

Worship services are being cancelled until further notice because of Covid-19. However, we will have worship services through the Internet Zoom platform every Sunday at 10:30 AM in NB, NS and PEI. The Zoom link for this service will be sent to you by email. The telephone numbers for Zoom always remains the same but the Meeting ID and password number change every week.. Please let Mr. Vautour know if you would like to be added to the weekly mailing list. See the bottom of the bulletin for the contact information

If you have friends or acquaintances who want to join in the worship service, please do not hesitate to share with them the Zoom links to join with us in the worship our great God.

For more information about special activities happening in GCI international, please see the website at www.gci.org. On the left-hand upper side of the screen, click on "PARTICIPATE". Click on it. A drop-down menu will appear. Click on "GCI UPDATE".

Please note that audio and video sermons are available at www.worshipim.ca and video sermons are now available on YouTube – GRACE COMMUNION INTERNATIONAL-MONCTON (see link below)

Bible Study: Thursday October 22, 2020 at 7:30 We will begin a new series called RZIM's Conversational Apologetics Curriculum: EVERYDAY QUESTIONS: LIFE'S BIGGEST QUESTIONS ARE BEING ASKED ALL AROUND YOU. ARE YOU HEARING THE QUESTIONS?

If you have a prayer requests, other events you would like to announce and/or praise to our great God you would like to share, **please try to contact Mr. Vautour by email, text or telephone no later than Saturday in the morning.**

To see specific prayer requests from the church, please go to www.worshipim.ca – under "Members Only" and type the password.

Let us also pray to God for the church in Canada that God will provide fresh leadership. As you know, many of us are getting older. We need to pray that God will provide young men and women who are gifted for pastoral duty with a heart for Jesus, a heart for the Gospel. Please pray that in his love and wisdom God will add people to join in the wonderful continuing miracle he has done in our midst as a denomination.

Let us pray according to God's will as per his instructions: "1 ¶ First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, 2 for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. 3 This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." (1Ti 2:1-4 ESV)

Let us also pray for one another.

Offerings: you can send your offering directly to the following address: **Grace Communion International- Canada, Suite 203A, 2121 Airport Dr., Saskatoon, SK 7S1 6W5.** If you prefer,

you can also call **1-306-653-2705**. Thank you for your continued generous giving to God by giving to this part of God's church, his body.

For those living in Moncton area, if you wish, you can drop your offerings in our mailbox. I will mail them with the ministerial expenses at the end of each month.

From Mr. Bill Hall – GCI Canadian Director *"We will continue to process the donations we receive in Saskatoon. Members are urged to mail them directly to our office for the time-being. They can also donate via phone using a credit card, or via Canada Helps using the donate button on our website www.gcicanada.ca We are waving the provision that all donations given via Canada Helps go toward national expenses for the time being. We will credit all donations received via Canada Helps to a member's local congregation, if we can identify where they attend."*

THE GOSPELS: MATTHEW 13: PARABLES OF THE KINGDOM

We need to make sure that our description of the kingdom is compatible with the description Jesus gave. Jesus often preached about the kingdom of God—but what did he say about it? Did he describe peace and prosperity, health and wealth, law, and order? Did he get into details of governmental organization?

No, we do not need to know those things. The most important thing we need to know about the kingdom is how we get there in the first place—and when Jesus described the kingdom, that is what he talked about.

Let's begin with Matthew 13, the largest collection of kingdom parables. Several times Jesus said, "The kingdom of God is like..." and then he would tell a story. We know many of these parables, but a few details may surprise us.

Parable of the sower

A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. ([Matthew 13:3-9](#))

The story is easy to understand. We can picture a man scattering wheat seeds, and we understand about birds, thorns, and sunshine. But Jesus had a spiritual purpose in this story, and the disciples found it puzzling. So they asked Jesus, **"Why do you speak to the people in parables?" (v. 10).**

Jesus told them that it was not yet time for people to understand the "secrets of the kingdom of heaven" (**v. 11**). He is saying that this parable is actually about the kingdom of God—something we see again in verse 19. Most of the people in the crowd were not spiritually responsive (**vs. 13-15**), and so Jesus was not giving them more than they could handle. But Jesus taught his disciples the spiritual significance of the story—and they have published it for us.

