

The Gospel of the Kingdom #3

by Stephen Kaung

The Gospel of the Kingdom of the Heavens is a message of self-denial and obedience to God, which is essential for living a life that is pleasing to Him.

Duration: 1:15:43

Scripture: Matthew 5:1-7, Matthew 12:22-32, Matthew 13:1-9, Matthew 13:18-33

Topics: "Kingdom Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the parables of the sower and the wheat and the tares from Matthew chapter 13. He explains that the first parable represents different types of hearts or people who receive the word of God. Some are like the seed that falls on the wayside and is devoured by birds, representing those who hear the word but do not understand or retain it. Others are like the seed that falls on rocky ground or among thorns, representing those who receive the word but are hindered by worldly desires or distractions. However, there is also the fourth type of soil, representing those who receive the word with a good and receptive heart and bear much fruit. The preacher then moves on to the second parable, which he explains as the kingdom of heaven being infiltrated by evil forces, represented by birds that come and roost on the tree that grows from the good seed. He warns against the growth and influence of false Christianity and emphasizes the importance of discernment and staying true to the true teachings of the word of God.

Transcript

Will you please turn to Matthew Chapter 13. We will read the first seventeen verses. I will read it in English first, and my brother will read it in Chinese.

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 parables, saying, Behold, the sower went out to sow, and as he sowed, some grains fell along the way, and the birds came and devoured them, and others fell upon the rocky places where they had not much earth, and immediately they spread up out of the ground because of not having any depths of earth.

But when the sun rose, they were burned up, and because of not having any root, were dried up, and others fell upon the thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them, and others fell upon the good ground, and produced fruit, one a hundred, one sixty, and one thirty. He that has ears, let him hear. 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.

For whoever has, to him shall be given, and he shall be caused to be in abundance. But he who has not, even what he has, shall be taken away from him. For this cause I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear nor understand.

And in them is filled up the prophecy of Isaiah, which says, Hearing ye shall hear and shall not understand, beholding ye shall behold and not see. For the heart of this people has grown fat, and they have heard heavily with their ears, and they have closed their eyes asleep, lest they should see with the eyes, and hear with the ears, and understand with the heart, and should be converted, and I should hear them. But blessed are your eyes, because they see, and your ears, because they hear.

For verily I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see the things which ye behold and did not see them, and to hear the things which ye hear and did not hear them. For there was a man who went out to sow seeds, and when he sowed, birds came to eat the seeds which lay by the roadside, and those which lay on the earth, and the earth was not deep, and they sprouted the fastest. And when the sun came out to dry them, because there were no roots, they withered away.

And those which lay in the fields, and they squeezed them. Therefore I have spoken of them in expression, so that they have heard but do not understand, and that they have sight but can not see, and that they have no ears but can not hear. So now they have the biblical plan of Isaiah to say.

He says of them that if you hear but do not understand, you see but do not know what really being heard means, for the people are blind, and which open very early for our namesake, with their ears sounded and eyes closed.

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██████████,██████████████████,██████████,██████,██████████,██████████ May we have a word of prayer? Dear Lord, we want to thank Thee for gathering us together here this morning. We want to declare that we do gather together unto Thy Name.

Because wherever Thy Name is, there is Thy Presence. We covet Thy Presence more than anything else. We thank Thee for being present with us this morning.

Dear Lord, what hast Thou to say to us? Speak, Thy servants heareth. May Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. Dear Lord, we want Thee to be glorified.

And Thy people be blessed. In Thy precious Name we pray. Amen.

Dear brothers and sisters, we thank the Lord for gathering us together again this morning. Now, if you were there last weekend, you know that the reason why we gather this time, because we do feel that the message, the gospel of the Kingdom of the Heavens must be preached throughout the habitable world. As a testimony to the nations.

And then the Lord said, the end shall come. I wonder, if you have been wondering, why is it that our Lord is still waiting? Has He not promised us? Before He left, He promised His disciples that He would come back and receive them to Himself. And when you come to the end of the Holy Bible, the Lord said, behold, I come quickly.

But here we are, after 20 centuries, and the Lord seems to be delayed. So I have been burdened before the Lord. I'm wondering, why is it that the Lord should be delayed? What is the reason for that? Of course, there is no reason for Him.

Our Lord is ever ready. How He must have longed to come back immediately. The problem must be with us.

And I think one of the main problems is, because the Gospel of the Kingdom of the Heavens has not been preached to all the nations. We know from history, that even though at the very beginning, it is our Lord Jesus who preached the Gospel of the Kingdom of the Heavens. And also His apostles continued with such preaching.

