

Hard Sayings Of Jesus

Lesson 4

I. This Week's Hard Saying

Mark 4:11-12 11 And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: 12 That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them. KJV

Matt 13:13 13 Therefore speak I to them in parables: **because** they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. KJV

Luke 8:10 10 And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand. KJV

II. Why It Is Considered Hard

- a. This is hard because if Jesus is saying what He seems to be saying, his **purpose** is to say things that people who are not His followers will not understand.
- b. If His purpose was to intentionally say things that people would not comprehend, that would violate all notions of truth, justice and mercy, and make Jesus the author of a sinister plot to **deceive His hearers**.
- c. This, obviously is inconsistent with what Scripture teaches about Jesus and the **nature of God**.

III. Two Different Understandings

- a. Jesus speaks in parables as a form of **judicial punishment** for His hearers who have hardened hearts toward His message.
- b. Jesus speaks in parables in order to make the message **more likely** to be understood.

IV. Sorting Out The Truth

- a. Matthew's version adds the word "**because**" which leads the reader to understand that Jesus employed the use of parables in an effort to make His intent more clear to His hearers.
- b. This saying is an adaptation of Isaiah 6:9-10 in which God tells Isaiah that the people to whom he is sent will not understand nor will they **accept** his message to them.
- c. This is not to say that God **caused** their blindness but rather, in the Hebrew language there is a tendency to express a consequence as though it were a purpose. Ps 107:11-12 11 Because they rebelled against the words of God, and contemned the counsel of the most High: 12 Therefore he brought down their heart with labour; they fell down, and there was none to help. KJV Ps 107:17 17 Fools because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted. KJV
- d. Therefore, this blindness is not necessarily to be understood as a **judicial punishment** brought on by the hardness of their hearts as the phrasing may seem to indicate.
- e. **Anselm** 1093-1109. "Surely, Truth deceives no one; someone deceives himself if he does not know the truth, if he does not believe it. He deceives himself if, seeing the truth, he hates it or despises it;"

V. Two Classes of Hearers

- a. A more suitable way of understanding the use of parables is that the hearers are of **two classes**. Matthew 11:25. At that time Jesus declared, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children
 - i. Those who are **self deceived**, not interested, or looking for the wrong thing, and
 - ii. Those who have had the message **revealed** to them. To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside everything is in parables Mark 4:10-12
- b. Those who are self deceived, not interested, or looking for the wrong thing, are described as closing their own eyes and stopping their own ears. They are **responsible**. Matt 13:15, Zech 7:11-12

Matt 13:15 15 For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. KJV

11 But they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear. 12 Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the Lord of hosts hath sent in his spirit by the former prophets: therefore came a great wrath from the Lord of hosts. KJV

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- c. Jesus states that this class of hearer **fulfills** Isaiah's prophecy in Isaiah 6:9-10 . "With them indeed is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah which says: 'You shall indeed hear but never understand, and you shall indeed see but never perceive.'" Matthew 13:14
- d. Therefore, "Truth **deceives no one**. For Although Truth does not manifest itself to everyone, it does not withhold itself from anyone." Anselm
- e. The second class of hearer is the recipient of **grace** who has the Truth revealed to him. Matt 16:17 17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. KJV

VI. Why Use Parables

- a. There is no question that God **conceals truth** from man and uses paradox, mysteries, and parables to appeal to the natural curiosity of man so as to draw him into a discovery of the truth. 1 Cor 2:7-8 7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: 8 Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. KJV
- b. These deep things of God can not be understood by the **natural man**, hence can be said to be hidden. 1 Cor 2:10-11 10 But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. 11 For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. KJV
- c. In general, a thing that is **partially hidden** is much more intriguing to the mind and therefore far more likely to draw one than something that is crystal clear.
- d. Moreover, God has created man with the natural ability and even a **desire** to solve problems and riddles, and to seek answers to questions. Ex 3:2-3 2 And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed . 3 And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. KJV
- e. Therefore, from a learning psychology point of view, the parable is the **perfect form** of delivery from which to convey Jesus' message.
- f. God promises those who are drawn to the mystery of Truth that they will be **rewarded** by finding what it is that they seek. Deut 4:29 29 KJV Prov 2:1-5; Prov 2:1-5 Matt 7:7-8 7
- g. In searching for Truth, one will discover far more than expected and still **more** will be given to him. Mark 4:24-25 24
- h. Furthermore, If one does not use the revelation that he has been given, he will **lose it**. Mark 4:25 "Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him."

