

## Metaphors: Why Did Jesus Teach in Parables?

Matthew 13 (various sections)  
(Black Bibles page 818; Children's Bibles page 1178)

Jesus spoke parables of the Kingdom of God/Heaven that look like they were hard to understand. Were they?

- A strange but I think true answer to that question: **Jesus' parables of the Kingdom were not clear, but they are clear now.**

Beginners: What's a parable?

- Sometimes a full story, sometimes merely a comparison, and sometimes only a proverb

Let's turn to an example: The Parable of the Weeds (Matthew 13:24-30)

- There are various possible interpretations of this parable. How do we know which is correct?
  
- In this case, Jesus interpreted the parable (Matt 13:36-43) in a simple point-by-point allegorical identification. For example, *the field = the world*.

Skeptics: "Jesus didn't speak in point-by-point allegories. His parables have only one point." (or perhaps zero)

- Yes, many parables scholars have (over-)confidently asserted this rule, and by doing so they say that Jesus never interpreted the Parable of the Weeds as an allegory, saying it was fabricated. *They have no good reason to claim this, and it provides a startling example of scholarly arrogance.*

Okay, but then why did Jesus speak in parables?

- **Answer #1:** Because they're *memorable*.

- **Answer #2:** To *hide* truth from the crowds. (!)
  - Jesus declares this in Matt 13:10-13
  
  - But he wasn't creating a permanent secret. Here are five interesting observations from Scripture that drive us to that conclusion...
  
- **Answer #3:** At each moment, to reveal only as much truth as he desired
  - Water faucet analogy: he controls the flow of knowledge/information, opening or closing the faucet at will.

Strugglers: Can you relate to the confusion, not knowing, not understanding..?

- Jesus recognizes this, and it's not merely about parables. It's about life in general!
  
- "Take care then how you hear, for to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he thinks that he has will be taken away." Luke 8:18 (cf. Matt 13:12)

To the Lord's Supper and the most important metaphor ever: "*This is my body.*"

### Questions for Reflection and Application

1. Read Matthew 13 to hear Jesus' Parables of the Kingdom. Which two does he interpret for the disciples?
2. Perhaps someone thinks the Kingdom of Heaven/God comes to earth with overwhelming force, perhaps via an angelic army. Is that true according to this chapter?
3. "To the one who has, more will be given..." (Matt 13:12) It sounds unfair, but how is this an encouragement for us who might be confused?
4. Read Matt 13:16-17. Is that true only for the twelve disciples, or in what way is it true for us? If it's true for us, how does your life reflect this truth? How should it?