When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path. (**v. 19**)

When we preach the gospel, Jesus says, some people do not understand it. That's just the way it is in this world. Don't get upset if people think you are talking nonsense.

The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. (**vs. 20-21**)

Some people like the gospel as a novelty. But then they get bored with it, and when it doesn't solve their problems, they quit. So when we share the gospel, some of the people who respond will eventually fall away. Don't be surprised; that's just the way some people are.

The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful. (**v. 22**)

People do not have to be rich to be deceived by riches. All sorts of people can be distracted by the worries of this world, and some drop out for that reason. They are more worried about this world than they are about eternity.

But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. (v. 23)

Jesus wants us to be this kind of person. Seeds don't have a choice as to what kind of soil they fall on, but we have a choice as to what kind of soil we will be for the seed. We can choose to respond to the gospel. When trials come, we can choose to stick with the gospel, or to fall away. When life gets boring or worrisome, we can choose whether to bear fruit for the kingdom. That's the kind of message Jesus gives us.

Parable of the weeds

Jesus told them another parable:

The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared.

The owner's servants came to him and said, "Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?"

"An enemy did this," he replied.

The servants asked him, "Do you want us to go and pull them up?"

"No," he answered, "because while you are pulling the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn." (Matthew 13:24-30)

Jesus explains the parable for us in verses 37-43. The good seeds are the disciples, spread by Jesus throughout the world. The weeds are bad people, spread by the devil. The bad people are mixed in with the good, and this is what the kingdom of God is like. God allows this; it is part of his plan. Jesus is describing a world in which Satan is active—the age we live in today. The kingdom of God starts small, like seeds, and it is growing now, and God is waiting to see which plants will bear fruit. Don't be too hasty, he tells his servants. Wait and see. There will be a harvest.

In farming, weeds can never produce grain. But when it comes to the gospel, fruitless folks can be changed. What looks like a weed one day may begin bearing fruit another day. It depends on each person's choice, and the kingdom of God gives people time to choose. But this will not go on forever. There will come a judgment, and the weeds will be removed from the kingdom (v. 41). God lets good and bad grow together, but he doesn't want the bad to stay bad. He wants them to change, and he will keep only the good. (How we become counted as "good" is covered in other places.)

This parable, and the previous one, describes an age in which we have spiritual enemies. It does not describe the world after Jesus returns. Rather, it's a time when enemies snatch away the message that was sown in people's hearts, and cause weeds to grow among God's people. The kingdom of God, as described in these parables, is not a utopia in which everything is perfect. It is a time of struggle, trials, worries and deceit—but it is also a time of growth that leads toward God's harvest.

In these parables, the harvest is at "the end of the age." The harvest is the time when God's people will be resurrected to be with the Lord forever. These descriptions of the kingdom *end* with the return of Christ, rather than beginning with it. These parables describe a kingdom that exists in this age, a kingdom that will also include a future judgment.

When Jesus preached the gospel of the kingdom of God, this is the way he described it. He was not preaching about a golden age of peace and prosperity, but a long period of growth in which his disciples are to produce fruit for the kingdom.

Parables of growth

The next story is about growth:

He told them another parable: **"The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches." (vs. 31-32)**

Here Jesus described the kingdom not just as a seed, but as the *smallest* seed. Jesus is not describing a kingdom that arrives in a blaze of glory—he is describing a kingdom that begins very small.

This is not what the Jews expected, but this is the kingdom that Jesus said was near. The kingdom is a story about gradual growth.

In the next parable, perhaps the shortest parable of all, Jesus compares the kingdom to a small amount of yeast.

