

The Kingdom in Parables

Matthew 13

What We Found

- Parables reveal and conceal at once: to the open heart they carry the kingdom's secrets, to the closed they are riddles. A parable is a mirror; what you hear in it reveals what you have become.
- In the sower, the seed is never the variable; the soil is. The path, the rock, the thorns, and the good soil are four conditions of one heart, and soil can be worked.
- The kingdom's present season is mixed by the King's own design: wheat and weeds in one field, every kind of fish in one net, with the sorting reserved to God at the close of the age. Jesus says the field is the world (Matthew 13:38), and the Church has always read her own mixed life by the same light, since the weeds are gathered at the end out of his kingdom (Matthew 13:41). Sinners in the Church do not refute her; they confirm this description, and today's weeds may be tomorrow's wheat.
- The mustard seed and the leaven: smallest of beginnings, hidden operation, unstoppable growth, until the nations nest in the branches.
- The treasure and the pearl: the kingdom costs everything and is a bargain at the price. The finder sells all "in his joy."

Voices of the Church

Voices of the Church: St. Augustine (Sermons on the Gospels)

Those who are weeds today may be wheat tomorrow, and the reckless uprooter destroys what God is still growing. The separation is certain, but it belongs to the harvest and the Harvester, not to us.

Voices of the Church: St. John Chrysostom (Homilies on Matthew)

From twelve obscure men the faith has filled the world, as quietly and irresistibly as leaven works through dough. The smallness of the beginning is the demonstration of the power.

Voices of the Church: St. Gregory the Great (Homilies on the Gospels)

The treasure hidden in the field is the desire for heaven hidden in an ordinary life. What looks from outside like renunciation is, from inside, the shrewdest purchase ever made.

Live It This Week

- Reread the parable you understood least, once a day, and let it interrogate you rather than the reverse.

- Pray for one person whose place in the Church scandalizes or irritates you, remembering that someone may be praying the same way about you.
- Do one hidden, leaven-like act inside an ordinary structure of your life. Tell no one; let it work.

Scripture Memory

Matthew 13:44 (RSV2CE): *“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.”*

Before Next Session

Read Matthew 14-16. And do not forget: **bring your sealed Take-Home Sheet 1 with you next week.**

Catechism References

CCC 543-546 · CCC 827 · CCC 1036