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a Production of
Precept Ministries International
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SERIES: Matthew (The King, His Kingdom And Me)

TITLE: Program 22 – Parable Of The Sower

TUESDAY

OPEN

“Kay, you’ve been teaching us about the kingdom of heaven, but what is the kingdom of heaven like? Can you tell me a story about the kingdom of heaven?” Jesus did. I’m sitting in a replica of a boat from the time of Jesus on the shore of the Galilee. It was here that Jesus explained to His people the parables of the kingdom of heaven. And do you know what? If you can understand those parables, it’s because God has given you understanding.

PART ONE

As we progress through Matthew, I want you to understand where we are and what Matthew is doing. Remember that the gospel of Matthew is all about the kingdom of heaven. It’s all about the fact that the King has come and His message is, **“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”** (Matthew 3:2) We just looked at Matthew chapter 12, and at the end of Matthew chapter 12, remember, Jesus lets us know that He has a whole new

family. [Who are His brothers, and who are His sisters? And who is His mother? It's those that do the will of the Father.] (See Matthew 12:48, 50) Now, Matthew tells us about an incident when Jesus taught the multitudes. It says, **"That day Jesus went out of the house and was sitting by the sea. And large crowds gathered to Him..." (Matthew 13:1-2)** And we can understand why, because this man was healing so many. He was doing all sorts of miracles. And so He would draw a multitude. And it says, **"...So he got into a boat and sat down, and the whole crowd was standing on the beach." (Matthew 13:2)** I'm sitting in a boat that is a replica of the times of Jesus. I'm sitting at the head of the boat, in all probability where Jesus would sit. At the back of the boat is where the disciples could lie down. Underneath there's a place for the storing of the nets. The crowd on the shore, now, is able to see Jesus. They're able to hear Him because He's some distance from them. And then it says, **"...He spoke many things to them in parables, saying, 'Behold, the sower went out to sow; and as he sowed, some seeds fell beside the road, and the birds came and ate them up. Others fell on...rocky places, where they did not have much soil; and immediately they sprang up, because they had no depth of soil. But when the sun had risen, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away.'" (Matthew 13:3-6)** Because there was no place to go down, but there was enough soil to go up, they went up. But as soon as the sun came, the heat of the sun would wither them and they would not bear fruit. Now, as He's speaking, the crowd standing on the shore understands very much what Jesus is saying, because He's speaking to them of things that are common to them, things that they can understand. He's telling them a story. A parable is a story that has, more or less, one basic point. And everything in that parable points to that one basic thing. They could understand. They could see in their mind's eye a sower going out to sow. They could see some of that seed being caught and falling beside the wayside. They could see the birds come down and take that seed and take off

with it. They could imagine some that had fallen beside the rocks, because there were so many rocks in Israel. And then He tells them that, **“Others fell among the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked them out.”**

(Matthew 13:7) And they had seen that also, because they have seen the grain growing up, and then there are thorns there. The thorns here and thistles are very beautiful. They’re purple and they have a beauty all their own, and yet they are deadly to the grain, because they choke out the grain. And then He says in verse 8, **“And others fell on the good soil...”** And you’ll see much good soil in Israel, you’ll see this rich brown soil. And it says, **“...And [they] yielded a crop, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty.”** And then He said, **“He who has ears, let him hear.”**

(Matthew 13:8-9) We’ve heard that phrase before, haven’t we? When you look at the audience, and you look at the crowd on the shore, they all have ears, but the problem is, many of them are not understanding. Many of them are really not hearing what Jesus is saying. And it says, **“And the disciples...said to Him, ‘Why do you speak to them in parables?’ ”**

(13:10) Now “parables” is a keyword, and if you’ve gotten your study guide, if you’ve gone to PreceptsforLife.com and downloaded the study guide, then you know that this is one of the words that we tell you to mark in the gospel. Parables are stories, as I told you, stories that were told to make a point; stories where they use familiar things so that the audience could understand what was being said. So you want to mark “parables.” And they wanted to know, “Why are you speaking to them in parables?” “[And] **Jesus answered them, ‘To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven....’**” **(13:11)** I want you to stop right there for a minute. **“...To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven....”** **(13:11)** The way that you and I know and understand God’s Word, Precious One, is because God has granted us that privilege. So any time you come to the Word of God and every time we get ready to cut a program, we pray for you. [We pray that the eyes of your