Again he asked, **“What shall I compare the kingdom of God to? It is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into about sixty pounds of flour until it worked all through the dough. (Matthew 13:33)**

When yeast is first mixed into bread dough, it is not very noticeable, but a small amount eventually produces a large result. The kingdom begins small and inconspicuous, but it grows large. In the parable of the wheat, it also produces a crop for harvest.

The small beginning of the kingdom would have surprised Jesus’ listeners. They were hoping that a Messiah would lead the Jewish people to a great victory over the Romans. They were hoping to become an independent nation, with the power of David’s kingdom and the wealth of Solomon’s. But Jesus was announcing that the kingdom must begin in a very small way.

These parables do not describe a future golden age. They do not fit well with a kingdom that begins in a blaze of glory at Jesus’ return. Rather, these parables describe the kingdom of God that exists for many years before the return of Christ. These parables describe a long, slow growth process for the kingdom.

The kingdom of God is not just a seed, and it is not just a fully grown plant. It is the entire story—something small that grows into something large.

Hidden treasures

The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it. (vs. 44-46)

Again, the story begins with the kingdom small and hidden—but it does not remain hidden. The traditional interpretation of these parables is that when we hear the message of the kingdom, we should be so full of joy that we are willing to give up everything else. That is true.

But we can never “buy” the kingdom or earn our salvation. Rather, in these parables (like other parables in this chapter), it may be that *Jesus* is the main character. He is the one who sees hidden treasure in his people (the field), and gives everything he has to purchase the prize. The value may not be evident right now, but it is there.

Good fish, bad fish

Once again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away. This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous and throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (vs. 47-50)

The kingdom of God captures both good and bad people. The message is given to both. They live together and are given a chance to change and grow. Eventually the time comes when judgment is made, and God keeps the good. He loves the bad, he seeks the bad, he wants the bad, but he does not want them to stay bad. But some people choose to stay bad. God gives each person time, but eventually there is a judgment. That is what the kingdom of God is like.

Again, these parables *end* with the day of judgment. When Jesus described the kingdom, he did not describe the world after his return. Rather, he described the world in this age, the age in which we hear the gospel, choose to respond, and choose to be faithful.

When we hear the gospel, we should respond. Though trials come our way, we need to keep our eyes on the goal. Though this life has its worries, we should not let them distract us. Through faith, we enter the kingdom of God, and through faithfulness, we stay in the kingdom of God, and through faith, we bear fruit for the kingdom.

Author: Michael Morrison

Jesus, The Center of the Center

Here are some of the reasons why we say that Jesus is the Centre of the centre. These are not all the reasons but some of them.

Jesus mission is to bring us to the Father by the Holy Spirit.

Jesus is the person in the Trinity who was sent to the earth from the Father to become one of us in the incarnation. He took on our fallen flesh becoming fully man while continuing to be God.