But very soon, it seems as if that message of the Gospel of the Kingdom is gradually losing. Not even that. Even the Gospel of Grace is not known.

It wasn't until the 16th century. Then the Lord began to recover the Gospel of Grace. That we are to be saved by grace, not by merit, by work.

But so far as I understand, the Gospel of the Kingdom of Heavens has not been recovered even then. It wasn't until the 19th century that there are some people who began to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom of the Heavens. And even to our days, if you ask Christians, what is the Gospel of the Kingdom of the Heavens? Many of them do not understand.

We only know of free grace. Now if we are continued in free grace, the result will be we become very self-centered. Everything is for me.

God is for me. Christ is for me. Salvation is for me.

It is me, me, me. Brothers and sisters, no wonder our Lord Jesus is not able to come back. How can he receive us as his bride? Who are totally different from him.

Because he was one who gave up himself. And we are those who centered upon ourselves. And I think the reason is because we forget the Gospel of the Kingdom of the Heavens.

You know, when our Lord Jesus was on earth, this is the Gospel that he was preaching. And today, it becomes something unknown to us. Because it is the Gospel of the Kingdom of Heaven that will prepare us for the second coming of the Lord.

We mentioned last weekend when our Lord Jesus first came, the first time, he came as the king. The king has come. But he has no kingdom.

Because the kingdom on earth is the Roman Empire. Even in the Jewish nation, Herod the Idonian was on the throne. So the reason why our Lord came in the first place, he was seeking for his people.

When people believed on him, he continued to disciple them. Because it is only through discipleship that we will be changed and transformed to be conformed to his image. So after he had some disciples, then you remember Matthew 5. How our Lord Jesus went to the mountain.

And his disciples came to him. And then he opened his mouth. And tell us what we call Sermon on the Mount.

Now what is the Sermon on the Mount? The Sermon on the Mount is just telling us the reality of the kingdom of the heavens. The Lord came to establish his kingdom upon the earth. Now what is that kingdom like? It is absolutely different from all the kingdoms on the earth.

Because it is the kingdom of the heavens. So we find in Matthew 5-7 he told us what is the kingdom of the heavens. The kingdom of the heavens is nothing but the king himself.

His character is to characterize all his citizens. So whoever begins to have his own character, he will be in the kingdom of the heavens. So that is the reason why, when you come to Matthew 11, then the Lord Jesus said, from the day of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of the heavens is to be taken by violence.

And the violence seize upon it. You know, we try to soften the force. But in the original it is the word violent.

We do not like that word. We think it is a bad word. But we know the word violent itself is neutral.

It depends on whom do you do violent. If you do violent to other people, that is bad. But if you do violent to yourself, that is good.

So here you find our Lord Jesus when he was on earth. You will find there is no one who is doing violent to himself just as our Lord Jesus. While he live on earth, he never live for himself.

He live for his father. He deny himself all the time. Not my will, but I will be done.

And if we want to be in the kingdom of the heavens, we must have the same character. We must learn to deny ourselves. Take up our cross and follow him.

So that is what violence mean. And the violence shall seize upon it. Now when you think of the word seize, you know it is a very strong word.

In other words, if you do not try to seize it, you miss it. It is not something that you receive freely. In one sense, it is free.

Because God will give you grace to overcome yourself. But on the other hand, within yourself you must have that will to seize upon it. It is as if you say, Lord, I will not let you go.

I remember a story about a sister. Miss Barbara. One day, she had a controversy with the Lord.

The Lord was denying her. Demanding something on her. But he did not want to give up.

So now you know what he prayed? He said, Lord, be patient with me. I will turn around. But be patient with me.

In other words, she has that sense of seizing upon the kingdom. So the Lord said, he who do violence to himself, he who denies himself, lay down himself, and allow the will of God to go through him or through her. Then you prove that you are living today in the kingdom of the heavens.

The demand is high. But the supply is higher. So this is what we have covered the last two days.

Now this morning, we would like to come to the second peak in the gospel of the kingdom. And that is chapter 13. You know, when you come to the reality of the kingdom of the heavens, it is very, very simple.

You know, brothers and sisters, it is man that makes things complicated. But so far as God and his truth is concerned, it's very simple. Blessed are the poor in spirit.

Blessed are the pure in heart. Blessed are those hungry and thirsty after righteousness. Brothers and sisters, these are very simple.

But how we complicate everything. So when the gospel of the kingdom of heavens is being preached to our surprise, then it becomes a very complicated thing. Now why is this so? It is because of our weaknesses.

It is because of the work of the enemy. You know, when our Lord Jesus was preaching and doing wonders, and when he healed the blind and the deaf, it is a demonstration of the power of the kingdom of the heavens. But the Pharisees, they opposed the Lord Jesus.

