

The Parables of Jesus - The Householder

(Matthew 13:52)

This Parable is found only in the Gospel of Matthew. It is the last of a group of parables Jesus used as He was teaching by the shores of the Sea of Galilee. He was teaching on the "Kingdom of Heaven" and what the disciples should be ready for as they would be used to bring

it forth on the earth. In giving these parables Jesus expressed and revealed how the Gospel of salvation would be received and that it was for both the Jew **and** Gentile. He was also revealing that this mission of bringing forth the Kingdom of Heaven upon the earth would not be without obstacles and difficulties.

Before we continue with the "Parable of the Householder," I would like to draw our attention to Matthew 13:51 which is the verse just prior to our parable that we will be discussing. This verse is vital to us and serves as a prelude in grasping what and why Jesus was trying to have His disciples understand as He was using these parables in this time of teaching.

Matthew 13:51, (Amplified Version) - *"Have you understood all these things [parables] **taken together**? They said to Him, Yes, {Lord.}"*

For reference sake, Matthew 13:51 is at the conclusion of His giving of all of the previous parables in this setting by the Sea of Galilee concerning the Kingdom of Heaven on the earth and the Gospel of salvation through Jesus. The "things" that He was referring to were His teaching on: The Parable of the Four Soils; The Parable of the Wheat and the Tares; The Parable of the Mustard Seed; The Parable of the Hidden Leaven; The Parable of the Hidden Treasure; The Parable of the Pearl of Great Price; The Parable of the Great Net.

After, discussing with the disciples all these parables, Jesus asked them if they understood and truly grasped what these parables meant. It was important for them that they understood the point He was trying to teach them concerning the Kingdom of Heaven upon the earth. After all, they would be the ones used to usher in this Kingdom as His "ambassadors." It was vital for them to understand these parables **within the context** of how they were given - "**taken together**" (Amplified Version). This was key to what He was about to teach them through this next parable.

This "question" by Jesus to His disciples serves also as a vital teaching point for today's leaders, teachers and pastors to get a hold of as we teach the scriptures. Jesus was very emphatic that His disciples realize that they must not take any of the parables He spoke as a "stand alone" parable. Every parable was and is to be an integral "building block," building upon each other, to form the full concept of what He was teaching His disciples throughout His ministry.

This is a vital point for anyone who is entrusted with teaching, preaching and even studying the Word of God. Every scripture must be taken within the context of its surrounding scriptures (chapter and verses), the Book they are in, as well as in context within the entirety of scripture – the Jewish scriptures and the New Testament. We should not take any one of these parables or any of the other parables that Jesus gave, as well as all scripture, out of the context in which they were given. We are not to make them "stand alone" topics that fit a certain way of thinking but yet is not what that scripture is saying within the context in which it is found. Unfortunately, this is where much error in doctrinal matters has arisen.

These parables in this one teaching setting, **taken together**, would give the disciples a "good, full picture" of what Jesus was trying to do in preparing them as His "ambassadors" in bringing the Kingdom of Heaven throughout the earth. Each parable, "built upon" each other, led to the summation of His main thought concerning what their responsibility would be when He would no longer be with them. This "summation" is found in this next parable, the "Parable of the Householder."

Jesus, in Matthew 13:51, had asked if they understood what He was teaching based on all the parables He had just given, *"taken together."* The disciples answered, "Yes." So... Did they **really** understand? I think we can safely say that the disciples "meant well" by their sincere, yet naive, one word answer. The fact was that they would truly grasp all of these truths only when they would receive the "Spirit of Truth," the Holy Spirit.

I believe Jesus, knew they "meant well." and that they really didn't quite get "it" yet. We definitely see this through their behavior in the Gospel accounts. Even though Jesus knew they did not understand He continued with the main purpose and message that He wanted to convey to the disciples. He does so by giving this concluding parable known as the "Parable of the Householder."

"The Parable of the Householder" - Matthew 13:52 - "Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old."

