

# The Gospel According to Matthew

## Presence as Lifestyle?

November 7, 2021

### Matthew 13v1-23

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. 2 Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. 3 And he told them many things in parables, saying: "Listen! A sower went out to sow. 4 And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. 5 Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. 6 But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. 7 Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. 8 Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. 9 Let anyone with ears listen!"

10 Then the disciples came and asked him, "Why do you speak to them in parables?" 11 He answered, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. 12 For to those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. 13 The reason I speak to them in parables is that 'seeing they do not perceive, and hearing they do not listen, nor do they understand.' 14 With them indeed is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah that says:

You will indeed listen, but never understand,  
and you will indeed look, but never perceive.  
15 For this people's heart has grown dull,  
and their ears are hard of hearing,  
and they have shut their eyes;  
so that they might not look with their eyes,  
and listen with their ears,  
and understand with their heart and turn—  
and I would heal them.'

16 But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. 17 Truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, but did not see it, and to hear what you hear, but did not hear it.

18 "Hear then the parable of the sower. 19 When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path. 20 As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; 21 yet such a person has no root, but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away. 22 As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing. 23 But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty."

A story about attentiveness?

How would you rate yourself when it comes to being present?

A parable about what it looks like to do the will of God?

Who in your life practices presence well?

Who is the sower?  
What is the seed?  
Which is to say, what is the fruit we're aiming to grow?

What kind of soil are you?

Matthew 12v48-50  
But to the one who had told him this, Jesus replied, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" 49 And pointing to his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! 50 For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."

A story about the importance and difficulty of being present?

Matthew 13v9, 12, 16  
Let anyone with ears listen!...For to those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away....But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear.

What if following Jesus isn't easy?

You have to want it?  
You have to work for it?

The Difficulty of Gardening

The second and first more important things that must be true before you can learn anything?

"What would my life be like if God touched my mind as frequently as I touch my phone?"  
John Ortberg

What if presence isn't a task but rather a lifestyle?

"The first and most basic thing we can and must do is to keep God before our minds."  
Dallas Willard

**Book:** *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry* by John Mark Comer

**Podcasts:** Bridgetown Audio Podcast: 349. The Case for Digital Asceticism

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