

OVERCOMING REJECTION Sunday School- January 31, 2010

Unifying Topic: REVEALED IN REJECTION

Lesson Text

I. Jesus Returns To Nazareth (Matthew 13:54)

III. The People Are Skeptical (Matthew 13:55-56)

III. The People Reject Jesus (Matthew 13:57-58)

The Main Thought: And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief. (Matthew 13:58, KJV).

Unifying Principle: People respond to rejection in different ways. What have we done when we have been rejected? Jesus faced rejection when He taught in His hometown of Nazareth, yet He moved on to continue His ministry.

Lesson Aim: To show how unbelief blinds people to the truth and robs them of hope.

Life aim: To be open to the teachings of Jesus, knowing that God will give more understanding and an abundance of knowledge.

13:54 And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this [man] this wisdom, and [these] mighty works?

13:55 Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas?

13:56 And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this [man] all these things?

13:57 And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house.

13:58 And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

HISTORY:

¹In our last study, we saw that Jesus had compared the church to both a pearl of great price and a hidden treasure. To own the treasure of the church cost God everything - the death of His only begotten Son. Now, Jesus continues teaching in parables with the parable of the net or dragnet.

13:47-48 Parable Of The Net

This is not a casting-net, which is thrown out from the boat and drawn in again, but a dragnet which is of great length, and which is drawn constantly through the water until it is well filled with fish. This net had weights on the bottom and floats at the top. It would be thrown into the water, making what was essentially a curved wall of net. As it was dragged back in, it would catch everything in its path—both edible and inedible fish. Fishermen would always have to separate the good from the bad. No doubt the disciples understood the concept of the net. After all, it was just back in Chapter four that we saw Jesus calling men to follow Him.

The net gathers every kind. When we preach the gospel, it is not just those who are truly born again that gather. When we evangelize; when we fish for men; many more are caught up, than just the "good fish." This makes the parable strikingly similar to the previous ones, in which Jesus said the kingdom was like poisonous weeds planted in the midst of good wheat, in which Jesus said the fellowship would be permeated with sin, and that the kingdom would be far larger than it was supposed to be, and even be hospitable to the devil's ambassadors. This shouldn't sound strange to us. After all, even Jesus' ministry attracted followers that didn't believe in Him. They were there for motives other than faith. Maybe it was the healings they witnessed, or maybe it was the free food they ate. But ultimately, they didn't believe. They didn't belong in the net.

The net is drawn when full. The fisherman could tell when the net was full by the weight of its pull. When it was full, they drew the net to shore and began the tedious "process of separating" the good fish from the bad. The bad, of course, were cast away. The net is the Kingdom of heaven and the gospel is the message of the kingdom. The sea is the world in all the depth of its darkness and its unknown. The fisherman represents Christ and His followers. And this parable shows us that the end of those who inhabit the kingdom without being citizens of the kingdom have a horrible future in store for them (cast away into the fire).

¹ <http://www.rondaniel.com/library/40-Matthew/Matthew1347.pdf>

13:49-50 Explaining The Parable

The first part of this parable deals with the present state of the kingdom or the church. The latter part deals only with the future. At the end of the age, there will be a separation. In the same way that the tares were separated from the wheat and burned, so too the bad fish will be thrown away - the wicked will be thrown into the furnace of fire. The only time the bad will be in the presence of the good is "Now!"

At another time Jesus taught His disciples the same truth; when He spoke of His coming and of the gathering of all nations before Him, the good entering into eternal life, but the wicked being cast away. *"When the Son of Man shall come in His glory," said Jesus, "and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory. And before Him shall be gathered all nations; and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats. And He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left" Rev. 20:31-33.*

Judgment is real. It comes at the end of the world. Angels are real. They come forth to separate the wicked from the just. The church does not separate. And the furnace of fire is where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. And it's real. Hell is a real place, and real people who really don't choose God's forgiveness really go there. What should this teach us? It is that although all of us are in church, not all of us are in the family of God. All of us are in the net, but not all of us are good fish. All of us are being gathered together, but some will be separated and end up in Hell.