Jesus proceeds to use this "parable" of "scribes" referred to as "householders" who bring forth "new and old treasure." What did He mean by this and how was He using this "parable" in relation to these 12 disciples? As we go forward, let us first review the "Characters" of the Parable

- Scribe
 - The Hebrew word for "scribe" is "caphar" which means one who enumerates or one who counts or recounts. In the times of the Old Testament, prior to any scriptures being written, "scribes" were the ones who were entrusted with "recounting" or speaking forth and keeping the accuracy of what God had spoken concerning the commandments that were written by God on the tablets of stone and by Moses (Torah). They were also "retell" the "oral law" as it was being brought forth by the old Jewish sages who expounded on the Torah. They were then used to speak these scriptures orally to the people. As time went on they were then entrusted to write all of the Jewish scriptures with extreme accuracy on scrolls.
 - The Greek word for "scribe" as used in the New Testament is "*grammateus*." This was a generic term used for a person whose task it was to record events such as civic or historical accounts in the "secular" realm. It was also used to describe a person who was entrusted to write, with extreme accuracy, the religious writings of any of the pagan religions and philosophies.
 - In Judaism, these scribes were entrusted with conveying and writing the Jewish scriptures. They were considered to be very learned men and came to be highly respected as such. A "Scribe" was one that was considered to be an expert and an authority in all the Jewish scriptures - the Torah, the Prophets and the Writings. It was the Scribes that would literally write meticulous copies of the Jewish scriptures on scrolls. Not one "jot or tittle" was to be out of place.
 - A Scribe was to be trained and disciplined in understanding the "hidden truths" of God found within the Jewish scriptures. They were then entrusted with bringing that truth to the people.
 - The Scribes of Jesus' day knew the Jewish scriptures, at least on their face value. However, unfortunately, we know that they lacked the true "spiritual understanding" of those same scriptures that they memorized and wrote. We also know that the Scribes of that day, along with the Pharisees and Sadducees considered Jesus to be their "enemy." Jesus exposed their lack of true understanding concerning the truth of the Jewish scriptures. They did not appreciate that and wanted to silence Him.
- Householder - The Greek word translated "householder" is "*oikodespotēs*" which literally means "the master of the house." He was not the owner of the house. He was considered the chief servant

of the owner. The term "master" implies great authority as well as responsibility over the owner's house. The "master of the house" had the final say in deciding what was best for the owner's household when that owner was away or out of the house. Jesus, in this parable, was describing what the true "job description" of a "householder/ scribe" should be.

- The word "treasure" used in this verse comes from the Greek word "*thēsauros*" which means "a place for treasure referred to as a "treasury" but not the treasure itself. In other words, Jesus is referring to "a treasure house," a "treasury," a "storehouse," or a "storeroom," where a person would keep necessary items like food, clothing, and supplies for safekeeping.
- The "new and old" would refer to the "food" or "provisions" stored within that storeroom. The master of the house, the householder, was the person in charge of ensuring that this storeroom contained everything needed to feed and sustain the owner's household. A good "householder" balances the usage of these provisions. The good "householder" sees the value in the "old" provisions just as much as in the new provisions. He wisely serves his household the older stored provisions as well as the fresh "off-the-vine" food, recognizing the value of both and mixing them in balance so that neither is wasted.
- In the context within this parable, Jesus is saying that the "Scribe" was to use his knowledge of the scriptures as a resource of God's truth and ways to bring to the God's "household," the Jewish people. In doing so the scribe would then teach the people how to enter into a lifestyle of blessing and provision by the "owner of the household" – God, the Father.

If we look closely we hear that Jesus is actually referring to the disciples as "scribes." What!!! Could Jesus really be referring to the disciples as becoming the "scribes" of this coming Kingdom of Heaven on earth? At first glance we may think that this was a "put down" or an insult to the disciples. We know that Jesus and the scribes of that time were not on the best of terms.

However, through this parable, we can see that Jesus was "figuratively" telling His disciples that **they will be the new "scribes"** of this coming "Kingdom" upon the earth. Throughout His ministry and time with the 12 disciples, Jesus was personally training and teaching them the full truth of God's Word. He was doing so by teaching them from both - the "old" (the Jewish scriptures) and the "new" (Jesus' teaching and rightful use and explanation of the Jewish scriptures). Jesus was stating that from now on it would be His disciples who would be trained by the Master Himself, the Living Word, to go forth and teach God's "household of faith" in the truths of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Jesus was saying that these twelve disciples were in the process of gradually learning the "mysteries," the "hidden truths" and "spiritual insights" of the living Word of God. They were being taught by Jesus, who is the Living Word come in the flesh, how the scriptures are to lead, guide, direct and affect the life and lifestyle of the true believer, the true disciple of Jesus – the true child of the Living God.