They said, our Lord casts out the demons through the demons. So for that reason, you know, in Matthew chapter 12, the Lord Jesus said, if you sin against the Son of Man, you will be forgiven. If you sin against the Holy Spirit, there is no forgiveness.

Not in this age, not only in this age, but even in the age to come. And because of the resistance of this world, so our Lord Jesus began to use parables. He used to speak plainly to the people.

But now he changed his way of speaking. So here you find in Matthew chapter 13, when he spoke to the people, he began to speak in parables. Now the beauty of a parable is here.

To those who do not believe, it is just a story. But to those who have believed in him, it makes truth simple. It makes it so clear, so simple.

So homelike. Now in Matthew 13, we will call it the Mysteries of the Kingdom of the Heavens. Because this is what our Lord Jesus himself said.

He said, no, the Mysteries of the Kingdom of the Heavens. Why is it the Kingdom of Heavens become mysterious? We have already said, when you read Matthew 5 to 7, it is so clear. Now why is it suddenly it becomes a mystery? As we have said, it's because of man's unbelief.

And also, the devil, the enemy, is working. Whenever the Gospel of the Kingdom of Heavens is preached, there you find not only the resistance from unbelief, that changes, as it were, its character. But the enemy will work in the same field.

And try to mix up the whole thing. So that's why it becomes a parable of the Kingdom of the Heavens. The first parable is the basic one.

You know, brothers and sisters, in my fellowship with brothers and sisters, I find that whenever we read Matthew 13, we have a big problem. Because in our mind, it is only the Church. So whenever you read Matthew 13 with the word Church in your mind, you will be confused.

Why is it? It is because the Church is the Body of Christ. Because the Church is the Body of Christ. Every member of the Church has the life of Christ in it.

But when you read these parables, you find that the enemy has the son of the devil there too. That's the Church. It is because even our very concept of the Church is so wrong that we make such a mistake.

So what does the parables of the Kingdom of the Heavens, the mysteries, are? It is Christianity or Christendom. It is Christianity within Christianity. I'm sorry.

It is Christianity within Christianity. The scope. The scope.

I'm sorry. It is the scope of Christianity. When the Gospel is being preached and people misunderstood, and the enemy began to sow his seed in it, that becomes Christianity or Christendom.

In the first parable, our Lord spoke to the people and he said there is a sower going out to sow. Now who is the sower? It is evident that it is our Lord himself. Now what are his seeds? The seeds are the truth of the Kingdom of the Heavens.

And when he sowed the seed, you find there are four different kinds of soil. And the soil here is our heart. Now because our Lord himself explained this parable, so when the Gospel of the Kingdom of Heaven is being preached, it reaches the heart of the people.

But there are four different hearts. The first kind of heart is like a wayside. It is a place where there is much traffic.

Many people walk upon it. So it is a hardened land. It is a hardened heart.

Much communication with the world will harden your heart. So when the Gospel of the Kingdom is being preached, he heard it. But there is no idea in him.

It has just fallen outside. And when this happens, what will follow? The birds will come and snatch the seeds away. And our Lord Jesus said, this is the first kind of the heart that receives or rejects the Kingdom of the Heavens.

And the birds here refer to the devils. The second kind of heart, it is a very shallow land. There is stone underneath it.

Just a thin layer of land. So when the seeds fall upon it, it seems to be able to come out very quickly. But because there is no root, so when the sun shines, it dries up.

Now that shows the second kind of heart. Emotionally, you are stirred. And it seems as if you receive it.

But because there is no soil, so the sun came, persecutions came, difficulties came, and everything is gone. So when the sun shines, difficulties come, and persecutions come. Brothers and sisters, if there is a stone in your heart, there seems to be something else there.

So when the Kingdom of the Heavens is preached to you, you may be emotionally touched for a while. But very soon, it dries up. That's the second type of heart.

Then the third type of heart, the seeds fall into that land. But unfortunately, there were thorns there. So when the seed began to grow, the thorn will overcome it.

It cannot bear any fruit. So brothers and sisters, some people may hear the Gospel of the Kingdom of Heaven. They seem to have received it.

But then you find the thorns squeeze it. And it cannot bear fruit. Now that speaks of people who have the world in his heart.

It's like thorns that squeeze the seed. But thank God, there is the fourth kind of soil, fourth kind of heart, that land has been tilled. And so the seed will fall into it and will bear fruit a hundredfold, sixtyfold, and thirtyfold.

So that is the result of the preaching of the Kingdom of the Heavens. And then the Lord Jesus continued with the second parable. Now brothers and sisters, you know, when you read Matthew 13, there is a progression.

