

The New Testament Church
Kingdom Rising #1 – Guard your Heart
July 23, 2023

I With all that is going on... *we will be examining the parables of Jesus in Matthew 13*

- A. If politics are the consequences and not causes, *what should we be doing?*
 - 1. Proverbs 4:18 – **What God has saved us to is greater than what He has saved us from!**
 - 2. Matthew 16:18 – **God is preparing His Ekklesia for victory over the gates of hell!**
 - 3. Hebrews 12:26-29 – **God is shaking and exposing evil as His Kingdom rises!**
- B. Re-claim the vital importance of the heart – the soul – that shapes the culture (q. Bishop Barron)
 - 1. We must begin by dethroning a love of wealth, pleasure, power and evil in our hearts!
 - 2. This can only be done through the cross of Christ which is symbolized in this parable
- C. Why did Jesus teach in Parables? (Mt. 13:10-17)
 - 1. Hidden truths (pictures) of the Kingdom – preached in public, explained in private (desire)
 - 2. Those who hunger will receive more, but *those who are lazy will lose what they have*
 - 3. Isaiah 6:8-13 – they *expose the condition of the heart* – blessed if we “see them”
 - 4. The Church is the womb of the Kingdom – *gospel of the kingdom, multi-generational!*

II Matthew 13:1-9; 18-23 – The Parable of the Soils – *Discerning your heart condition*

- A. Jesus exposes those whose *hearts* have been moved by God – for not all will hear
- B. Farmers in Jesus’ day – sowers - looked for *plowed surface, depth and pure soil*
 - 1. The sower is the Son of Man
 - 2. The seed is the Word of God
 - 3. The soil is the heart condition of an individual
 - 4. Growth takes place in proportion to one’s heart condition
 - 5. The harvest (from conversion to maturity) is for the Kingdom, not just the individual or church!

III God is moving in our day and the *Kingdom of God is rising in the earth!*

- A. Only God can change a heart! And this is where the Kingdom begins – by regeneration!
 - 1. Lk. 17:21 – *Kingdom of God is within you* – The Kingdom rises first in an individual’s heart
 - 2. Pr. 21:1-7 – God moves the heart, but pride, manipulation, lying and theft are heart problems
 - 3. Pr. 4:23 – *keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life*
 - 4. Lk. 6:45 - ... *for out of the abundance of the heart (the) mouth speaks.*
- B. God is moving on hearts today in a massive way...
 - 1. Young people – from college campuses to another Jesus revolution – God is moving!
 - 2. From around the world among the Muslims of the Middle East – God continues to move!
- C. So how should we guard our hearts? We must recognize the necessity of keeping our soil soft!
 - 1. The Soil of the wayside – hard – neglect – ***in need of water – not a flood but showers***
 - a. Hard packed soil can’t be broken easily, and needs water with good soil (5-10 years of it)
 - b. A hard heart is being in a rut – no passion for Christ or spiritual growth – seed stolen
 - 2. The Soil in stony places – no root – shallow topsoil – ***the plow***
 - a. An old river bed, shifting earth pushes rocks to the surface, only shallow soil on top
 - b. Quick growth comes, but it withers quickly – there is no substitute for a soft heart
 - 3. The Soil among thorns – mixture (unwilling to have the roots of thistles pulled up) – ***the cross***
 - a. If the thistle bush is simply cut down but the roots are not removed, it will grow again
 - b. What isn’t seen at the beginning, will rise up and choke the fruit in the end
 - 4. The Good soil – “blessed are those who hunger and thirst” – soft soil (Mt. 5:6)
 - a. Good soil is soft, mixed, and ready for seeds to grow – neither acidic nor alkaline
 - b. Even if you have the right seeds, rain, sun, and you weed – bad soil affects fruit
 - c. Even good soil, with a distinct harvest – some 100, some 60 and some 30 (we are different)