understanding would be opened.] (PARAPHRASE, Ephesians 1:18, KJV)
We pray that God would take His Word, which is alive and **“...powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword....”** (Hebrews 4:12, KJV) His Word that **“...is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”** (Hebrews 4:12, KJV) His Word which is life and that He would speak to you, and that life would come as a result of that. His Word which is the bread of life by which we are to live. (See John 6:51) And so, He’s saying to those disciples, **“...[It’s] been granted [to you] to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted.”** (Matthew 13:11) In other words, the crowd that was standing on the shore, many of them they would not understand these parables. Why would they not understand these parables? Because it hadn’t been granted to them. You say, “That doesn’t seem right.” I know. In the natural it doesn’t seem right, does it? But I want you to know that even if it has been granted to them, they wouldn’t care at all. Many of those people that were standing on the shore were simply seeking a miracle. Many of those people that were standing on the shore had come simply because they had heard about this man that was doing all these things and they were curious. Are you curious or do you really want to know truth? Well, let’s go on. He goes on to say, **“For whoever has, to him [shall more] be given, and he will have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him.”** (13:12) Now, what is He saying? He’s saying those that have a teachable spirit, those that want to hear, those that want to know, more will be given to them. But those that say, “Nah, that’s enough. I’ve heard enough. It’s okay.” Then it’s going to be taken away from them. He says, **“Therefore...,”** “therefore,” a term of conclusion, **“...I speak to them in parables...,”** mark parables again, **“...because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.”** (Matthew 13:13) Now, I want you to stop and think of what a comfort that this must have been to the disciples. Remember, He has already

commissioned His apostles to go forth and to take the message of the gospel. And yet, He said, [“If you go into a city and they don’t listen to you, shake the dust off your feet.”] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 10:14) So many times we share the gospel and people are sitting there and they’re just bored. And they’re just tolerating us. Or we’re in the middle of some wonderful, profound truth, and someone says something and all of a sudden the conversation is changed. And it goes off in another direction, and you sit there and you think, “What did I do wrong?” Precious One, it’s not what you did wrong, it’s simply that they see, but they don’t see. That they hear, but they don’t hear. He says, **“In their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled....” (13:14)** It’s happening. What Isaiah wrote, some 700 years before, is now happening. And what did he write? **“...‘You will keep on hearing but you [won’t] understand; you will keep on seeing, but you will not perceive.’” (Matthew 13:14)** It’s like you hear. But it’s like you’re going: “Duh.” You could be less interested. So He’s saying, [“You keep on seeing, but you don’t perceive.”] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 13:14) It really doesn’t click. **“For the heart of this people has become dull, with their ears they scarcely hear, and they have closed their eyes, otherwise [otherwise] they would see with their eyes, [and] hear with their ears, and [would] understand with their heart and...,”** and I want you to get this, **“...return...,”** they would return. **(Matthew 13:15)** All of a sudden it would dawn on them, and understanding and enlightenment would come to them, and they would return. He said, **“...And I would heal them,”** I would heal them. **(13:15)** The Word of God heals us. In Psalms 107, verse 20, it says, **“He sent His word and healed them, and delivered them from [all] their destructions.” (Psalms 107:20)** Precious One, these are words of life. And what you need to pray is “O God! O God, give me understanding. O God! I want eyes that see, I want ears that hear. I want a heart to receive this. I want your Word in my life so that it comes and so that it heals me. And it brings life to my soul. This is what I want, Lord.” And He goes on to say,

“[And] **blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear. For truly I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and [they] did not see it, and to hear what you hear [but they] did not hear it.**” (Matthew 13:16-17) Many men in the past would have loved to have been living at this time in history. They would love to have seen these miracles. They would have loved to of seen the Messiah in the flesh. But they didn’t see the Messiah in the flesh. And so what He wants them to understand is how blessed you are. And, Precious One, what I want to say to you today is how blessed you are. How blessed you are to be able to open the Book. How blessed you are to be able to hear the words of this Book and to receive this truth. So, Precious One, Precious One, just say to God, “God thank you, thank you for the truth. I want to learn.” We’ll talk more about the prophecy in Isaiah in just a minute.

PART TWO

What a wondrous moment it is for me, Beloved, to be able to sit in this replica of a boat from Jesus’ time here on the shores of the Galilee. And be able to teach you what Jesus taught from a boat like this. He was teaching them parables. He was speaking to the crowd, and yet it wasn’t the crowd that was really comprehending or understanding. Rather, [the ones that were understanding were His disciples. The ones to whom He had granted the blessedness of being able to see and perceive. Being able to hear and understand.] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 13:16) Remember, as He spoke to them in parables, He says, “**In [this] case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled....**” (Matthew 13:14) And then He took them in their mind’s eye back to Isaiah 6. Well I want us to go back to Isaiah chapter 6. In Isaiah chapter 6, it’s the year that King Uzziah died. And in that year, Isaiah sees the Lord. He sees the Lord high and holy and lifted up. And he sees the cherubim around the throne, the seraphim around the throne, (See Isaiah 6:1-2) crying “**...Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts, [and] the whole**

