

# THE PARABLES OF Jesus

## Why Parables?

## Lesson 4

The disciples came and said to him, “\_\_\_\_\_ do you speak to them in parables?”  
(Matt 13:10)

Seven centuries before Jesus’ disciples asked that question, the prophet Isaiah had an incredible vision. Let’s take the time to read **Isaiah 6**. It will provide valuable context for Jesus’ answer to the **“Why parables?”** question...

In **Matthew 4:17**, Jesus began to preach, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” He began his most famous sermon (**Matt 5-7**) by saying, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (**5:3**). He draws attention to “the gospel of the kingdom” in a variety of ways in **Matthew 8-10**. But in **Matthew 11**, we begin to notice a turning-point:

- John the Baptist asks: “Are \_\_\_\_\_ the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?” (**11:1-6**)
- Some say of Jesus: “A glutton and a drunkard, a \_\_\_\_\_ of tax collectors and sinners!” (**11:7-19**)
- People in Galilean cities see his mighty works but fail to repent (**11:20-24**)
- Pharisees and scribes accuse Jesus and conspire against him (**12:1-45**)
- Jesus’ own family isn’t sure what to make of him (**12:46-50; John 7:5**)

That \_\_\_\_\_ day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. And great crowds gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat down. And the whole crowd stood on the beach. And he told them many things in \_\_\_\_\_, saying: “A sower went out to sow...” (**13:1-3**)

After describing how seeds fall along the path, on rocky ground, among thorns, and on good soil, concluding with “He who has ears, let him \_\_\_\_\_,” the disciples ask, **“Why parables?”** Let’s read Jesus’ response carefully in **Matthew 13:11-17**...

The parables begin to come alive when we look at Jesus’ original audiences through his eyes. Some are unwilling to repent. Some are hostile. Some are interested, but confused. Some are struggling with doubt. Some are enthusiastically supportive and ready to follow him wherever he goes. So Jesus tells them **“many things in parables.” Why?** Let’s talk about it...



## For Class & Family Discussion:

What stands out to you about **Isaiah 6**? What's the problem that led to the LORD commissioning Isaiah?

Looking back at **Matthew 13:11-17**, what is Jesus communicating? Let's think carefully through what he says. What did he mean by...

- 📌 "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given" (13:11)?
  
- 📌 "For to the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away" (13:12)?
  
- 📌 "Seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand" (13:13)?
  
- 📌 "Indeed, in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled..." (13:14)?
  
- 📌 "...many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it" (13:17)?

Let's think through the last paragraph of this page's other side. "Some are unwilling to repent. Some are hostile. Some are interested, but confused. Some are struggling with doubt. Some are enthusiastically supportive and ready to follow him wherever he goes." Thinking through each of those phrases, who comes to mind from the life of Jesus? In what way did his parables "conceal" *from* hard hearts and "reveal" *to* open hearts?