatable. If there's no leaven, it's hard. But brothers and sisters, how Christianity has compromised.

How Christianity has tried to make things soft, palatable to man. But it is no longer fit to be offered to God. And then in 1 Corinthians chapter 5, leaven speaks of evil conduct.

Cast out the evil man because he has sinned. Evil conduct. So leaven in the scripture always speaks of something bad.

Not good. Outwardly, it has grown abnormally into a big institution. And all the evil forces have come to roost.

Inwardly, it is corrupted by evil teaching and evil conduct. This is Christianity. This is the so-called kingdom of man.

Isn't that a mystery? A confusion? This is followed by two other parables. And these parables were spoken in the house. In other words, the Lord spoke to his disciples two other parables.

The parable of the treasure hidden in earth. And the parable of the pearl of great price. Now these two parables form an opposite to the preceding two parables.

The kingdom of the heavens is such a mixture with wheat and tare. The tare plot is the abnormal growth of the muscat seed and the leaven in the meal. And you find the plot that is of God.

The kingdom of the heavens is like a treasure hidden in the earth. You know, most likely sometimes before that somebody must first have buried the treasure in the earth. Otherwise, it will not be there.

You know, during the war time in China, I still remember my grandfather. We had so much war, you know, so much war, you know. So sometimes the war came and we had to flee.

So what will we do? I remember he used an earthen urn, you know. And he would put gold and silver in it. And when everybody was asleep, with one of his servants, his most faithful servant, they were in midnight they would go to the field.

We have a yard there. And they would dig a hole and bury the thing there so that nobody would know. And then we'd flee.

When we came back, he would again dig it up, you know. That's what my grandfather did. So most likely someone had hidden a treasure in the earth.

Then a man came and by chance as it were, he discovered that treasure. Now what did he do? Did he just take it? No, because the field belonged to somebody else. So he buried that again.

He did not let anybody know. He went and he bought the field. So he got the treasure.

He got the treasure. You know that is the story. Brothers and sisters, even before the foundation of the world, God has in his mind a treasure.

What is that treasure? The church. The church. In 2 Corinthians chapter 4, it says we have this treasure in the earthen vessel.

The treasure is Christ. But because we have Christ in us, therefore we become a treasure to God. Do you know that we are treasure to God? We are treasure to Christ? We are very precious to Christ.

Even before the foundation of the world, God had the church in mind. But in this world, it is hidden. The church is like a treasure hidden throughout the ages and the centuries.

Paul says it is a mystery hidden throughout the ages. Until it is discovered, revealed, that man who found the treasure is Christ. He comes to this world and he finds, but what does he do? He does not bring it out.

The church today in this world is still hidden. Is still hidden. He goes away to buy this world.

And when he got this world, then he would take the treasure. This is our Lord. And this is followed by another one.

The pearl of great price. A merchant. He is a pearl merchant.

An expert. He is looking for pearls. He never found other pearls before.

But when he came to a pearl of greatest price, then he went and sold everything just to get that pearl. Brothers and sisters, Israel must be a pearl to God. But the church is the pearl.

And for the sake of having his church, our Lord Jesus gives everything just for it. And also, as a contrast, the treasures of the outward behavior. The pearls speak of the inward experience.

And here you'll find whether it is the outward testimony or the inward experience. It's like the treasure and the pearl in a site. So here you'll find in the kingdom of the heavens there is a mixture.

Something bad, but thank God, something good. And these will remain in Christianity until the last parable. The parable of the net of the sea.

Here a man will cast his net and out of the sea will gather all kinds of things. Then he will sit down and sort them out. And he will put the good in his baffle and the bad he will throw them away.

So, that is the last parable. In other words, when Christ shall return he will send his angels to divide, separate that which belongs to him and that which do not belong to him. There will be a final separation and those who are his will be put in the baffle, will enter into his kingdom.

And those who are not his and that is the end. So, brothers and sisters, when you see the awkward appearance of the kingdom of heaven that is the picture. And the Lord says it is for us to understand.

So, in Matthew 5, 6 and 7 you have the reality. And Matthew 13 you have the awkward appearance. And God willing we will go to Matthew 24 and 25 for the public manifestation of the kingdom of the heaven.

Shall we pray? Our Heavenly Father we do pray that we may not be confused by the mystery of the kingdom of the heaven. But Lord we may know what thy mind is. That we may be those who are in the reality of thy kingdom.

And not just be in the awkward appearance of it. O Lord be merciful to thy people. Not only here but everywhere.

We ask in the name of our Lord Jesus.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/0/SID0796.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/stephen-kaung/gospel-according-to-matthew-ii/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net