earth is full of His glory.” (Isaiah 6:3) Well now, let’s go back to Isaiah chapter 6: “...The whole earth... [speaks] of His glory.” (Isaiah 6:3) Well He tells them that he’s to go to these people. And he’s to bring the message to these people. And He says to, “...Go, and tell [these] people...,” in verse 9, “ ‘Keep on listening, but do not perceive; keep on looking, but do not understand.’ Render the hearts of [these] people insensitive, their ears dull, and their eyes dim, otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and return and be healed.” (Isaiah 6:9-10) Now you say, “Well what is the sense of speaking to them if they’re not going to listen? Why should I bother?” You should bother because God tells you to bother. He says, “...Lord, how long...?” (6:11) “How long am I to speak to a people like this?” “...And [then] He answered, ‘Until [the] cities are devastated and without inhabitant, [until] houses are without people and the land is utterly desolate. [And] the LORD has removed men far away, and the forsaken places are many in the midst of the land.’” (Isaiah 6:11-12) You speak to them until I have dispersed them out of their land because of their disobedience. And then He makes this statement, and this is the statement of encouragement: “Yet there will be a tenth portion in it...” (Isaiah 6:13) There is a remnant, so to speak. There’s a tithe for God. “...And [there] will again be subject to burning, like a terebinth or an oak whose stump remains when it is felled...” (6:13) You cut it down, and yet there’s a stump there. That stump has roots, and all of a sudden one day you come along, just like I did in my yard, and there is that plant that I cut down, there’s the stump and out of it comes a little green sprig. He says this, “...The holy seed is [in the] stump.” (6:13) There is a remnant. And, Beloved, not everyone is going to believe. And this is what He wants them to understand. Jesus says, “Hear...the parable of the sower. When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it...,” when there’s a total “Duh?” and they do not understand it, “...the evil one comes....” The evil one is like the

bird, “...comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the one on whom [the] seed was sown beside the [ground].” (Matthew 13:18-19) The Word comes down, it’s there. It’s taken away immediately. The person doesn’t know it’s come. The person doesn’t know it’s gone. Why? Because there is an opponent to the kingdom of God, and the evil one comes just like the birds and snatches it away. **“The one on whom [the] seed was sown on...rocky places, this is the man who hears the Word and immediately receives it with joy.” (Matthew 13:20)** “Oh! Jesus is here! You should hear what He’s teaching. It is so exciting.” This is the person that sits in church, hears the gospel and makes a profession of faith. And they’re so excited they’re telling everyone. They receive it with joy. And it says, “[And] yet he has no firm root in himself....” (13:21) He’s excited about the message. He receives it. But he never puts his root down. He never goes deep into the soil of the Word. He’s never established in the Word of God. He’s just all excitement. **“...But [it’s] only temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away.” (Matthew 13:21)** Immediately. Now remember what has led up to this point. What has Jesus told us? Jesus has told us that we will be persecuted. His apostles will be persecuted. We are no greater than our Master. We will be persecuted. We’ve stepped into a world, a world that does not believe; a world that does not receive Jesus Christ. And therefore, the world will not receive us. How do you know that your faith is real? How do you know, Precious One, that your faith is genuine? The only way you know is to have your faith tested. Faith is not faith until it’s tested. And when persecution comes, when affliction comes, and it holds, it means because your roots have gone down into the soil and you are able to bear fruit at that time. But what He’s showing is, listen. The seed now falls on this rocky soil. And these are not saved either. They make a profession, but they don’t hold. In verse 22, **“And the one on whom [the] seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and the [worries]**

of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.” (Matthew 13:22) In Mark chapter 4, verse 18 and 19 in this parable, says **“...and the desire for...things....” (Mark 4:19)** Don’t you know people that make a profession of faith that say, “Oh yeah, I believe. I’m sorry I don’t have time for Bible study. You see, I’ve got so many problems. I’m worried. I’ve got to take care of myself. I’ve got to provide for myself.” What did Jesus tell us in the Sermon on the Mount? Jesus told us in the Sermon on the Mount that He will provide for us. That we are simply to **“...Seek...first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things [will] be added [to us].” (Matthew 6:33, KJV)** O Beloved, we’re going to finish this parable of the sower and we’re going to look at the other parables in the next program. But what I want you to understand right now is this: “Is your Christianity genuine?” Do you have good soil? Or has the Word of God been sown on rocky soil? Has the Word of God been sown among thorns?” This shows through your fruit. You’ve got to understand that it’s not simply a profession of your words. Rather, it is what your life produces. True life inside of you will produce fruit. And this is what He goes on to say in verse 23, **“And the one on whom seed was sown on...good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty.” (Matthew 13:23)** True Christianity--true membership in the kingdom of heaven--those that truly belong to the family of God have the evidence in their life. There will be fruit to some degree. Now what you see here is that there are different degrees of fruit, thirtyfold, sixtyfold, and a hundredfold. Precious One, what do you want? What kind of a harvest do you want? I will tell you this. It depends on the Word of God, because it is the seed that was sown. This is the Word of God. We’ll look at it more in our next program, but I want you to think upon these things as I sit by the shore of the Galilee in a boat, remembering when Jesus taught these parables.