

# LESSON 9

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## THE FIRST GREAT GROUP OF PARABLES

### THE OCCASION AND SETTING

(MT. 13:1–3; MK. 4:1, 2; LK. 8:4)

After the incident with His mother and brothers, Christ left the house where He had been teaching and went to one of His favorite spots: the shore of the Sea of Galilee (Mt. 13:1; Mk. 4:1). The situation may have been familiar, but His sermon was not: It consisted of a series of stories—all of them short, some very short. [See *Life of Christ, 1*, pp. 337–343.]

1. What parables had Jesus taught before this sermon?
2. What made this situation different?
3. Was the use of parables unique to Jesus?
4. What is a parable?
5. Why did Jesus speak so extensively in parables?
6. How should we go about interpreting Jesus' parables today?

### THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER— AND EXPLANATION

(MT. 13:3–23; MK. 4:3–25; LK. 8:5–15)

The parable of the sower is found in all three synoptic Gospel Accounts because of its importance. Jesus told His disciples that if they did not understand this parable, they could not understand any of the parables (Mk. 4:13). [See *Life of Christ, 1*, pp. 343–348.]

7. What types of hearts was Jesus surrounded by?
8. What practical purposes did the parable of the sower serve?

## **THE PARABLE OF SILENT GROWTH**

**(MK. 4:26–29)**

According to Mark, immediately after Jesus told the parable of the sower, He told of a seed that grew by itself until harvest time. It is a simple story whose details are familiar to any who have planted a crop that did not require cultivation. [See *Life of Christ*, 1, pp. 348–349.]

9. What facts about crop care would provide a better background for modern readers of this story?
10. In what ways was this parable a source of encouragement to the disciples?

## **THE PARABLE OF THE TARES—**

**AND EXPLANATION**

**(MT. 13:24–30, 36–43)**

Jesus spoke another parable about seed growing: He told about an enemy who sowed tares in a field shortly after wheat had been sown. [See *Life of Christ*, 1, pp. 349–351.]

11. What are tares? What do they represent in our lives?
12. What does this parable teach us about excluding workers of evil from our fellowship?
13. Why did Jesus tell this parable to His disciples?

## **THE PARABLES OF THE MUSTARD SEED**

**AND THE LEAVEN**

**(MT. 13:31–35; MK. 4:30–34)**

Several pairs in this series of parables fit together; this is one of the pairs. The first of these continued the theme of growing seed: the parable of the mustard seed. In the next parable, the setting changed to a woman making bread for her household. [See *Life of Christ*, 1, pp. 351–352.]

14. How does the emphasis of the parable of the mustard seed differ from the other parables involving seeds?
15. What role did leaven play in bread making in Jesus' day?
16. How are these two parables similar?

**THE PARABLES OF THE TREASURE  
AND THE PEARL (MT. 13:44–46)**

These next two parables go together: Both are about men who located something of great value. [See *Life of Christ, 1*, pp. 352–353.]

17. What difference is there between the treasures in these two parables?
18. What message did Jesus give by telling both parables together?

**THE PARABLE OF THE DRAGNET  
(MT. 13:47–53)**

The series of parables closed with a story about fishing on the Sea of Galilee with a dragnet that collected both good fish and bad. [See *Life of Christ, 1*, pp. 353–354.]

19. What would a Jew have thought when he heard Jesus speak about good and bad fish?
20. What two different applications could this parable have when heard from different perspectives?