

## The Parish of Wellow

### The secrets of the kingdom: *The purpose of parables* Matthew 13:10-17 & 34-45 Passage, Talk Notes and Questions

Please feel free to take these talk notes home with you and you may wish to find some time during this week to consider the questions below or join us at **Coffee 'n' Stickies** on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> September 7.30-9.30pm at The Cottage, High Street, Wellow (Call Pauline Preddy 01225 832625 for directions) to discuss the questions further.

#### 1. Talk Passage – Matthew 13:10-17 & 34-45

10 The disciples came to him and asked, "Why do you speak to the people in parables?" 11 He replied, "The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them. 12 Whoever has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. 13 This is why I speak to them in parables: "Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand. 14 In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: "You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving. 15 For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them. 16 But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. 17 For I tell you the truth, many prophets and righteous men longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.

34 Jesus spoke all these things to the crowd in parables; he did not say anything to them without using a parable.

35 So was fulfilled what was spoken through the prophet: "I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things hidden since the creation of the world."

#### 2. Talk Notes

##### 1. Introduction

- We all love a good story! Newspapers, magazines, books, the television, cinema, the internet, they all are loaded with stories.
- The disciples approach Jesus noticing that his teaching style has changed and ask him: "*Why do you speak to the people in parables?*"
- The crowds of Jesus' day also enjoyed a good story and Jesus knew that stories would be the best way of sharing spiritual truths not only with his disciples but also with the people of Israel – this was not a new phenomena Parables were used in the Old Testament e.g. Isaiah 5:1-7
- Parables are therefore a bridge helping us to move from the natural level of life to the spiritual level of life – they are earthly stories with spiritual meanings.
- Jesus teaches in parables:
  - a) Stories that are memorable and accessible to all ages and have stood the test of time

- f) To expose his true identity (13:35)
  - g) To reveal truth about spiritual things (13:17 & 35)
  - h) To encourage us to dig deeper and learn more (13:12-16)
2. Stories that have stood the test of time
    - Jesus tells stories because these are memorable and portable – especially useful for people who cannot read or write!
    - Jesus looks around and uses the world that he can see, events that the crowds would easily associate with and uses them to tell stories that will ultimately reveal truths about the Kingdom of God.
    - But for us this means more work because we have to understand the culture of Jesus' day before we can hope to understand his parables.
    - Jesus' Parables are like 'stealth bombers' they appear innocuous but on further inspection are profoundly shocking! The original hearers would have been amazed at what Jesus was saying and expecting of them!
  3. To expose his true identity (13:35)
    - "*I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things hidden since the creation of the world*" is a direct quote from Psalm 78:2. The prophets had revealed that the Messiah would speak in parables – Jesus was revealing his true identity.
  4. To reveal truth about spiritual things (13:17 & 35)
    - Jesus tells his disciples and us that we are especially blessed: *many prophets and righteous men longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.* (13:17) *I will utter things hidden since the creation of the world.* (13:35)
    - Jesus wants his disciples, the crowds and ultimately us to understand how the Kingdom of God ticks – he wants to reveal the secrets of the Kingdom but are we ready to listen and learn?
    - Are we ready for what Jesus has to teach us over the next 8 months!
  5. To encourage us to dig deeper and learn more (13:12-16)
    - *Whoever has will be given more, and he will have an abundance.* (13:12) – Jesus encourages us to dig deeper.
    - Some in Jesus' day heard his stories and went no further but others like the disciples heard the stories and dug deeper. What will we do over the next 8 months? Will we come to church, hear these familiar stories again and take no further action or will we allow the Holy Spirit to reveal deep spiritual truths that will change the way we live forever.
- ### 3. Coffee 'n' Stickies Questions
- 1) Why does Jesus adopt a different teaching style?
  - 2) "*The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them.* (13:11) what does Jesus mean by this?
  - 3) How do we go about interpreting Jesus parables?

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