- 1) Jesus is our wisdom, righteousness and sanctification and redemption from God. **"But because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption:" (1Co 1:30 KJV_2011)**
- 2) He came to the earth to reveal God. He is the only one who knows God because only God can reveal God. **"All things have been given to me by my Father: and no one really knows the Son, except the Father; nor does anyone really know the Father, except the Son, and he to whom the Son chooses to reveal him." (Mt 11:27 KJV_2011)**
- 3) The man Jesus is our only mediator. **"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;" (1Ti 2:5 KJV_2011)**
- 4) He is our high priest. **"For he needed to be made like his brethren in every way, in order that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, and make atonement for the sins of the people." (Heb 2:17 KJV_2011).** Many other Scriptures in Hebrews speak of his high priestly role.
- 5) He is the last revelation from God. **"1 ¶ God, who in the past spoke to the fathers at many times and in various ways through the prophets, 2 Has spoken to us in these last days in the person of his Son, whom he has appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe;" (Heb 1:1-2 KJV_2011).** Furthermore, the world was made through him. He has been appointed heir of all things.
- 6) Jesus is the saviour of the world sent for by God the Father. **"And we have seen and bear witness that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world." (1Jo 4:14 KJV_2011)**
- 7) God the Father has reconciled the world through him. **"For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, not counting their sins against them; and has committed to us the word of reconciliation." (2Co 5:19 KJV_2011).**
- 8) Jesus is the last Adam. **"45 And so it is written, The first man, Adam, was made a living soul; the last Adam a life-giving spirit. 46 However the spiritual did not come first, but the natural; and after that the spiritual. 47 The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven." (1Co 15:45-47 KJV_2011)**
- 9) Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. We can only go to the Father through him. **"Jesus replied, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man comes to the Father, but through me." (Joh 14:6 KJV_2011)**
- 10) It is only through him that we can be saved. **"Nor is there salvation in any other: for there is no other name under heaven given among men, by which we must be saved." (Ac 4:12 KJV_2011)**
- 11) He was the subject of the apostles preaching at Pentecost. **"22 Men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know: 23 This Jesus, being delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you have taken, and by the hands of wicked men have crucified and slain: 24 Whom God has raised up, freeing him from the agony of death: because it was not possible for him to be held by it." (Ac 2:22-24 KJV_2011)**
- 12) He was a centre of Paul's preaching. **"For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." (1Co 2:2 KJV_2011)**
- 13) He is the head of the church. **"And he is the head of the body, the church: he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; so that in everything he might be pre-eminent." (Col 1:18 KJV_2011)**

- 14)** It is only through Jesus that we can be made righteous. **“18 Therefore as through the sin of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so through the righteousness of one the free gift abounds to all men bringing justification and life. 19 For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one many will be made righteous. 20 Moreover the law came, that transgression might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: 21 That as sin has reigned unto death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Ro 5:18-21 KJV_2011)**
- 15)** Through Jesus we have access in one Spirit to the Father. **“For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.” (Eph 2:18 KJV_2011)**
- 16)** The book of Revelation is the revelation of Jesus Christ. **“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, that God gave him, to show his servants the things that must shortly come to pass; and he sent it and communicated it through his angel to his servant John:” (Re 1:1 KJV_2011)**
- 17)** Our rest is no longer in a particular day, but in Jesus. **“28 Come to me, all you who labor and are carrying a heavy load, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” (Mt 11:28-30 KJV_2011)**
- 18)** At the End, when Jesus will deliver the kingdom of God to God the Father after the destruction of every rule, every authority, and every power. He is the one who must remain until he has put all his enemies under his feet the last enemy being death. **“24 Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father; after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. 25 For he must reign, until God has put all enemies under his feet. 26 The last enemy that will be destroyed is death. 27 For God has put everything under his feet. But when he says that everything has been put under him, it is evident that this does not include the one who put all things under him.” (1Co 15:24-27 KJV_2011)**
- 19)** As God’s people, in our relationship with him, we are to grow in our relationship with him! **“But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever. Amen.” (2Pe 3:18 KJV_2011)**
- 20)** Jesus is our life. **“When Christ, who is our life, appears, then you will also appear with him in glory.” (Col 3:4 KJV_2011)**

There are so many other things that the Bible tells us about Jesus. Salvation is available through believing in him which refers not only to a mental assent but a surrender to him as our Lord. The Bible tells that Jesus is the complete revelation of God the Father. When we have Jesus, we have the Father, as the apostle John tells us in one of his epistles. That is why we say that for mankind Jesus is the centre of the centre sent forth to us from heaven by the Father, out of love for us.

Author: Eric Vautour

GCI principle website and Moncton Websites—a) www.gci.org , b) www.worshiphim.ca , c) <https://www.facebook.com/GCIMoncton> ; d) *Grace Communion International-Moncton* <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCgKazyWhmKmDZy69vJcFfPg>

For a wealth of helpful articles about God, grace and his plan for salvation, who we are, etc., please see the GCI.org website.

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