Paul the apostle knew that he was in the net, but he desperately wanted to make sure that he was also one of the good fish. He said in, *1Cor. 9:23-27 And I do all things for the sake of the gospel, that I may become a fellow partaker of it. Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. And everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; but I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified.* If Paul was concerned about making sure he was a "good fish," then how much more should we pursue godliness, ensuring that we are too?

13:51 Have You Understood?

After this intensely deep teaching, Jesus asked the disciples if they had understood these things. And they said, "Yea Lord" Because when they didn't, they always asked Jesus to explain. Their comprehension allows Jesus to give one more illustration to reveal their responsibility as scribes being instructed on the subject of the Kingdom of Heaven.

13:52 A Scribe Who Becomes A Disciple

The Scribes were those who copied the Scriptures by hand. In the days before printing presses, they were the ones who made copies of the Bible. In this, the function of a scribe is similar to the function of what we call a "minister" of God. *"Therefore every Scribe which is instructed unto the Kingdom of Heaven..."* ²The word translated "instructed" is from a Greek word meaning "to make a disciple" or "to become a pupil." *"...is like unto a man who is an householder..."* The householder represents the true minister doing the work of feeding the household of faith. This verse could easily read, *". . . every scribe who has been trained for the Kingdom of God is like a master of a house."* "Master" implies great authority as well as responsibility over his house. The master of the house has the final say in deciding what is best for his household. This parable suggests that God has granted His ministers authority to expound His Word, calling them *"masters of the house."*

The last part of this verse reads, *"...which brings forth out of his treasure things new and old."* The instructed scribe of Christ's own household has a duty towards his fellow-members of the house. That duty is to *"bring forth out of his treasure things new and old"*. The qualified scribe has his "treasure" - the knowledge of God's Word, and to the extent that he has prayerfully studied, seeking to divide it rightly as a good workman (2Tim. 2:15), placed that Word in a place, a storehouse, or storeroom. He is to use as resources all the things he has stored away. The *"new and old"* refers to food, the Word, stored in a storeroom. Jesus wants His ministers to teach their spiritual families by carefully balancing the teaching of the Old and the New Testaments. It does not mean that the old is thrown away or is wrong. In this sense, seeing the value in the old, he wisely serves his family "old store" as well as the fresh "off-the-vine" food, mixing them in balance so that neither is wasted. The scribe of the

² <http://cgg.org/index.cfm/fuseaction/Library.sr/CT/BS/k/1166/Parable-of-Householder.htm>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

kingdom is to be well versed in the Word of God.

13:53

"And it came to pass that when Jesus had finished these parable he departed thence." Jesus stayed where He was until He had completed His ministry. He departed only after He *"had finished these parables"* that is His teaching. This gives us the thought that we should finished, complete, each task before moving on elsewhere.

LESSON:

Matthew 13:54: Jesus Returns To Nazareth

Jesus went to Nazareth, his hometown. On the Sabbath day, He goes into the synagogue, a habit He has formed from childhood (Lk.2:41-50). Since He grew up in the town, He was therefore a familiar face to the rulers of the worshippers and synagogue. He was also familiar with the worship rituals and was no stranger. According to Jewish customs in the synagogue service, which include Scripture reading (Lk.4:17). Jesus read from the Scriptures and then begins to expound the Word of God. The nature of His teaching was so profound that His audience and worshippers in the synagogue are amazed and dumbfounded at the wisdom with which He is teaching. They begin to question among themselves, *"From whence hath this man these things?"* Probably many of the people have not heard Him speak before and so this is their first experience. They are amazed! Jesus taught, but they rejected Him. The people's rejection was strong. There was scorn and spite in their rejection. Luke tells us that they set out to kill Jesus. Jesus was rejected because:

- The people did not understand the source of His wisdom and power.
- Jesus lacked proper credentials and education. They heard His wisdom and seen His works, but they understood neither.
- They would not acknowledge that He had really come from God.