The first parable is the foundation. But the second parable, you see the difference here. So now say the two parables, the Kingdom of Heavens has become like a man sowing good seed in his field.

Now, you notice that the seed here is not the truth of the Kingdom of the Heavens. Because if you read verse 38, and the field is the world and the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom. So between the first and the second parable, you find there is a progression.

The seed here, that our Lord Jesus sowed, is no longer the truth, but the sons of the kingdom. In other words, those people who have received the truth, and they become the sons of the kingdom. So the Lord sowed them in the field.

Now the field here is no longer the heart. The field here is the world. In other words, whenever the gospel of the Kingdom of Heavens is preached in the world, there are people who receive them, and the Lord sowed them in that particular place.

So in other words, whenever the gospel of the Kingdom of Heavens is preached, there are people who have received the gospel of the Kingdom of Heavens, and the Lord sowed them in the world. Brothers and sisters, you are here in California. Do you think it is by accident? The Lord sowed you there.

It is the Lord who put you there as his witness, as his witness. But when the man slept, you notice that the first man sown is singular, but the man here is plural. Because our Lord Jesus never slept no slumber.

And here you find the man in plural number. Now, the man here refers to those who work for the Lord. When those who work for the Lord were sleeping, and the enemy quietly came in and sowed his seed in the same field.

He sowed the dino into it because the dino awkwardly looks like the wheat. But when it begins to grow, the wheat, when it is ripened, it becomes bending down. But the dino will be straight up.

The Lord knows all about it, but his people do not understand. So they said, Lord, you sow only the good seed. How come it is dino? Well, the Lord said it is because when you are sleeping, the enemy came and sowed his seed in the same field.

The seed here is the sons of the devil. How can a church have the sons of God and the sons of the devil? So you cannot apply this to the church. But this is exactly what happened in Christianity.

Whenever Christianity spread, you have your schools, you have your hospitals, you have your other activities, and it is the area of the Christendom. And here you find it is a mixture. But in that Christianity, in that Christendom, if you won't try to divide them, it is impossible today.

Because when you try to root out the dino, the wheat, they were so intertwined, they also will be rooted out. So Christianity or Christendom will be a mixture until the coming of the Lord. There is no way to improve it.

In history, some people tried to improve. Like John Calvin. He tried to make Geneva the city of God.

But it is impossible. The Lord said, leave it. Until towards the end.

Then he will send his angels to divide them. And those of the dino will be thrown into the lake of fire. And those that are wheat will be entered into God.

So that is the second parable. That shows when the gospel of the Kingdom of Heaven is preaching in the world. What a mixture, what a change, outwardly, is now.

And these two parables our Lord Jesus explained himself. Now, if you really understand the explanation of our Lord, then you will be able to understand the following parables. Because the Lord follows it with four different parables.

Two parables are negative. Two parables are positive. So when you come to the third parable, now, the Kingdom of the Heavens is like what? In verse 24.

31. He said another parable said he before them saying, the Kingdom of the Heavens is like a grain of mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field which is less indeed than all seeds but when it is grown is greater than herbs and becomes a tree so that the birds of Heaven can graze on it. The third parable said the Kingdom of Heavens is like a grain of mustard seed which a man took.

Now, what is a mustard seed? If you read the scripture when you turn to Luke chapter 17 and verse 6 the Lord said if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed you have said to this sycamine tree be thou rooted up and be thou planted in a seed and it will have obeyed you. Because at that time our Lord Jesus said if your brother sinned against you and he repented you must forgive him. If he sinned against you seven times in a day and seven times he came back and said I am sorry you still have to forgive him and the disciples said Lord give us more faith.

So the Lord said faith is like a mustard seed the mustard seed is the smallest of all seeds but there is life there so it will grow but the mustard seed when it grows it is a plant it is not a tree and here you find the mustard seed has grown but it has grown abnormally it becomes a tree now what does it mean you know when you read Genesis chapter 1 when God created the world when he created plants and when he planted trees there is one word said after each kind and when he is created birds again it is after its kind and fishes of the sea after its kind and the animals on the land after its kind in other words when God created he created different kinds we will call the kinds here species so everything has its own kind has its own species but whenever it goes out of its species it becomes

something abnormal and when anything abnormal happens it is hated by the Lord use an illustration the angels are a kind human beings is another kind but when you came to Genesis chapter 6 some of the angels married the women of mankind and the result was the giants and whenever this happened the Lord said man has become flesh the Lord used the flood to wipe out all the living things so God hated anything out of his kind so far as the mustard seed of faith is concerned faith is living but when it grows upon this earth it is still like a plant so the Lord said fear not little flock because it is God's grace to give you the kingdom so those who believe in the Lord Jesus they will grow but so far as the world is