VII. Summary

- a. Anselm answered the "purposeful deception" issue when he said "For Although Truth does not manifest itself to everyone, it does not withhold itself from **anyone**."
- b. Parables have the effect of raising man's natural curiosity, thereby necessitating further inquiry by the one who is **interested**.
- c. For those who were not interested or who were disbelieving His parables were the savor of **death**, but for those who were drawn to His message it was the savor of life. 2 Cor 2:15-16 15 For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish:16 To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things? KJV

VII. Application

- a. God loves a good mystery and faithfully rewards those who **diligently** seek His mysteries.
- b. He rewards believers through revelation of His Word in two ways:
 - 1. Revelation of **Himself**
 - 2. Revelation of **ourselves**
- c. One cannot get such revelation apart from **seeking**. May God encourage you to continue seeking out His great mysteries.

To what extent are you continuing to seek Truth?

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Matt 13:13 13; Luke 8:10

II. Why It Is Considered Hard

- a. This is hard because if Jesus is saying what He seems to be saying, his _____ is to say things that people who are not His followers will not understand.
- b. If His purpose was to intentionally say things that people would not comprehend, that would violate all notions of truth, justice and mercy, and make Jesus the author of a sinister plot to _____.
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III. Two Different Understandings

- a. Jesus speaks in parables as a form of _____ for His hearers who have hardened hearts toward His message.
- b. Jesus speaks in parables in order to make the message _____ to be understood.

IV. Sorting Out The Truth

- a. Matthew's version adds the word " _____ " which leads the reader to understand that Jesus employed the use of parables in an effort to make His intent more clear to His hearers.
- b. This saying is an adaptation of Isaiah 6:9-10 in which God tells Isaiah that the people to whom he is sent will not understand nor will they _____ his message to them.
- c. This is not to say that God _____ their blindness but rather, in the Hebrew language there is a tendency to express a consequence as though it were a purpose. Ps 107:11-12; Ps 107:17
- d. Therefore, this blindness is not necessarily to be understood as a _____ brought on by the hardness of their hearts as the phrasing may seem to indicate.
- e. _____ 1093-1109. "Surely, Truth deceives no one; someone deceives himself if he does not know the truth, if he does not believe it. He deceives himself if, seeing the truth, he hates it or despises it;"

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- a. A more suitable way of understanding the use of parables is that the hearers are of _____. Matthew 11:25.
 - i. Those who are _____, not interested, or looking for the wrong thing,
 - ii. Those who have had the message _____ to them. Mark 4:10-12
- b. Those who are self deceived, not interested, or looking for the wrong thing, are described as closing their own eyes and stopping their own ears. They are _____. Matt 13:15, Zech 7:11-12
- c. Jesus states that this class of hearer _____ Isaiah's prophecy in Isaiah 6:9-10. Matthew 13:14
- d. Therefore, "Truth _____. For Although Truth does not manifest itself to everyone, it does not withhold itself from anyone." Anselm
- e. The second class of hearer is the recipient of _____ who has the Truth revealed to him. Matt 16:17

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- b. These deep things of God can not be understood by the _____, hence can be said to be hidden. 1 Cor 2:10-11

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- c. In general, a thing that is _____ is much more intriguing to the mind and therefore far more likely to draw one than something that is crystal clear.
- d. Moreover, God has created man with the natural ability and even a _____ to solve problems and riddles, and to seek answers to questions. Ex 3:2-3
- e. Therefore, from a learning psychology point of view, the parable is the _____ of delivery from which to convey Jesus' message.
- f. God promises those who are drawn to the mystery of Truth that they will be _____ by finding what it is that they seek. Deut 4:29 29; Prov 2:1-5; Matt 7:7-8
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- a. God loves a good mystery and faithfully rewards those who _____ seek Him.
- b. He rewards believers through revelation of His Word in two ways:
 - 1. Revelation of _____
 - 2. Revelation of _____
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To what extent are you continuing to seek Truth?									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Cold & Disinterested-			Tepid or Luke Warm				Passionate Pursuit		