Matthew 13:55-56: The People Are Skeptical

The people were as other men, lost and without hope and needing a Savior. He longed to help those with whom He had played, grown up, and rubbed shoulders with for thirty years. However, there is an undercurrent of skepticism among some of them as to the source of HIS authority and power as implied in the questions: *"Where did this man get these things?"* and *"What's this wisdom that has been given him, that he even does miracles!"* Skeptical means cynical, disbelieving, and unconvinced. By implication, they are saying. It's either from God or from Satan. To skeptics, it must have come from Satan, since no one (including rabbis and scribes) has ever taught and done miracles as He did. Although there is no record of Jesus performing any miracles in Nazareth before, His fame spread. While Jesus astonished the listeners in the synagogue on this Sabbath day, their amazement was soon changed to contempt. They could not accept this Messenger or His message because they knew Him too well. He was their neighbor, their brother, their relative, a boy from down the street. He was the son of peasants, a carpenter's son. Jesus was from humble beginnings. His family was humble and ordinary—just average.

Matthew 13:57-58: The People Reject Jesus

So the town of Nazareth rejected Jesus, and in response to their offense, Jesus quotes *"a proverb that the prophet is without honor in his native land."* Jesus was also rejected because people were offended by Him. The literal meaning of offended is *stumbling*. His neighbors and friends stumbled over Him. Jesus says, *"Only in his hometown and his own house is a prophet without honor"* (respect, tribute, admiration). They could not imagine that someone from their own house—someone they've known from a child could be the Messiah, the Son of God. They could not imagine someone who had been born in their own country and lived among them could be making the claims that He was making. A man who ate, drank, worked, and slept among them had no right to speak and make such claims. Most people consider God to be some remote power in outer space or in another dimension. Therefore, they put Him out there, not in here, not in their world and in their lives. Men do not want God too close. If God is close, then man has to submit, serve, and obey Him. Therefore he creates a mental god, a far-off, and to have little control over their life. All this comes to show that they did not believe Him. Unbelief results in some bitter fruit.

- Unbelief hurts the unbeliever

- Unbelief hurts the unbeliever's neighbors and friends.
- Unbelief hurts Christ.

Their lack of faith hindered their own spiritual gain, for "*Jesus could not work many miracles there because of their unbelief.*" God cannot work where there is unbelief. Unbelief shuts God out. It pushes Him away and refuses to let God's love and power work. When people take offense at the teaching of the Word, God will not do many miracles there. And so we must be receiving the teaching of the Word before we will truly be able to receive the miracles written about in the Word.

SUMMARY:

The people listened to Christ as he taught in the synagogue and wondered about this man of Nazareth, saying, "*Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works*" *Matt. 13:54*. When Christ presented Himself, whether in Word or deed (works), He revealed the force, the miraculous and wonderful power, the divine authority of heaven. Peter, preaching on the day of Pentecost, speaks of this power or authority of the man of Nazareth: "*Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know...*" *Acts 2:22*. The Son of God came to earth and took upon himself our flesh, that he may show to us His power to redeem us from the darkness of our sin, its guilt, and from death itself. **Christ revealed to us that He is the King of kings, the Sovereign Lord**, in whom we have victory over the darkness of this world.

We overcome "*rejection*" through the blood of the Lamb and the Word of our testimony. The Faith living within comes by hearing and hearing the Word of God. The lack is not on God's part. The lack is on our part, and it is called unbelief. What comes out of the mouth is already in the heart. If we are listening and meditating on God's Word, God will reveal what's in the heart, the hurts, the blockage, so He can work miracles in our lives. Therefore, Jesus being rejected by His own hometown still continues in some of our lives today. People can reject, but just remember they are not rejecting you *per say*, but the Word that is in you, the Christ who is in you, the anointing that is endowed upon your life. One more thing, "*they're not going where you're going.*" They will continue to stay in their rut. They will continue to not allow God to work in their lives. If you listen to what people say all the time, you'll be in that same rut, stuck! What was revealed in their rejection?—Unbelief! Jesus continued to demonstrate compassion, He continued to demonstrate confidence, He continued to demonstrate Love unto those who rejected Him. He would rebuke along the way, but He still loved them but hates sin.

APPLICATION:

Because they rejected Jesus, it did not take away from who He is! He never compared Himself with anyone else and neither should we. I'm talking about overcoming rejection. You are one of a kind, doing exactly what the Lord said do. You can only work where God leads you, not where man deems you. The reason the Spirit of God is not in a thing, is because there is either so much confusion or unbelief. Focus on your strengths instead of your weaknesses.