He was telling them that as they learn and begin to live out what He was teaching them, they were then to go, teach and pass on these truths to all future generations of disciples. Those disciples were to then teach and pass these truths on to the next generation of disciples, and so forth. That is what the "job description" was for a "scribe." This was now to be their "job description." This is what the "job description" is for the every disciple of Jesus.

This is what Jesus commanded His disciples to do in His "Great Commission" in Matthew 28:20 - *"Teaching them to **observe all things** whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."* The word "observe" used in Matthew 28:20, comes from the Greek word, "*tēreō*," which literally means "to watch someone for the purpose of learning to do as they do." As part of the "Great Commission," the disciples were to first, of course, tell the Good News of salvation through Jesus.

They were also to role-model the lifestyle that Jesus role-modeled to them, for the purpose of letting the world see this lifestyle so that anyone who believes and receives Jesus as their Lord and Savior can now live and walk in that lifestyle. Any believer who would chose to walk in and live out that lifestyle would then be able to walk in and receive the full blessings of God through their "born again" experience.

Those twelve disciples, along with every believer/disciple to come after, would be the ones that would "build His House." God's house, God's temple, His dwelling place, is now found within the born again believer. That is where God desires to dwell. The disciples, by using the truth of the Jewish scriptures ("*...bringeth forth treasure of things...old.*") along with the revelation of Jesus' teachings and the illumination by the Holy Spirit ("*...bringeth forth out of his treasure things new...*"), will now go forth and be the "builders" of the Kingdom of Heaven upon this earth.

This parable teaches an important lesson for those who are entrusted to teach and bring forth God's truths to His people. The teaching that tells us that the Jewish scriptures, referred to as the "Old Testament," do not apply to the Christian today is a false doctrine and totally incorrect. Jesus **never** said nor did He ever teach that and neither did any of the writers of the New Testament.

Matthew 5:17 tells us, "*Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.*" Jesus makes it very clear that He did not come to do away with the Law. He came to "fulfill" the Law. The word "fulfill" in Matthew 5:17 comes from the Greek word (*plēroō*) which means to "consummate" or to bring the Law to its completion or fullness. It infers that the word "fulfill" used in this passage means, "to cause God's will (as made known in the Law) to be **obeyed as it should be**, and God's promises (given through the prophets) **to be received in total fulfillment** as it was intended by God for a person walking in the ways that are pleasing to Him. Jesus came to show us what it really means to live this lifestyle that the Law was pointing us and directing us to live. He was the epitome, the highest example, of the life that God had intended for us to live.

The apostle Paul in 2Timothy 3:16 writes, "**All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness...**" The "scripture that he was referring to were the only scriptures they had at the time – the "Jewish scriptures."

The twelve disciples, as well as His disciples today, are to be the "builders," bringing the fullness of God's Word and Truth to the hearts and lives of the true believers of Jesus and to the whole earth. We are to "build" God's house upon the foundation of Jesus and the "Rock" of the Father's precepts and principles found only in His Word. This is to be done through both the "old" and the "new" - the Jewish scriptures as well as the Gospels, the Book of Acts, all the Epistles and the Book of Revelation - all revealed through the One who will teach all truth to every disciple of Jesus - the Holy Spirit.

It was within this context that Jesus taught concerning the Kingdom of Heaven on the earth and the true understanding of the fullness of the Word of God and the Gospel of salvation through Jesus. He used all these parables - from the parable of the "Sower and the Four Soils" to the last parable of "the Great Net." It was for this reason that Jesus asked His disciples in Matthew 13:51, (Amplified Version) - "*Have you understood all these things [parables] **taken together**?*" The disciples in the innocence of the moment said, "*Yes, {Lord.}*"

I believe that they received the true understanding of the entirety of scripture (both the "old" and the "new") only when the "Spirit of Truth," the Holy Spirit, came and filled them to the overflowing. Through the Holy Spirit, the true disciple of Jesus now has the ability to grasp and truly understanding the "mysteries" of the Word of God. Jesus' disciples of that time, as well as His disciples today, were and are entrusted to be the "true scribes" to all who are, and will become, residents of the "Household of Faith."