concerned it is insignificant it is just like a plant but when it begins to

grow abnormally like that mustard seed becomes a tree and when that happens you know what will continue on? the birds will come and roost on it and who are these birds? now in the first parable the Lord explained it in the first parable the birds refers to these evil forces but brothers and sisters this is not the explanation in so called Christianity on the contrary you find the explanation of Christianity see how the church grows it becomes great in the world you see the Roman Catholic Church you see the influence of Christianity today the bigger the better brothers and sisters how you see the concept of man is different from the concept of God so this is the reason why this third parable is often misunderstood it actually tells us this abnormal growth is not the will of God and then

you find the fourth parable he said the kingdom of the heavens is like leaven which a woman took and hid inside three pieces of wheat until it has all been all leavened and I believe brothers and sisters this should be easy because leaven in the scripture always speak of something evil you know in the old testament time when they offer sacrifices there should be no leaven no honey but only with salt so leaven always speak of something bad but this is something we like if you eat a bread without leaven you don't like it you want a bread that has been leavened but brothers and sisters spiritually speaking leaven in the scripture always speak of something bad in Matthew 16 you remember when our Lord Jesus and his disciples went to a boat and there you find in verse 5 and when his disciples

came to the other side they have forgotten to take bread and Jesus said to the sea and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees the disciples thought the Lord was referring to the real bread but the Lord said it is the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees the leaven of the Pharisees is hypocrisy the leaven of the Sadducees is unbelief these are the leavens now if you put into the three meals three measures of meal three measures of meal is for offering then it will be all leavened up the master seed speaks of truth he speaks of untruth when it grows abnormally it becomes untruth and the leaven speaks of experience because it begins to leaven up so whether you are thinking of the truth side or the experience side you find something is abnormal so this is the two parables that

show us the negative side but the kingdom of the heavens itself is real so in spite of all these difficulties then the Lord Jesus continued with two other parables but these two other parables he spoke to his disciples and not to the world so far as the disciples are concerned the kingdom of the heavens is like a merchant and he is seeking for treasure verse 44 the kingdom of the heavens is like a treasure hidden in the field which a man having found has hid and for the joy of it he goes and sells all whatever he has and buys that field now here you find the kingdom of heaven is like a treasure and a man finds it the man refers to our Lord Jesus he came into this world and he found that treasure the reality of the kingdom of the heavens now what did he do he hid it in other words it is

unknown to the world but for the sake of that treasure he gave up everything to buy the field so today the kingdom of the heavens is hidden and yet it has been found by the Lord himself and the reason why he sells everything and buys the field is for that treasure one day the whole earth will return to the Lord but he paid a great price for it not for the earth for that treasure this shows us the positive side and then follows with another parable the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls and having found one pearl of great value he went and sold all whatever he had and bought it you know we often interpret the pearl as Christ so you find a famous hymn I have found a pearl of greatest price I don't know if you have heard this hymn Brother Sparks never sang the

first verse because that pearl in the first verse refers to Christ the pearl refers to the reality of the kingdom of the heavens it is hidden and yet that man that is our Lord has found it and he went and sold everything to get it so that shows the kingdom of the heavens is so precious to the Lord why do you need two parables? because the first parable the treasure speaks of truth and the second parable's pearl speaks of experience so thank God when the kingdom of the heavens is preached to the nations even though it began to grow abnormally and yet within it there is the reality there and that is what the Lord is really after and then you find the last parable of the sin or the net here you find at the end of the age God will send his angels to divide them we cannot change Christianity

they will continue just as it is until the end of the age it takes the angels to come and divide them and then you find one will be thrown into the furnace of fire the wicked the wicked will be cast and they will be weeping and gnashing of teeth so that is the end of the parables so here you find Matthew 13 you have seven parables they are the parables of the mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens this is what it appears today and finally some people say there are eight parables because there you find the Lord said every scribe disciple to the kingdom of the heavens is like a man that is a householder who brings out of his treasure things new and old because what the scribe had is something old what he has is the law but now he has something new which is grace upon grace so dear brothers

and sisters as you look into Christianity today that is what the Lord is trying to tell us that we may know how shall we walk on this earth where is the straight path that leads us to life and by the grace of God we will walk upon it shall we pray dear Lord how we thank Thee for giving us these parables Thou does desire us to understand them and not only to understand but to follow Thee oh dear Lord we pray that Thy people here everyone will really press on towards the goal that we may be able to follow Thee to the very end and allow Thy kingdom to come we ask in Thy precious name Amen

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